

ON THE ROAD WITH THE USGA

By **BOB BRAME**, *USGA Agronomist*

The first few weeks of May resulted in wide-spread wet. Virtually every course visited in recent weeks (throughout Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio) has been very wet; too much rain, over too short a time frame. The last week to ten days of the month offered some minor relief for certain courses, while others got even wetter. Three straight days with morning frost throughout the lower North Central Region during the last half of May also has been a stumbling block for golf turf conditioning.

The weather combination has resulted in some root decline. The root loss has been most intense where the weather pattern has been combined with aggressive fertilization. Less than consistent growth has prompted a few to push feeding in an attempt to stimulate growth and wear recovery. Aggressive feeding in the spring is never a good idea, and even more so with the weather pattern experienced this past May.

Pink snow mold disease activity sightings continued throughout the month of May. Red thread also has been a common occurrence over the last two weeks. Some dollar spot disease has been observed the last few days of May as far north as the Cleveland area. There is no question that golf turf conditioning is a challenging task as Mother Nature is very good at throwing curve balls. Just when you begin looking for the curve ball, then comes the heat. Hopefully, there will be some drying before temperatures begin climbing.

As you would expect with the wet weather, mowing has been less than consistent. In fact, a few courses have switched to lighter-weight equipment on fairways and approaches to get through the wet weather, and the eventual ability to go back to their larger equipment. Despite the challenges with mowing and manicuring, there have been minimal complaints from golfers. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that wet weather makes it virtually impossible to mow a course like everyone would prefer.

The biggest concerns that exist as we move into early June is the loss of roots, and the fact that many courses have not been able to topdress and aerify as they would like. Foliar feeding at very light rates can aid in strengthening the turf in advance of summer heat. In fact, foliar feeding should be continued right on through the summer. While temperatures are a bit cooler a slightly higher rate can be utilized to safely offer some strengthening.

If it has been impossible to core aerate greens this spring, keep summer opening and venting tools handy for the season ahead. Cross/shatter tines, or water injection aeration have become the most commonly used tools for summer opening and venting. Anytime moisture is holding in the upper profile and Mother Nature turns up the thermostat, open and vent. As for making up for missed topdressing, not much can be done other than kicking in more consistency as soon as weather conditions allow. Some courses have been able to get back on schedule over the last seven to ten days by carefully working around the weather.

Remember, play the course the way you find it and the ball where it lies. Equally, to the extent applicable variables allow, maintain the surface and upper profile as dry as possible.

(Editor's Note: Bob Brame may be reached at bobbrame@usga.org or 859-356-3272.)

*New from
The Andersons...*



Contact for more
information:

Mike Redmond

Territory Manager
11607 Seepaniak Dr.
Little Falls, MN 56345
(320) 632-6108

FAX: (320) 632-6120

CELL: (612) 963-0752



Professional Turf Products Division
P.O. Box 219
Mantua, OH 43537