

buses and cars to the Green Horizons Group of Farms Ltd., Compact Sod. Ron Schiedel, President, accompanied us and answered questions. At the farm, Ron explained the company business. They grow sod on 3,000 acres between Hamilton and Cambridge. The Green Horizons Group own 500 acres and the rest is leased under various agreements ranging from one to five or more years.

Green Horizons is a family business with a winter staff of 15-20 and approximately 50 seasonal employees. While their market is mostly to homeowners, they also grow corn and soybeans, sell grass seed, and blend their own fertilizers. Some of their sod is exported to New York and Michigan.

The basic operation employed by Green Horizons after a crop has been taken off is to spray with Roundup, plough, disc, rough and fine pick stones, and finally seed. They allow 24 months from seed to harvest and sell 1,000 acres a year which translates into 1 million rolls.

Mowing also is critical. Grass is cut three times a week by 10 staff members



who cut 100 acres per day. Grass is kept at a height of 2-1/2" except in summer when the cutting height is raised to 3". (Bentgrass is mowed at 3/8".) Last year they drilled a well down 450' in order to counteract previous droughts and used large travelling sprinklers which can water an acre at a time.

The company has 120 mowing reels,

15 large trucks, 5-6 smaller trucks for hauling sod, and all the allied farm equipment necessary. In winter, all equipment is refurbished. Bearings are replaced, reels sharpened, and MTC certification is performed on the trucks. The sod harvesters are overhauled.

To end, Ron shared one of the largest jobs he was involved with—removing top-

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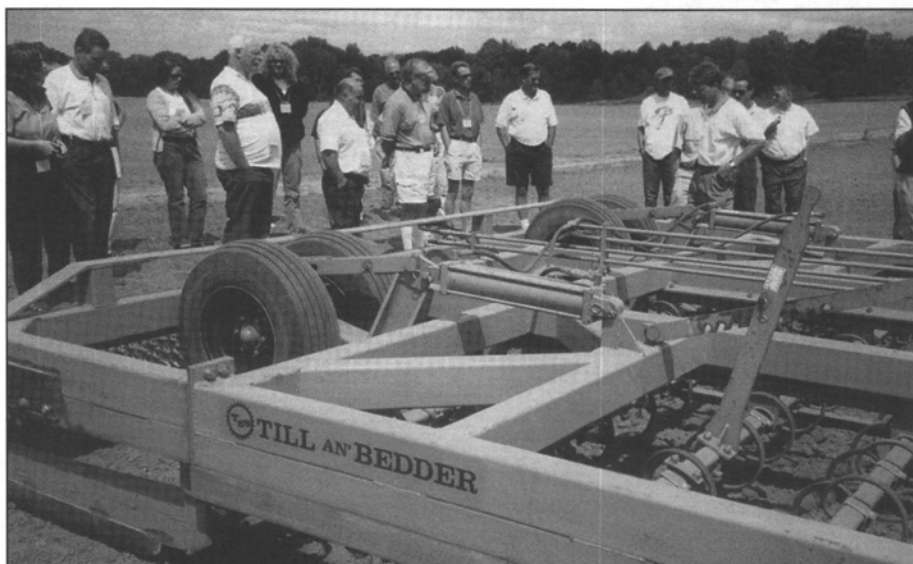


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The Schmeiser tiller and bedder used at Compact sod farms to cultivate and firm the land area prior to seeding.

soil that was in the way of a subdivision for the City of Cambridge. They used 300 triaxle trucks for two months to haul 5,000 metres of soil onto a 70 acre area and spread it one foot deep. He wanted to mix the clay soil with an existing sandy loam. Quite a project!

### **Sponsor and Exhibitor Demonstrations**

After touring several farms to see various aspects of the sod operation, we listened to and viewed demonstrations by George Bannerman, Vanden Bussche Irrigation, Turf Care Products Canada, Dol Turf Restoration Ltd., and G.C. Duke Equipment. George Bannerman demonstrated a new piece of equipment called a Uni-drill, a slicer-aerator which looks very promising. Andrew Gaydon and his staff had an excellent working irrigation demonstration so delegates could see a complete system. He showed what can be expected from different nozzle sizes and the ease in which they can be interchanged depending on your requirements and water pressure. He also explained pop-ups and how they retract so they are safe on sports fields. He had a pressure gauge on the system and a small controller. It was an excellent hands-on display.

