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**MISSION STATEMENT**

Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in New Jersey by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and "networking" with those in the sports turf industry.

**Contact us at:**

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**National Organization**  
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Currently we have 260 members. If you haven't renewed your membership send in the membership form from this newsletter or call (908) 730-7770.

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## “Monthly Field Tip”

### Water Conservation

Evapotranspiration (ET) is the combined water loss from a plant community as a result of evaporation from the soil and transpiration from plant surfaces. Its impact on the efficiency of water use can be moderated through diligent management practices.

The following lists some suggestions for water conservation in turf management:

1. Do not stimulate rapid shoot growth during periods of high water demand. This will accelerate ET and increase water use. Avoid nitrogen applications when dry, hot conditions are anticipated. It is better to concentrate nitrogen usage during the spring and fall.
2. Stimulate root growth. Increase mowing height, reduce nitrogen fertility, ensure good soil aeration,

*Continued on next page.....*



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reduce thatch, and control root-feeding insects and root-infecting diseases. A strong, deep root system will maximize water availability, and will delay drought stress during dry periods.

3. Reduce root-inhibiting conditions in the soil profile. Promptly treat soil acidity, toxic ion concentrations, anaerobic layers, and excess compaction. Most such conditions are best corrected during installation, but they can also be addressed by deep coring, by adding soluble lime and nutrients, and by selecting acid-tolerant turfgrasses.
4. Develop irrigation practices based on the concept of deficit water management. By applying less water than would be lost through ET under well-watered conditions, turf can be maintained under managed drought stress. This stimulates deep rooting and conserves water. ▲

*This material was excerpted with permission from Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association Newsletter, April 1997. It originally appeared in TurfGrass TRENDS, October 1996.*

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NEW JERSEY RECREATION & PARKS ASSOCIATION TRADE SHOW & CONVENTION

March 16-19, 2003 at Bally's Park Place Hotel & Tower, Atlantic City, NJ  
Contact Bill Foelsch or Terry Dunwiddie at the NJRPA Office at 732-568-1270 or fax 732-568-1274 (See front page)

### SPORTS FIELD MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY SPRING FIELD DAY

**In cooperation with NJRPA**

April 10, 2003 at Wall Twp., NJ Indoor & outdoor education and demonstrations with vendor Trade Show. Fliers have been sent to members.

### **SFMANJ & NJRPA**

*Spring Athletic Field Day*

*Held at Wall Township*

*April 10<sup>th</sup> 8am to 2:30 pm*

***COST: \$35 members & \$45 non-member  
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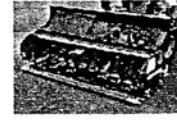
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## “All Things Considered” – Specifying New Tractors and Mowers

*Todd Cochran / CGM\**

The growing season is approaching and you're thinking about adding a new tractor or mower to your operation. Perhaps your present equipment is due for replacement, or you've taken on more acreage. Maybe you have labor challenges and must look to machines to keep up or increase production. Or could it be you were at the most recent equipment expo and now you feel compelled to upgrade. Whatever the reason, today's grounds managers need to carefully define their requirements before specifying a new piece of equipment.

Before deciding on a particular unit, whether it is a dedicated mower or a combination of tractor and implement, performing an operations inventory can help narrow the field. As the grounds manager, you should be able to identify the task you need to perform, the time you have to do it, how many times you have to do it, the human resources available to do it, and what you can afford to spend to complete it. Of course each site and operation will have its unique requirements, but its best not to ignore the obvious.

With respect to mowers, never has there been so many brands offering so many features to perform essentially the same function. Wading through the brochures or walking the showroom floor can leave you frustrated and confused. How can they all be the same thing, only different?

In order to match a piece of equipment to your requirements you need to understand what the specifications will mean to the operator, mechanic, and the budget. You can be sure that the dealers and sales reps know their specs and they know the competition's. To get what you want, you need to know what you want.

Generally speaking, the size of the area will dictate what type of equipment is most appropriate. For those who care for large tracts of turf, parks or right-of-ways, tractor/mower combinations and large riding mowers tend to dominate. Managers of smaller areas as found on campuses, condo developments, or the lawn maintenance contractor will find the widest variety of options among the small ride-on and large walk-behind offerings.

