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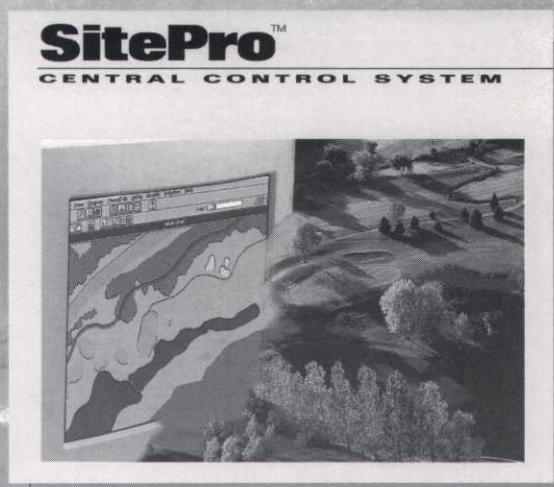


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The Truth And Consequences Of Fast Greens

...And Some Thoughts About Edward Stimpson's Stimpmeter

Reprinted with permission from GCSAA Online

Years ago, there was a man named Edward Stimpson who loved golf and craved to create more fairness in the game. To further his passion, he invented a device intended to ensure that all the greens on a course were relatively equal speed. The idea was to give superintendents (then, greenkeepers) a way to compare the speed of the 4th green with the 13th and take steps to equalize them. This was, no doubt, a sound and noble idea.

But sometimes bad things happen to good ideas.

Today, his simple tool, the Stimpmeter, is often misused to compare the speed of greens from course to course and, unfortunately, to establish a benchmark of putting difficulty. Golfers are sometimes heard to say, "Hey, Hickory Hills was 'stimping' 13 last week." This essentially means that the greens were as fast as the linoleum on most kitchen floors.

Golfers must change their attitudes about the competitive aspect of green speeds. They should, in the footsteps of Mr. Stimpson, strive for fairness, not fastness.

From a purely competitive standpoint, that's OK. However, this quest for fast greens has serious consequences in terms of cost, environmental quality and the long-term health of the green. In short, speed can kill. Here's why:

A healthy, vigorous green can be maintained at a very short cutting height (as low as 1/8-inch) for short periods of time without serious consequences if it's been prepared properly and weather conditions are acceptable. Courses hosting tournaments often take months (and spend significant extra money) to bring greens up to an ultrafast speed for PGA Tour players. For example, the greens at Augusta National or Oakmont may "stimp" up to 14 when properly prepared and dry.

However, fast greens are extremely fragile. If you compared them with human beings, it would be fair to say that their immune systems can be very weak. They become susceptible to diseases and pests, and therefore may require more chemical treatments. Weather can also quickly destroy the health of an ultrafast green. High temperatures and lack of moisture in the air are deadly to greens that are maintained at very short cutting heights for any length of time.

The risks of maintaining fast greens — even with the best professional management by superintendents — were apparent in the summer of 1995 when golf courses across the eastern United States lost greens during an extended period

of drought and high temperatures. Many of the world's best-known courses suffered serious damage and were essentially unplayable for the last half of the year. Many of these had to be reseeded or completely rebuilt at a cost that was high in terms of budget, playability and reputation.

The solution to the dilemma of fast greens is twofold. First, the golf industry is sponsoring and promoting research and development of new grasses that are more tolerant of fast speeds under adverse conditions. Organizations such as the USGA and GCSAA are investing millions of dollars in this effort.

On the other side, golfers should understand and accept the limitations of these living systems we call greens. Golfers should also heed the advice of superintendents who manage, nurture and protect the ecosystems. And finally, many golfers must change their attitudes about the competitive aspect of green speeds. They should, in the footsteps of Mr. Stimpson, strive for fairness, not fastness.

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**MGCSA
AFFILIATE NEWS**

**Kerry Glader Joins
Plaisted Companies**

Plaisted Companies, Inc. is pleased to announce the addition of Kerry Glader to its sales management team. "Continued expansion of product lines as well as aggressive growth within golf course construction markets has made this addition necessary," said Tood Plaisted, Plaisted Companies, Inc. "Kerry's golf course superintendent and sales experience allows us to continue providing high quality service to our customers within the golf course industry."

Kerry started with Plaisted Companies on March 22, 1999. He will be working along with Steve Young servicing the golf course and sports field industry in the five-state area. He can be reached at (612) 441-1100.