Ed Robertson of Turf Care gave us a run down on three different sized Toro mowing units, as well as introduced himself as one of their newer staff members. Gord Dol had a sample on the back of his truck of his newly acquired "Sportgrass"

(article in June 1999 STM). He has about 60,000 yards of it in stock and mentioned it is excellent for soccer goal mouths and bare centre field areas. Maintenance is the same as for most sports fields. Paul Turner demonstrated a weedkiller unit which uses boiling water. It is manufactured in New Zealand. He sprayed and indicated that the area would be dead in 24 hours. Finally he showed the two latest mowers on the market from Jacobsen with many safety attributes and helpful diagnostic features to aid the mechanic. The day ended with transportation back to the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

### **Field Day Evaluation**

Overall impression from all evaluations was positive. Topics participants would like to see addressed at future field days include: naturalization, problems and concerns of sports field maintenance at the municipal level, and more information on various seed plants. A number of participants suggested a tour of the University of Guelph campus including gardens, sports fields, and the arboretum. ♦



Mark your calendar now for OTS 2000, January 4-6 at the Regal Constellation Hotel, Toronto. Early bird registration details are on the following page.

## Thank-You!

### **Sponsors**

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- Plant Products Co. Ltd.
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### **Speaker Sponsorship**

Ken Mrock, head groundskeeper for the Chicago Bears, was presented by PROFILE Products, LLC, Manufacturers of Turface, and PROFILE Soil Amendments & Plant Products Co. Ltd., Distributors.

*The Sports Turf Association extends a sincere thank-you to all sponsors and exhibitors who assist in our mission of providing better, safer sports turf.*



# Rain a Pain for Grass Guru

ENGLISH WEATHER TOUGH ON WIMBLEDON KEEPER

**L**ondon - Eddie Seaward twists his cheery face into a grimace when a racket is stabbed into Wimbledon's soft turf. And certain players always make the Englishman cringe. "Some are more heavy-footed than others. You've got people who drag their toes when they're serving, dragging little bits of turf from behind the baseline onto the court so it looks untidy."

But what really gets the keeper of the most famous grass in the world is, well, the English weather. "The biggest problem is still the rain," said Seaward, in his 10th year as the head groundsman at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. "It's that wonderful thing we have a lot of in England. Rain is the bugbear all the way through the tournament. And the last few have been pretty bad."

Wimbledon is more than its famous Centre Court. It's a complex of 34 tennis lawns—20 for competition and 14 for practice. That's 3-1/4 hectares to cut, seed, and roll—and keep puddle free for two weeks. Seaward works out of a series of sheds and a machinery storehouse beside "Please Keep Off The Grass" signs nuz-

zled alongside Court 11. It's high tech versus the unpredictable English summer.

Lasers level the courts and a machine thumps away testing wear. The soil is scientifically uniform, seed research is ongoing, and the grass is mowed daily to an 8 mm cut. Wimbledon is the theatre and Seaward is the stage manager, working alongside the director—referee Alan Mills. He sports a blazer, gray flannel trousers, and a club tie, but he looks "more at home in waterproofs." He's tense on opening day, exhausted when it's finished, and ever mindful of the critics.

"I'm always glad when the first day is over," said Seaward, who directs a ground staff of 150 during the tournament. "At the end you feel dead. You're absolutely shattered. But while there's a lot of stress, there's also a lot of buzz about the place."

Former top-ranked woman Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, winner of four tennis Grand Slams but never on grass at Wimbledon, offered a famous quote a decade ago that's been fodder ever since for losing players departing the slick, quick lawns. "Grass is for cows," she said.

Players a few years ago openly criti-

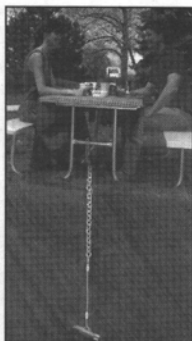
cized Centre Court, which was saturated by rain and smothered by a seemingly never disappearing cover. "You don't like to hear it, but you just get on with the job." Stiff upper lip? "I guess you could say that," Seaward said. Translucent rain covers were introduced a year ago, allowing the grass to be covered for three days with 97% of light still seeping through. Fans were sent to Centre Court and Court 1 to boost air circulation.

The weather may be English, but much of the grass comes from Dutch seed. Wimbledon changed its mix of grasses five years ago, going to 70% rye and 30% fescue and eliminating bent grasses. And the strains are always changing. Another 115 new grasses are being tested, sown in 1 m squares at the Turf Research Institute in northern England.

We want it looking nice and green, but we don't want a lush green grass," Seaward explained. "That would mean too much nitrogen. If we have it too lush, to an amateur gardener it looks very good, but to a professional tennis player it would be too slippery." ♦

—Associated Press, *The Record*, June 18, 1999

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When registering for the OTS, be sure to indicate you are a member of the Sports Turf Association, a sponsoring association of the symposium. On your registration form please  Sports Turf Association to ensure your membership credit is directed back to us!

**Save more money** on the registration fees of others from your facility/organization who are not members of the STA. Non-members registered **at the same time** as a member qualify for the same lower association rates. Send the registration in the same envelope, fax it at the same time, or make just one phone call to register.