### Tractors

For large landscapes, parks and right-of-ways, a traditional style utility tractor still holds a place in the equipment shed. Unrivaled for its versatility, when properly equipped it can mow, tow, load, grade, rake, blow and more. When used strictly as a traction unit for a mower, it excels at long, straight passes and lawns or fields allowing wide turns. Although tractors are appealing for their simplicity there are still a number of choices to be made.

**Horsepower-** Depending on potential towing and lifting jobs an adequate engine horsepower needs to be determined. Look carefully at PTO driven implements you may use now or in the future to ensure sufficient horsepower at the PTO.

*Continued on next page.....*

**Four-wheel drive-** the additional traction and front-end weight is a benefit worth the expense when mowing on slopes, hilly terrain or if the unit is to be used for other tasks such as snow removal, rough grading, or tilling.

**Tire size and style-** If your tractor will be used for general purposes consider non-directional tires for the rear and implement tires up front. For those with a front-end loader, industrial type front tires may be more suitable. Right-of way mowing, rough grading or muddy conditions often require agricultural treads and larger front tires. Over-sized, high flotation tires reduce pressure on fine turf and permit work in marginal conditions.

**Fuel type-** Gasoline or diesel is still an option in some small and mid-range horsepower tractors. Fuel availability for your facility or application should be considered.

**Gear drive vs. hydrostatic-** The jury is still out on this one. When your tractor will be stopping and changing direction frequently than a hydrostatic transmission may be for you. When you need to calculate and maintain a constant ground speed or will be using a variety of attachments then the tried and true gear drive is favorable.

**Remote hydraulics-** In order to take advantage of the today's attachments, hydraulic ports have become a must have item.

### Large Riding Mowers

Institutional grounds managers, golf courses and parks departments have made the four-wheeled, rear steering, liquid cooled, 72in out-front mower the standard of their industry. Their heritage is mowing large grounds, but new attachments spring up every year in an effort to make these machines year-round workhorses. Evolution in this category has been difficult to notice. These machines are a testimony to the adage that if it's not broken, don't fix it.

**Mower size-** Width of cut for large rotary mowers can range from 48in to 16ft, with 72in being the standard. Jumping from a 72in to a larger articulating deck or wing decks comes with significant increase in cost. Make sure you can recover the additional expense with increased production and labor savings.

**Belt drive vs. hydraulic-** Possibly, the most important trend in this segment of the market is the move toward hydraulically driven mowers. Hydraulics eliminates belts and their maintenance issues and there are no spindles or drive shafts to grease. You should expect less down time with hydraulics but be ready for heftier repair bills.

**Discharge or mulch-** Side discharge decks are proven and common. Consider a rear discharge deck to address the issues of windrowing, close trimming and safety. Be aware that mowers designed specifically to mulch clipping and those that are adapted to will not perform well in wet or high grass. Without a directional discharge they afford additional safety and may eliminate the need to manage clippings.

**Fuel type-** Gas or diesel options still exist in some product lines.

### Zero Turning Radius Mowers (ZTRs)

Because of their zero turning radius, speed, compact size and affordability these mowers have attracted a great deal of attention in recent years. Grounds managers with tight schedules and small crews can use these machines in areas previously left for walk behind machines. Likewise, the lawn maintenance contractor can increase productivity by having a smaller crew ride instead of walk and save space on the trailer. Zero radius turns are accomplished by independently operated hydraulic drives. While one wheel spins forward, the other spins in reverse. There is an awkward transition period when switching from a steering wheel ride-on or large walk-behinds, but its brief and painless. Virtually all major manufacturers are present in this market. While most models look incredibly similar each manufacturer wants to be recognized for one unique feature or another. Our job is to separate fashion from function. Remember here that increase in speed refers to time to finish rather than ground speed of the machine. As with any mower, beyond a certain speed, quality of cut declines rapidly.

**Mower size-** Decks for ZTRs generally begin at 36in and top out at 72in. Width of gates, space between trees, size of lawns will tell you what size you need. When you are working on a property that can justify a 72in ZTR,

*Continued on next page.....*

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you may want to think hard about a large ride-on for its ability accept a variety of attachments.