MGCSA Superintendents hold a mini bull session in Orlando.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

NEW MEMBERS: MARCH 2, 1999

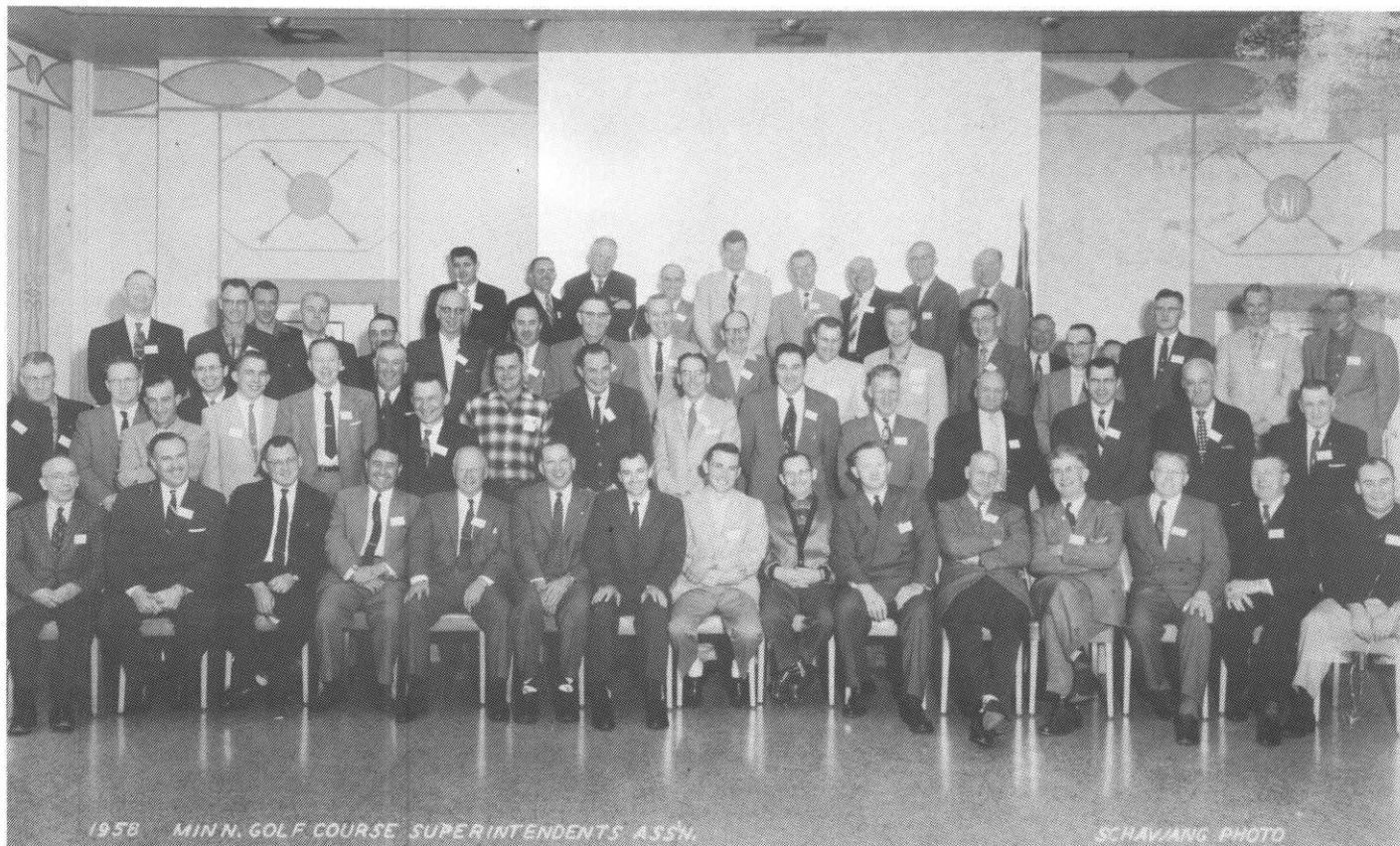
- | | Class |
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| Kenneth A. Madsen
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| Scott Greenfield
Spooner Golf Club B — GCSAA
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| Hugh Lynch
Wynstone Golf Club B — GCSAA
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W: (651) 773-8077 | |
| Lorianna Bluedorn
Woodhill Country Club GCSAA — C
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W: (612) 473-5811 | |
| Robert L. Tuccitto
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| Joe Berggren
The Wilds Golf Club Student
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| Michael Kutz
Anoka-Hennepin Technical College Student
P.O. Box 471, Winsted, MN 55395 • W: (612) 576-4923 | |
| Jason L. Larson
Anoka-Hennepin Technical College Student
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RECLASSIFICATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Daniel Hill
Birnamwood Golf Course C to B | |
| Joseph R. Dinnebier
Izaty's Golf & Yacht Club C to B | |