## Industry News

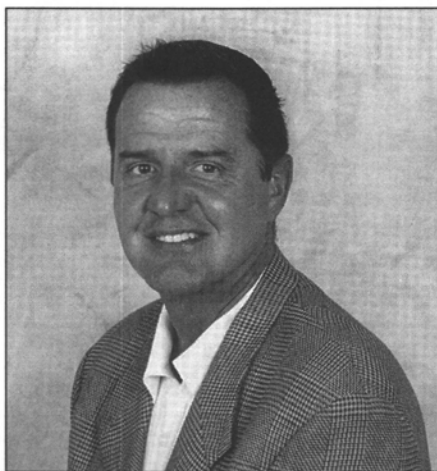
### ABT Canada Announces New Appointment

**A**griBio Tech, Inc. (ABT) wishes to announce the appointment of Ron Kowalski as General Manager of the combined forage and turf seed business of Rothwell Seeds International and Oseco Inc., which has integrated as a single entity, "ABT Canada."

Currently, Rothwell Seeds Int. and Oseco Inc. service the retail sector: sod growers, landscapers, city and municipal tenders, hydroseeders, golf courses, feed and seed distributors, farm centers, and farm dealers. The two companies distribute exclusively many of the top performing turf and forage varieties available on the market such as: L-93 Bentgrass, 1757 Kentucky Bluegrass, Preakness Kentucky Bluegrass, Raven Kentucky Bluegrass, Imagine Perennial Ryegrass, Palmer III Perennial Ryegrass, Starmaster Alfalfa, Proleaf Alfalfa, Carola Timothy, and Warrior Orchardgrass.

Ron has worked in the forage and turf seed industry for over 22 years and has a vast knowledge and understanding of the industry. Ron has served on a number of boards such as CSTA, ASTA, and Field Seed Institute.

"I am excited about what lies ahead and the challenges this new responsibility is going to bring. ABT Canada is and will



continue to be a major influence in the seed industry," says Ron.

AgriBio Tech, Inc. is a fully integrated, full service seed company specializing in the forage and turfgrass seed sector, complete with research and development of proprietary seed varieties, seed processing plants, and a national and international distribution and sales network. AgriBio-Tech's vision is to lead the turf and forage industry in discovering its value potential.

For additional information, call 1-888-768-4935 or 1-800-668-5080. ♦

*Editor's note: Norman Rothwell is an honorary STA life member and OSECO Seed is a founding member of the STA.*

### Witherspoon New Director of the GTI

MESSAGE FROM DR. ROB McLAUGHLIN, DEAN, ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

**I**t is with pleasure that I am able to inform you that Mr. Rob Witherspoon has been offered and has accepted the position of Director of the GTI. Rob's appointment is effective July 1, 1999.

After serving as Acting Director of the GTI for several years, both Rob and I are

excited about the new stability, energy, and opportunities this regular full-time appointment will bring to the GTI.

I look forward to all of you working with the "new" Director, and trust that you join me in congratulating Rob on his new appointment. ♦

### Did You Know?

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# Turf Tip on Backlapping

COURTESY OF JOHN DEERE TURF (WWW.DEERE.COM)

**B**acklapping is an often repeated maintenance procedure for service technicians. After experimenting with different ways to make the procedure as fast, easy, and efficient as possible, we've developed a simple technique that makes cleanup after backlapping much easier. We use water to wet down the reels and bedknife before applying the backlapping compound.

Despite today's water-based gel-type compounds, cleanup often is difficult. Even the slightest amount of compound that is left on the reels or bedknife can dull the blades that you've just spent time sharpening.

The machines can be washed down prior to backlapping and allowed to dry until just enough moisture remains or, better yet, use a hand sprayer to apply a 50-50 solution of water and ordinary dish soap directly to the reels and bedknife just prior to beginning the backlapping procedure. The water has no effect on the backlapping process itself, either positive or negative. But, once the procedure is completed, the backlapping compound is much easier to remove from the pre-dampened reels and bedknife during cleanup than it is from those that have not been wet down. This simple procedure will help increase reel sharpness and reel seal and bearing life. ♦

— Warren Savini, reprinted from the GTI Advisor,  
Vol. 4, No. 10, July 19, 1999

## STA New Members

- **Mark Ingwersen**, Manager of Parks, Town of Markham
- **Dru Chillingworth, Rod Norton & Bill Reinhart**  
Parks Forepersons, Town of Markham
- **Cameron McKay**, Manager of Operations  
Municipality of Leamington
- **Stephen Thuringer**, Groundskeeper  
Upper Canada College
- **Kerry Carrothers**, Sales Representative  
Dol Turf Restoration Ltd.
- **John Maradin**, C.E.T., Drainage Coordinator  
Dol Turf Restoration Ltd.
- **Dwayne Mason**, Operations Coordinator  
Dol Turf Restoration Ltd.
- **Mark Hillis**, Team Leader, City of Waterloo
- **Thomas Marshall**, Town of Newmarket
- **Peter Johnston**, Supervisor, Grounds Services  
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