



# Wisconsin Influence Spreading to Texas

By Tom Schwab, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Many of you have listened to the personable and dynamic Kurt Steinke at WTA Summer Field Day. He has presented his research on phosphorus runoff, growing turf in the shade, increasing sod shelf life, and other pertinent issues to today's turf industry. Kurt won't be presenting to Wisconsin's turf industry anymore, except when he is invited back as a visiting turf professor.

This past January, Kurt finished his PhD work in the Department of Horticulture at the UW-Madison under Dr. John Stier. He will be taking what he learned at the UW-Madison to his new position of assistant professor at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. There he will embark on his new career in teaching and research of turfgrass ecology in their Department of Soil and Crop Sciences.

This new appointment is an important milestone of recent years. Kurt is the only student to receive a degree from the UW-Madison who went on to become a professor in turf education, since the old guard of Bob Newman, Jim Love, Chuck Koval, Gayle Worf, and Wayne Kussow.

Kurt's research in Madison included runoff work of turf vs. native prairie systems, various projects to study shade, herbicide and cold stresses to supina bluegrass, and the use of different PGRs to increase shelf life of sod for transport.

He started his college life receiving a Bachelor's degree in soil science from UW-Stevens Point in 1999. In the summers he worked at both Hancock and Arlington Agricultural Research Stations doing studies with potatoes and other vegetable crops. From there he moved on to UW-Madison where he received a Master's degree working with turfgrass in the Department of Horticulture under Dr. Stier's guidance. After graduation, he worked a year for Naturescape in Milwaukee before returning to Madison to receive his PhD of horticulture in turfgrass studies.

Texas A&M will be quite the opportunity for a young professor. Presently A&M has between 100 and 110 undergraduate students in their turf program. And the turf industry is huge, as is everything else in Texas. As a comparison, the turf industry in Wisconsin is estimated to have a one billion dollar impact on the state's



economy. In Texas that number is eight billion dollars.

Kurt's appointment is 70% research and 30% teaching. Although he doesn't have any appointment to do extension work, I'm sure he will spend some time traveling around Texas, giving presentations to serve that huge turf industry.

That isn't the only big news in Kurt's life. He just became engaged to Beth, his girlfriend of three years and they already bought a new home in College Station. Things are looking bright for this ambitious new professor and we wish him the best. He answered many important turf

questions during his time in Madison and will take this information south with him where he will continue to discover better ways to grow healthy turfgrass. ♣



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