— Tom Meier
MGCSA Membership Chairman

Vintage Photo of 'Greenskeepers' At 1958 MGCSA Conference At the Curtis Hotel in Minneapolis



First Row: Dr. Miki Haydek, University of Minnesota Entomologist; Jim Madden, Maddens Inc.; Dr. Jack Harper, Penn State Extension Service; Dr. Jim Watson, Toro Manufacturing; Dr. O.J. Noer, Milwaukee Sewage; Dr. Richard Stadtherer, University of Minnesota Horticulture; Jack Kolb, Minikahda Club; Bob Feser, Medina Country Club; Ray Hall, Greenhaven Golf; Herman Seneseth, Somerset Country Club; Carl Anderson, Woodhill Country Club; Emil Picha, Oak Ridge Country Club; Art Thorud, Hiawatha Golf Course; Idon Haugen, Town and Country Club, and? **Second Row:**? Dr. Leon Snyder, University of Minnesota Horticulture; Francis Reiter, Minnehaha Country Club, Sioux Falls, S.D.;? David Feser, Orono Golf Club; Donald Jackson, Dawson Country Club; Mervin Klatte, Elm Creek Golf Course; Leo Feser, Medina Country Club (now Baker Park);? Allen Ista, Northfield Golf Club; Irv Fuller Sr., Mankato Golf Club;? Art Yanke, Phelan Golf Club;? Gust Hilmer, Fairmont Golf, and Frank Anderson, Golden Valley Country Club. **Third Row:** Lyle Cran, Stillwater Golf Club; Archie Beel, Mesaba Country Club, Hibbing;? Roy Nelson, Ravisloe Country Club, Chicago;? Leonard Bloomquist, Brookview Country Club; Gordon Brinkworth, Olympia Fields Country Club, Chicago; Carl Zahn, Marshall Golf Course; Clifford Vohs, St. Cloud Country Club; John Fuller, Midland Hills Country Club; Richard Hoff, Nemadji Golf, Superior, Wis.; Bill Johnson, Edina Country Club;??? Dick Rishavy, Woodhill Country Club; Todd Johnston, Hiawatha Golf Course, and Charlie Suter, Highland Golf. **Back Row:** Jim Holmes, "Nematode Holmes," USGA;? Alden "Rusty" Smith, Minnetonka Country Club; Kurt Erdmann, Rochester Country Club; Donald Brown, Rochester Park Department; Maynard Erickson, Theodore Wirth Golf Course; Mike Weinhandl, Como Golf Course; Jim Graham, Minnesota Milorganite Co., and Cliff Anderson, Dakota Turf Supply Company, Sioux Falls, S.D.

(Ed. Note: This vintage MGCSA photo was submitted by Life Member Ray Hall and printed in the November 1998 issue of Hole Notes. We did not have names for the faces in that issue, but because of the diligent effort from Jack Kolb, Gordon Miller and Al Gerdin, we now have names for most of them. "This 1958 shot was taken at the old Curtis Hotel in Minneapolis where the MGCSA

used to hold its fall and winter conference. We were called greenskeepers then," said Ray.

1958 was the same year Ray, on a bet, won \$50 for growing grass on a tennis ball in 36 hours. "I was then called the grassman by the editor of the Anoka Herald paper," he said.)

Why You Should Start Saving For Your Retirement Now!

When it comes to saving for your retirement, the best time to begin is now.

Consider the cases of Jim, Chris and Bill, three superintendents who have different approaches to retirement savings.

- Jim is 25 and in the early stages of his career. Though retirement is years away, and his income is lean, he manages to set aside \$200 per month.

- Chris' career is in full swing and her income is established. At age 35, she is looking ahead to the needs of her growing family and decides it's time to start saving for her retirement. She also puts aside \$200 per month.

- Bill is the head superintendent at his club. At age 45,

he's spent the past two decades working hard and supporting his family. Now that his youngest child is through college, he's ready to save for his own retirement. He decides \$200 per month will be enough.

While all of these superintendents have made the decision to save for retirement, Jim stands to fare the best. Given that each is investing in a tax-deferred vehicle that grows 9 percent annually, Jim's savings will soar to \$849,930 by the time he retires. Chris who began her savings 10 years later than Jim, will have \$342,876 at retirement. Bill will have only \$128,692 to show for his efforts.

