

# THE TURF POLL



This is the era of the poll. Consequently the Sports Turf Executive decided to conduct a poll of the membership with the objective of tabulating the extent of the use of the various management practices by Association members on their sports fields. The questionnaire was included with the membership invoices mailed in April of 1995. Forty-nine percent of the membership who were in administrative or supervisory positions with access to the necessary data for municipal or educational facilities responded - a truly remarkable response level.

All types of sports turf use were included in the management responsibilities of the respondents - stadium, golf courses, general sports fields and even cemeteries. The employer ranged from large municipal governments to small town operations; from large county school boards to small private schools; from Ontario locations to some in Western Canada.

The average total acreage of the 25 facilities reporting was 390 acres, with a range of 4 acres to 2000 acres (Table 1). On average 39% of the acreage was in sports turf, although the range of acreage devoted to sports turf varied from 100% to a low of 7%. The high percentages allocated to sports turf were associated with the small private schools whereas the lower values were related to large municipal parks departments.

The number of employees in an organization ranged from 1 to 112, with an average of 20. These employees cared for an average of 28.5 acres per person. The range of acres per employee was 4 to 198.3, the higher value being associated with a municipal parks department which opted to report only permanent supervisory personnel.

All reporting managers used Kentucky bluegrass on their fields. Fifty-four percent indicated they used ryegrass, while only 32% reported using fescues on their sports fields. Twenty of the 25 respondents indicated they had an overseeding program, probably the reason for the greater choice of ryegrass over fescues in the type of seed use.

Only three respondents indicated they did not use irrigation. Some respondents, particularly those in Western Canada, reported 100% of their acreage was irrigated. An average of 42% of the sports field acreage was irrigated.

Fertilizer was applied an average of 2.6 times per year. Some small municipal parks authorities used only one application per year whereas park authorities with golf courses reported up to

eight applications each year, reflecting the intensive management of golf greens. Sixteen of the 25 managers used a dormant fall fertilizer application.

Only one manager indicated he did not use an aeration or topdressing program. Unfortunately the survey did not ask a question which would separate the two management practices.

Three of the 24 managers indicated they did not have a herbicide program in use. Likewise they did not indicate they had an active IPM program as an alternative to a herbicide program. Otherwise the managers indicated they had some form of active IPM program.

Both rotary and reel type mower were used by the majority of the managers. Five managers indicated they used rotary mowers only, while six indicated they used only reel mowers.

Sand based root zones were being used by only five of the organizations with a total of 14 such fields reported to be in use.

Only six of 22 respondents indicated they were able to rotate their fields. While 15 of them indicated they were able to charge a user fee for the use of the sports fields only three suggested those fees were used for the maintenance of the fields.

The major concerns expressed by the 25 responding managers was overuse of existing fields combined with lack of funding. Two respondents cited lack of professional knowledge on the part of staff or the need for continuing knowledge upgrade as a concern. It is interesting to note that only one individual raised a technical problem, that of compaction, as a area of concern.

**Table 1:** Some statistics generated by the survey

	Range	Average
No. of Employees	1 - 112	20
Total Acreage	4 - 2000	390
Acres per Employee	3.3 - 198.3	28.5
Acreage of Sports Fields	3 - 800	146
% Acreage in Sports Fields	7 - 100	43
% Acreage Irrigated	0 - 100	42
Fertilizer Applications	1 - 8	2.6

Harry Shapko - Central Ont.  
 Bill Carnochan - West Ont.  
 Dave Telfer - East Ont.  
 Chuck Demers - North Ont.



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