

The Spring That Never Was!

By David Brandenburg, Editor

The loss of a colleague is never easy, especially when it is sudden. The WGCSA and golfers at Eagle Creek Golf Club in Hortonville lost a friend when Gene Van Liere passed away unexpectedly on Sunday April 24th, 2011 while visiting with family in Salem.

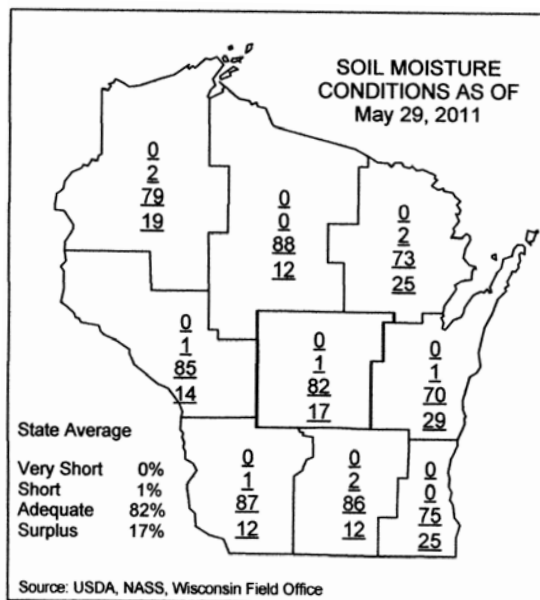
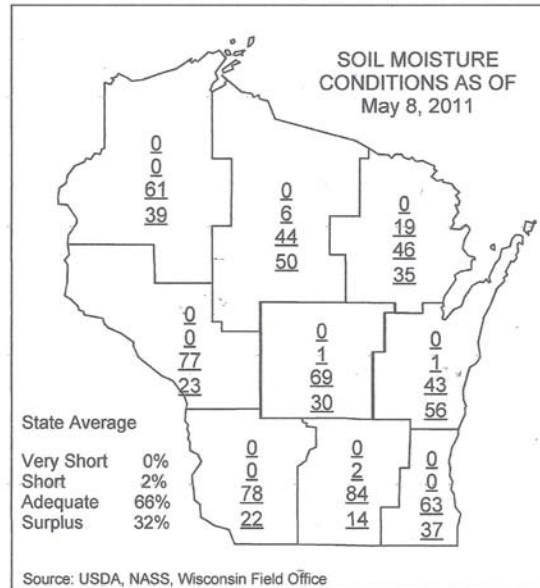
Gene was 49 and is survived by his wife Karen and sons Matthew and Jonathan both at home. Gene had a smile for all and was a welcome addition to any foursome, table or group discussion. I had the pleasure of getting to know Gene while we worked local golf shows and while on a trip to Farm Links.

Eagle Creek is hosting a memorial golf scramble to raise funds for the boy's tuition. The August 6th event features a 9:00 shotgun start and should provide a great time while helping out the family in Gene's memory. Registration can be by phone 920-757-1000 or find a registration form at www.eaglecreekgolfclub.net



What can you say about this spring? It may go down as one of the worst for cold and moisture but don't forget the wind. We track golf playable days based on days with less than .25" of rain and over 45 degrees. I am not sure winds at 35 to 40 miles a hour is considered playable. There was also a number of days where it hit 46 or 47 degrees from 3:00 to 3:20 pm before falling again?

It is difficult enough to grow grass in this weather but the real challenge is the detrimental hit to revenue and play.



Operators that were hoping for a early profitable spring to catch up on some bills have found weekend after weekend of rain or cold. The record number of courses up for bank sale this spring tells the tale of the past couple years. Hopefully as we approach summer the weather will provide for conditions to encourage play.

EDITORS NOTEBOOK

The Soil Moisture Conditions from May 8 show only 2% of the state short on moisture while 32% had a surplus of moisture. Fortunately late May and early June brought some warmer dryer days. The picture did not change much by May 29 when only 1% was short while 17% had a surplus.

The USDA and National Agricultural Statistics Bureau have released some charts on the costs of products for the ag industry that we also use in turf. The prices are from March and April for the Lake States Region.

Outside of Murate of Potash which has increased 114% from \$277 per ton to \$594 per ton the turf products have done pretty well over the past 4 years. Glyphosate and Chlorothalonil are down in price from 2007.

The trouble for golf courses is the rise in gas and diesel fuel. The high prices not only add to already tight budget concerns but reduce the customers discretionary spending dollars as more income is put in the gas tank.

As we move into the heat of summer I hope we have nice days with timely nighttime rains to benefit us and the farmers. Long term forecasts are for cooler and wetter than normal, but time will tell.

Remember there are some opportunities to see some great golf on the states best golf courses with the State Amateur at Maple Bluff July 18-21, The State Open at Blackwolf Run August 15-17 and the USGA US Amateur Championship at Erin Hills and Blue Mound Country Club August 22-28. These events are all free and a great opportunity to introduce juniors to the game.

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Item	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Unleaded Gas, Bulk	2.62	3.27	1.94	2.79	3.54
Diesel, Bulk	2.47	3.27	1.99	2.84	3.56
Urea / ton	450	547	504	520	519
Muriate of Potash / ton	277	562	848	501	594
2,4-D / gal	15.90	17.20	19.30	18.00	18.00
Dicamba	82.40	77.60	82.60	72.40	N/A
Glyphosate	28.90	40.50	42.80	22.80	16.80
Chlorothalonil	47.00	48.20	59.80	50.00	40.80
Pendimethalin	28.20	29.70	37.40	36.30	38.70
30-39hp Tractor	18,400	18,700	18,500	18,800	19,000



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