How Much To Save

How much is enough? Is there a magic number that you should use as your goal? Financial experts recommend you save at least 10 percent of your annual salary toward retirement. However, the amount you need to save depends on the age you plan to retire and what your expected lifestyle will be.

Studies conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate that most people need 80 percent of their pre-retirement income to maintain their standard of living when they are retired. If that is an unattainable level, retirees will need to scale back on their lifestyles or continue working in some capacity. (To help you determine how much you need to save for your retirement, GCSAA superintendents and assistant superintendents can use the retirement calculator found on the Golf Retirement Plus Web site at www.retplus.com.)

Common Barriers to Savings

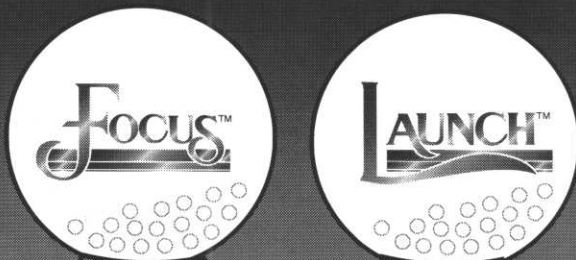
If saving for retirement is such a good idea, why do so few do a good job at it? There are several obstacles that often inhibit people from saving for the future.

- "Retirement is a long way away." It's ironic that when saving money could benefit you the most, you're farthest away from retirement. Taking the realistic, long-term view that retirement will indeed arrive can spur savings activity.

- "I'll probably inherit something from my parents." Seniors are liv-

(Continued on Page 36)

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Let's Be Realistic!

The Relationship Between Golfers' Expectations And Real World Golf Course Management

By **BRIAN MALOY**
USGA Green Section

The first round of the U.S. Open is about to begin. In Hometown, USA, a group of golfers is crowded around the clubhouse television set in anticipation. As the camera pans slowly, giving the television audience a glimpse of the course, one golfer says to another, "Why doesn't our course look like that?" Sound familiar?

In the case of the U.S. Open played at Congressional Country Club in 1997, 50 employees and 70 volunteer golf course superintendents from the Mid-Atlantic area worked from sunup to sundown manicuring the course. This extraordinary labor force accomplished what no other had even thought of attempting — they used walk-behind put-

ting green mowers to cut the fairways during the entire championship. While spectacular from an aesthetic viewpoint, this effort undeniably created unrealistic expectations in the minds of many golfers.

Duplicating course preparation feats seen on television has long been a sore topic of discussion between superintendents and golfers. Following major championships, such as the U.S. Open and The Masters, superintendents have to explain to golfers that the courses seen on television prepare months, if not years, in advance to host a four-day event for professional players. Furthermore, they have to

(Continued on Page 28)

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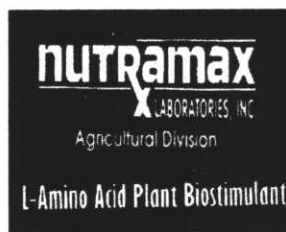
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Let's Be Realistic—

(Continued from Page 27)

explain that it is impossible to produce championship conditions on a daily basis because of environmental and budgetary restrictions.

Environmental quality has become a serious public concern and will likely be a major campaign issue during the next presidential election. The threat of global warming, the gradual disappearance of the South American rainforests, toxic waste disposal and endangered species protection are all topics discussed at the dinner table. The public's interest in environmental issues and, specifically, pesticide usage, will affect superintendents and their ability to produce perfect turf conditions.

Unless golf course superintendents adopt a proactive approach and voluntarily reduce the frequency and amount of both pesticide and fertilizer applications, new governmental regulations probably will force them to do so. In fact, a number of chemicals have already been banned for use on golf courses because of public concern. The most notable example is the insecticide Diazinon, which no longer can be applied to golf courses but is, ironically, still sold to homeowners for use on lawns and ornamental gardens. Mandatory restrictions may well affect the condition of golf courses by limiting the superintendent's ability to control certain weeds, insects and disease pathogens.

The best way for superintendents to respond to growing environmental concerns is to develop and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. The focus of an IPM program is to reduce pesticide and fertilizer usage by establishing maintenance practices that produce healthy turf, which is more resistant to weed, insect and disease incidence.

