

## U of M Update —

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al grass plants with more than 8 million miles of roots. The micro and macro, flora and fauna populations living in that forest of grass are immense, serving very useful purposes.”

He noted that lawns, like the rain forests, moderate temperatures, hold soil in place and enrich it through decomposition of plant tissue and biodegrade many pollutants that would otherwise stay in the air or go into the water supplies.

During this hour-long presentation, Fender encouraged his audience to increase their personal awareness and education about environmental issues. He also invited them to become more pro-active by sharing scientifically based facts about the benefits of turfgrass with the public to counter the pseudo-scientific attacks by people he termed “ecoterrorists.”

In one example, he reported that because grass clippings going into landfills are calculated on a wet-clipping basis, they are said to represent 20 to 50 percent of the total flow

of the waste stream. However, knowing that clippings are 90 percent water and they degrade quickly, the actual dry bulk amount clippings contribute to landfills is more like 2 percent. He added that while clippings are not actually large contributors to the waste stream, homeowners should be educated about the benefits of leaving the clippings on the lawn as it is mowed to return the nutrients they naturally contain.

Other environment-related points brought out during the talk by Fender included tree-turf water use comparison fallacies, the comparative low risk actually resulting from proper pesticide use and the massive size of the Environmental Protection Agency’s annual budget.

In closing his presentation, Fender urged attendees to begin examining their entire public relations and education efforts, as well as how they can more effectively market the benefits of their products and services to a population that is continuing to undergo major changes. A copy of the 16-page manuscript used for this presentation is available from the Turf Resource Center by calling 800/405-TURF (8873) The Turf Resource Center is sponsored by the American Sod Producers Association, Rolling Meadows, Illinois.

## It’s Time for Golfers To Pay Their Fair Share

Over the years, the entire golf industry has borne the cost of turfgrass research.

The United States Golf Association, private industry, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and state and regional chapters have all gone to great lengths to raise money, then given it away to scientists investigating everything from pesticide fate to low-input turfgrasses.

**Now it’s time for the end-user—the golfer—to pitch in.** Golfers are, after all, the beneficiaries of the lifetime of hard work that superintendents and their crews devote to creating perfect playing conditions.

The Arizona green industry took a severe blow last spring when two legislators killed legislation that would have assessed 10 cents per round of golf, with the funds bankrolling research. The entire golf industry reeled, stunned by that debacle. Similar legislation is in effect in various states supporting research in citrus, agriculture and other industries. Superintendents and scientists around the country expected to push for this type of law. That may still happen.

But in the meantime, others are undeterred in their own innovative efforts to raise funds.

Dick Stunz of Alvamar Country Club in Lawrence, Kan., may have pioneered another way to skin this cat—using mailings to GHIN Handicap users to ask for donations for research. Stunz and his green industry colleagues in Kansas should be lauded. They and others must have unique ideas to pass on. We welcome the chance to be the clearing house for these ideas, tried or untried. Multiply a \$2 donation by the number of golfers applying for handicaps in America and the potential is truly enormous for the Kansas-type fund-raising alone.

The industry could take the lead from organizers of the Herman Sani Fund in Iowa, which provides scholarships to graduating high school seniors. For 30 years they have raised funds at the state tournaments. Sometimes it’s voluntary. Other times, a donation is simply added to tournament charges.

There must be myriad solutions to the money problem. One thing is certain: “A worker is worthy of his wages.” And scientists from the University of Massachusetts to the University of Arizona continue to solve problems affecting golf courses.

They should get the support they need. And golfers should be among the supporters.

—Source: *Golf Course News*

### Member-Generated Articles

Articles written by members are the key to the success of a publication such as *Hole Notes*. We listen to each other’s ideas and trust each other’s common sense and advice, so why not share it?

An experience of a superintendent at one golf course may be of use to a fellow superintendent at another course. *Hole Notes* needs you to put down those thoughts on paper and welcomes your suggestions for articles.

Please contact Tom Johnson, Editor, *Hole Notes*. Phone 715-246-4850 or FAX 715-246-7059.