**Mid-mount or out-front-** ZTRs come in two configurations, both with specific advantages. Front-mounted mowers allow access under low branches, provide an excellent line of sight and on more and more models, the deck tilts to save storage space and provide easy access for inspection and maintenance. These models have a greater overall length than their mid-mount cousins. Mid-mount mowers provide a tighter turning radius and nearly all new models feature fully floating decks and anti-scalp rollers. Another user-friendly feature available in this class is the ability to change the height of cut without leaving the operator's seat.

**Sit or stand-** Standing riders will definitely save you space on the trailer. This may be their greatest attribute.

**Air-cooled or liquid-cooled** -Several manufacturers have liquid-cooled machines in their line-up. With the same level of maintenance, you should expect longer engine life from the liquid-cooled machine. Air-cooled engines reach a maximum in the 20hp range. If the mower is going to put in long hours at peak horsepower, liquid cooled machines will prevail in the long run.

**Ease of service-** Access to lubrication points, belts and pulleys can be tricky. Make sure the model you specify can be maintained with reasonable effort.

Once you have decided on a particular type of tractor or mower, before heading for the dealer with your checkbook or putting the specs out to bid, make sure you've done all your homework.

- Ask you crew what they like in a machine and what they don't like.
- Speak to somebody who already owns one.
- Arrange for a demonstration at your site with your crew.

Remember to keep your head when specifying new equipment. Salespeople will always be willing to sell you what they have. Knowing what you need will allow you to make the right deal. ▲

*\*Assistant Superintendent*

*Bergen County Department of Parks, Bergen County, NJ*



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## Are you Certifiable? *Take the Exam*

*\*Jim Hermann CSFM,*

1. Do you have more scrap books filled with pictures of your athletic fields than you do of your family?

Did you answer yes? Guess what? You could be certifiable.

2. Do you feel the Dallas cheerleaders should be banned from the playing field due to the unnecessary wear they inflict on the playing field.

Yup, probably certifiable.

No, this wasn't the Exam but I hope I got your attention.

The exam I am referring to is the exam that may designate you as a "Certified Sports Field Manager". The national "Sports Turf Managers Association" has developed this test to not only acknowledge the abilities and understanding of those sports field managers who have attained an exemplary level of proficiency in sports field management, but also to develop and maintain a standard of professionalism within the industry.

To become eligible to take the exam, the sports field manager must meet certain education and/or experience requirements. Although formal education beyond high school is beneficial in meeting these requirements, these requirements may be met strictly through experience. This I can confirm, speaking as the only uneducated certified sports field manager in New Jersey; or rather the only certified sports field manager in New Jersey not to have received any formal education beyond high school.

A total of 40 combined education and experience points are required to take the certification examination

The examination for certification covers four major areas of sports field management.

- Agronomics
- Pest Management
- Administration
- Sports Specific Field Management

If you would like to be held accountable to a nationwide standard of competence, I would highly recommend you take the exam. Speaking from experience I can safely say; this is the only test I have ever taken where every subject covered is important in the in the day-to-day operation of my profession. Not one question during the four-hour exam caused me to pose the question; what do I need to know this for? The questions in each area covered by the exam were broad based enough to where if you aren't as proficient in one area as in another you can still do well on the exam.

Not unlike many of you, over the years I have gained experience and become, I feel, proficient at what I do. Taking the exam has allowed me to determine if I am proficient based on a national scale. This has given me an added confidence in my ability to make decisions. This added confidence is a benefit to anyone in the industry.

The national Sports Turf Managers Association provides a list of reference material that is beneficial to the sports field manager in studying for the exam. I suggest that anyone who anticipates taking the exam, acquire the recommended reference material pertaining to the four major areas of sports field management covered in the exam and take the time to review this information. Check our [www.sportsturfmanager.com](http://www.sportsturfmanager.com) ▲

*\* President of Total Control, Athletic Field Maintenance*

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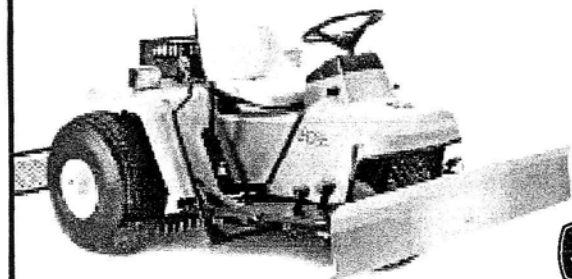
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