Adopting certain IPM programs can conflict with golfers' expectations, as they may involve raising the cutting height on greens during the summer months and/or allowing the appearance of the course to wane slightly with minor weed and insect invasions and disease infections. To many golfers, slower greens and insignificant pest outbreaks are perceived as being unacceptable. Some even go so far as to believe that superintendents who do not make multiple pesticide and fertilizer applications are simply unwilling to do their job.

To protect the environment for all citizens, golfers need to learn and accept that some degree of weed, insect and disease incidence is acceptable. They must realize that the playing condition of the course will vary from time to time based on the prevailing weather, and that championship conditions are temporary.

Matching golfers' expectations with the bottom line of the maintenance budget is another area where superintendents have difficulty communicating with golfers. Most expect their course to be in great condition but rarely understand how much must be spent to achieve such a goal. According to the accounting firm of Pannell, Kerr and Forster (PKF), many of America's most prestigious 18-hole courses spend more than \$1 million annually on routine

maintenance (Pannell, Kerr, Forster. 1997. *Clubs in Town & Country*). This is a staggering figure considering the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) reports that the average annual maintenance budget, including payroll, is only \$459,500 (GCSAA. 1998. *1998 Compensation and Benefits Report*). Being that the average budget is only half of what it actually takes to maintain a golf course in superior condition, it should come as no surprise that superintendents are often unfairly criticized for not keeping pace with golfers' expectations.

The largest expense in a golf course maintenance budget is payroll. Employee salaries normally account for one-half to two-thirds of a maintenance budget. A common trap set by golfers who scrutinize maintenance budgets is to compare their own course's expenses with the average payroll expense reported by GCSAA. Average payroll figures are very misleading, however, since the length of the playing season and the hourly rate for employees varies considerably across the country.

In addition to the length of the playing season and hourly wages, labor costs also vary according to factors such as acreage, course design, staff efficiency and equipment inventory. Acreage variations from one course to the next can be as much as double. On the flip side, courses with average total acreage can have exceptionally large greens, tees

(Continued on Page 29)

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Let's Be Realistic—

(Continued from Page 28)

and/or fairways that require larger staffs to maintain.

The architectural theme of a course is a factor in budget determination, as certain features, such as bunker design and layout, can add to the length of time it takes to complete routine maintenance tasks. For example, courses with more than 50 bunkers and/or with layouts stretched through a housing development take more man-hours to maintain than those with fewer bunkers laid out on a square plot of land. Not only does it take longer to get from one hole to the next, but there is simply more work that needs to be done.

The efficiency with which tasks are completed on a golf course is another factor that determines how much labor is required for proper maintenance. Staff efficiency is seldom discussed until it is necessary to justify additional employees to keep pace with golfers' expectations. Staff efficiency is most commonly affected by heavy play that forces employees to stand idle while golfers play through.

To improve staff efficiency, many courses choose to remain closed one day per week. This gives the staff a chance to complete important practices, such as applying topdressing and treating the turf with plant protectants, that cannot be completed ahead of early morning golfers. When possible, courses also start golfers off of one tee, as opposed to two, to give employees a chance to perform their morning duties without interruptions.

To provide the playing conditions expected by golfers, superintendents must have a complete equipment inventory. Moreover, the inventory must be in good mechanical condition and technologically up to date. As a point of reference, most maintenance facilities house more than \$600,000 worth of equipment to properly care for the course. Assuming that the average life expectancy of each inventory item is 8.5 years, an annual replacement expense of more than \$70,000 is required to keep the equipment in sound mechanical condition.

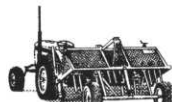
Many courses find it difficult to replace equipment based on life expectancy and, in fact, the GCSAA reports that the average annual amount spent on replacement equipment is only \$50,000 for 18-hole facilities. Consequently, most golf courses are maintained with equipment that is mechanically unreliable or technologically obsolete. When the equipment inventory is not turned over based on life expectancy, meeting golfers' expectations becomes impossible.

In conclusion, superintendents are faced with bridging the gap between golfers' expectations and what can actually be accomplished given their particular circumstances. This task is made difficult by environmental pressures that demand good environmental stewardship and budgetary shortfalls that limit available manpower and equipment. On the other hand, if golfers just played golf on the weekends instead of sitting in front of the television set viewing immaculately groomed courses, everything would probably look a whole lot better.

