



University of Minnesota Research Update: 2004-2005



By DR. BRIAN HORGAN

Turfgrass Extension Specialist, University of Minnesota

I've come to realize that there is no "normal" year when you work in the turf industry. The past three winters are proof of that. Well, at the University, there doesn't seem to be any sense of normality from year to year either. The University just announced wide-spread changes, from colleges being closed or merged, to the creation of a new honors college and school of design. Our college, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, will merge with the College of Natural Resources if the Board of Regents approves President Bruinink's Strategic Positioning Plan. We aren't quite sure what this will mean for the turf program as within these two colleges, there are 20 individual departments and it has been suggested that that number will be reduced significantly. This planning process to make the University of Minnesota a top public research institution has been ongoing for the past year. Implementation of the strategies will start Jan. 1, 2006.

Strategic Positioning Plan

Prior to the Strategic Positioning Plan becoming public, a blow to the turf program occurred. We were told that all of our planning for a building at the TROE Center was null. This is very unfortunate as we made sure that all our "i's" were dotted and "t's" were crossed when proposing the TROE Center concept within the University. This included having the Board of Regents agree to the concept. Many of you took this personally as you have spent countless days in meetings discussing how to make the turf program the best it can be. I took this personally as I have spent the last four years selling this idea to many of you.

Standing back and considering the ramifications of not completing the TROE Center, I cannot help but think that your trust in the University is wavering at this point. I cannot blame you if you have these feelings. You have supported the turf program

both monetarily and through in-kind gifts of products and services. I have calculated that the turf industry in Minnesota has contributed in excess of \$750,000 to achieve what we have today – an excellent field research facility.

Many of the projects that were written about last year and published in Hole Notes are ongoing. These projects includes:

NTEP Trials

We have been very successful at obtaining all the cool-season NTEP trials including bentgrass greens and fairway, fine fescue, perennials, ryegrass and

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National Turfgrass Evaluation Program
Perennial Ryegrass Trial



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U of M Update—

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Kentucky bluegrass. Data from these trials can be viewed at www.turf.umn.edu.

Breeding Program: Dr. Watkins has been very active in starting his breeding program and has established tall fescue, perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass plots at the TROE Center, Rosemont, Becker and Roseau. He is also working with some alternative species that can be defined as Low Input Sustainable Turf.

Environmental Fate

The fertilizer runoff plots are operational and we are collecting data. In addition, we constructed and tested a rainfall simulator that will be used on the bentgrass pesticide runoff plots. This will be the first year of data collection on these plots. Lastly, a project to evaluate N fractions in the soil that may be used as a predictor for reduced N applications was started with scientists from The Ohio State University.

Pest Management

With the addition of Andrew Hollman

who is managing our contract work at the University of Minnesota, we will have a more active pesticide and fertilizer evaluation program. This year, we are evaluating preemergence herbicides, N fertilizer sources, Fe sources and plant growth regulators for *Poa annua* seedhead suppression.

Water Conservation

Jon Sass, a graduate student in the turf program, is finishing his Masters Degree this summer. His research has helped to explain how ET data and soil moisture sensors can be used to maintain healthy turf while reducing water inputs. His work was recently published in *Turfgrass Trends* and will be prepared for journal publication.

Evaluating alternative species for golf course fairways and putting greens - Sam Bauer, a new graduate student in the turf program and past recipient of the MGCSA scholarship, will be evaluating the use of colonial bentgrasses and velvet bentgrasses for golf course putting greens and fairways. His work will define management schemes for these species and set recom-



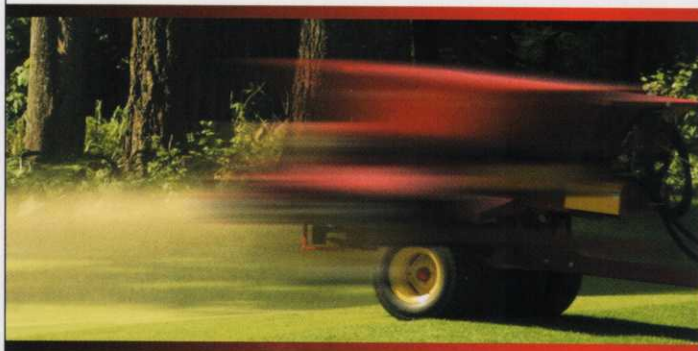
Low Input Sustainable Turf Project

mendations for Minnesota and the upper mid-west.

The resources provided by the MGCSA are being managed for maximum benefit to turfgrass managers in Minnesota. All of this research and much more will be on display at our annual field day, July 28, 2005. Watch for a mailing from the Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation in late June for registration information.

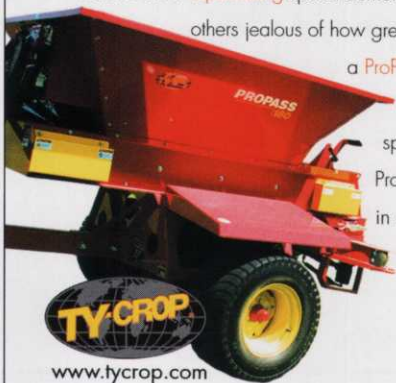
I hope that during the next couple years of transition at the University of Minnesota the turfgrass industry can remain engaged and know that your support is greatly appreciated.

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