



Sports Turf Industry Fact Sheet

The Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Missouri released some interesting statistics regarding the U.S. Sports Turf Industry based on a survey that was conducted within the Sports Turf Managers Association.

Overview

- The annual purchases of sports turf products and services is over \$1.29 billion on over 2.8 million acres. That's approximately \$457 per acre. These figures do not include salaries.
- Parks and recreation makes up \$480 million in annual purchases while schools are at \$685 million, college/universities \$71 million, and professional facilities spend approximately \$52 million.
- Professional sports facilities average approximately 15 acres spending \$4,333 per acre, colleges/universities spend \$1,075 per acre on an average of 30 acres, schools spend \$658 per acre on an average of 65 acres, and parks spend an average of \$284 per acre over 130 acres.
- Average annual spending on equipment and supplies at colleges/universities is \$32,300, while parks spend \$38,850. Schools spend \$42,750 and professional facilities spend \$65,000.
- It is estimated that there are approximately 16,000 schools, 2,200 colleges/universities, 13,000 parks, and 800 professional facilities.

U.S. Sports Turf Managers

- The average sports turf manager has worked in the industry for 13 years.
- Typical manager has been in his/her current position 7.5 years, while 38% had more than 10 years tenure in their position.
- Twenty percent of managers have a single field to maintain.
- Forty-two percent of managers maintain 5 – 10 fields.
- Two in three sports turf managers have a four-year college degree or an advanced degree.
- The average crew has 16 full-time and five part-time.
- Seasonal staff average is approximately nine.

Root Zones

- Cool-season bluegrass fields: 81% native soil, 19% sand based.
- Warm-season bermudagrass fields: 82% native soil, 18% sand based.
- Sports turf managers expressed a 3 to 1 preference for sand-based fields. Major reasons: (1) Greater resistance to compaction and (2) Better playability under wet conditions.

- Greater soil strength was cited as the most important advantage of native soil fields.
- Loss of nutrients to leaching was the major problem encountered with sand-based fields.

Mowing

- Frequent mowing is essential for healthy, dense turf because it reduces scalping, disease incidence, the need for sweeping and it improves field appearance.
- Of those surveyed, all mow more than once a week - 2 times (21%), 3 times (30%), 4 times (9%), and daily (40%).

Soil Testing

- Annually (42%), 2 times annually (22%), 6 times annually (10%), 12 times annually (2%), bi-annually (22%), tri-annually (2%).
- More frequent soil testing was reported by managers who have sand-based fields.
- The use of tissue testing is a standard practice by 44% of survey respondents.

Fertilizers

- All managers use more than one type of nitrogen fertilizer (soluble, slow-release, specialty, and natural organics).
- Sulfur-coated urea (SCU) was the most widely used slow release source due to acceptable performance and lower cost per unit.

Irrigation

- Eighty percent of sports fields have pop-up sprinklers, 11% have water cannons, 7% have quick coupler, and 2% have travel or tow impact sprinklers.

Interested in seeing the entire survey? Go to the following link:
<http://turf.missouri.edu/stat/reports/pdf/industry.pdf>

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