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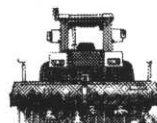
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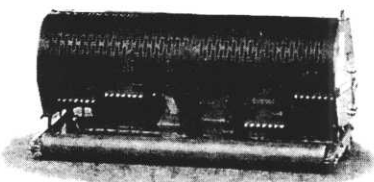


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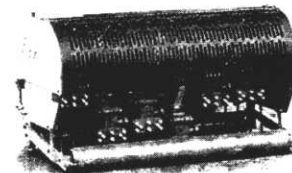
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Waste Pesticide Collections in 1999

By **JOE SPITZMUELLER**
Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The MDA-sponsored waste pesticide collections will occur in southern Minnesota during 1999. See the schedule at the right for times and locations. Collections are good opportunities for farms, businesses and other pesticide users to get rid of unwanted or unusable herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides and other pesticides at no cost. All types of pesticides are collected for proper disposal.

A total of 300,000 pounds was collected in 1998, which is more than in any other year since the program began. Yearly collection amounts have steadily increased and collection totals now exceed 1.5 million pounds. Collections began in 1990.

MDA collection strategies include both one-day drop-off events and year around drop-off sites conducted jointly with county sponsored collection programs. Despite the overall increases in the amount of pesticides collected, records show that the yearly total of old pesticides collected is going down. If you have questions about the program or want more information look on our web page at:

www.mda.state.mn.us

under divisions and programs; or contact Joe Spitzmueller at: state.mn.us or by phone at 1-800-657-3986 (outstate) or 651-297-5296 (metro).



COUNTY - CITY	SITE	DATE
Rock - Luverne	SWMN Farmers Coop	Tuesday, 3/23
Murray - Chandler	Chandler Cooperative	Wednesday, 3/24
Nobles - Adrian	County Highway Garage	Thursday, 3/25
Pipestone - Pipestone	Pipestone Ag Center	Friday, 3/26
Lyon - Marshall	HHW Facility	Tuesday, 3/30
Lincoln - Ivanhoe	County Highway Garage	Wednesday, 3/31
Renville - Bird Island	County Highway Garage	Tuesday, 4/6
Kandiyohi - Willmar	County Highway Garage	Wednesday, 4/7
McLeod - Hutchinson	County HHW Facility	Thursday, 4/8
Meeker - Litchfield	Cargill Fertilizer Plant	Friday, 4/9
Nicollet - St. Peter	County Highway Garage	Tuesday, 6/22
Waseca - Waseca	County Landfill	Wednesday, 6/23
LeSueur - LeCenter	County Highway Garage	Thursday, 6/24
Faribault - Blue Earth	County Highway Garage	Friday, 6/25
Sibley - Winthrop	Crop Production Services	Tuesday, 6/29
Blue Earth - Mapleton	Terra Fertilizer Plant	Wednesday, 6/30
Goodhue - Zumbrota	County Fairgrounds 4H Building	Monday, 7/19
Wabasha - Plainview	High Plains Coop	Tuesday, 7/20
Olmsted - Rochester	HHW Facility	Wednesday, 7/21
Dodge - Dodge Center	County Highway Garage	Thursday, 7/22
Winona - Wilson	MnDOT Garage	Tuesday, 7/27
Houston - Caledonia	County Fairgrounds	Wednesday, 7/28
Fillmore - Preston	MnDOT Garage	Thursday, 7/29
Steele - Owatonna	Central Coop Soil Service	Tuesday, 9/7
Mower - Elkton	Harvest States Coop	Wednesday, 9/8
Freeborn - Albert Lea	County Fairgrounds	Thursday, 9/9
Rice - Dundas	County Recycling Center	Friday, 9/10
Redwood - Wabasso	Meadowland Coop	Monday, 9/13
Brown - Springfield	Harvestland Coop	Tuesday, 9/14
Watowan - St. James	County Highway Garage	Wednesday, 9/15
* Jackson - Jackson	Environmental & Park Building	Thursday, 9/16
Cottonwood - Windom	Cenex Coop	Thursday, 9/16
Martin - Fairmont	County Highway Garage	Friday, 9/17
Hennepin - Bloomington	Problem Waste Drop-Off Center	Monday, 9/20
Dakota - Hampton	Cenex Co-op	Tuesday, 9/21
Washington - Lake Elmo	County Fair Grounds	Wednesday, 9/22
Ramsey - St. Paul	Mn DOT Garage	Thursday, 9/23
Carver-Scott - Belle Plaine	Mn Valley Ag Co-op	Friday, 9/24
Anoka - Blaine	(to be announced)	Tuesday, 9/28

* Satellite Site

Metro: 651-297-4870

Greater Minnesota: 1-800-657-3986

**All collection hours are
 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**