

# Out-of-staters Join in At HSAF Convention, Take Steps to Establish National Trade Group, Examine Spray Contracts

"We as sprayers have to gain our rightful place in American industry," HSAF president Ted Kaplan told conventioning delegates at the Horticultural Sprayers' Association of Florida annual convocation in Ft. Lauderdale last month.

Out-of-state attendance was more noticeable than ever before this year, although Floridians didn't turn out in the customary numbers. But sometimes the small groups are the ones to get the big things accomplished. This was certainly the case this year when the Florida sprayers and their guests from across the land met at the posh Pier 66 Motel, November 5-7.

About 120 registered delegates got 4 crucial things accomplished. The assembled sprayers:

(1) met with representatives of Florida's structural pest control industry to agree on proposed legislation favorable both to pest control people and horticultural sprayers;

(2) took steps to establish a national association of weed, tree, and turf sprayers, steps which now can only result in the formation of such a trade group in the near future;

(3) summoned to the podium outstanding spray company executives from the Sunshine State



Dr. Kerr waited for questions from the eager turf professionals.

to compare different kinds of spray programs and pricing procedures; and

(4) sat in on one of the best technical question-and-answer sessions ever to be offered at a vegetation maintenance and control conference.

President Kaplan, whose spray company is in Miami, pointed out in the convention's early hours that in the United States today, the turf industry takes in from 3 to 6 billion dollars each and every year.

He was prefacing the actual discussion about forming a national trade group set up to serve specifically the companies which contract for weed and brush control, turf management, and tree maintenance. Later in the convention's history, the

group enthusiastically endorsed the appointment of HSAF representatives to go forth to meet with other industry men throughout the country to lay the groundwork for establishing the trade group. Out-of-stater Dick Evans, a contract applicator from Pampa, Texas, was also named to the committee and appointed chairman pro-tem.

"Up to now the movement for a national organization has been floundering," Kaplan continued in his endorsement of the resolution to form the nationwide trade group, "Now it's just a matter of time," he mused.

The convention's official resolution also requested *Weeds Trees and Turf* magazine to act as a clearinghouse of information about the national movement, and asked WTT editor Charles D. Webb to act as coordinator and contact man during the formative days of the trade society. After contact is made with leading industry figures throughout the nation interested in the program, a meeting is to be held in WTT's Cleveland offices to further hash out the preliminaries before the group is born. Readers who are interested in the association-to-be are requested to write to this magazine.

"The reasons for this action are multifold," Larry Nipp, member of the national committee, and horticultural operator (American Power Spraying) in Ft. Lauderdale, said. "It will define the industry and present a public image of the horticultural sprayer; it will offer a means to exchange information on business practices, pricing, advertising, public relations, insurance, pertinent technical matters, and other problems peculiar to the custom spray industry; and it will offer a chance for industry men to get together in a single national convention to discuss mutual problems and perhaps have a trade show for custom

A convivial atmosphere prevailed at the HSAF convention as usual. Enjoying a speaker's point here are (left to right) sprayers Lou Streich and Ted Kaplan, and Bob Wiseman of W. R. Grace's Davison Division. Kaplan was reelected to his second term as HSAF president, and Pierre Nobs (not pictured) remains as secretary-treasurer.



spraymen and custom spraymen alone.

"Eventually," Nipp added, "the association will probably have a full-time staff which will be a source of technical information and assistance, and which can effectively lobby and otherwise affect legislation and public opinion favorably for the custom spray business as a whole. Truly this is a momentous idea," Nipp concluded as he laid the resolution on the convention floor for discussion. It passed immediately, by voice vote.

### **Spray Monthly? Semimonthly? Or When Need Is Determined?**

What type of lawn spray program is best suited to Florida conditions and to the systems of individual company philosophies was a key part of this year's convention. Spray operator Nipp was first of a quartet to explain his business concepts. Nipp sprays his customer's lawns for chinch bugs every 60 days. He said he finds this more profitable, and just as effective, as the monthly spraying pattern some other companies utilize.

Nipp said trucks and drivers are the major cost factors in lawn spraying, although today, with new and expensive chemicals in common use, material costs sometimes exceed even the cost of labor.

Nipp said when parathion began to fail as a chinch bug control and he had to switch to more expensive chemicals, his charges naturally had to go up. But this taught him a lesson and now his contracts include the phrase "based on the use and ability of (name of chemical) to kill chinch bugs." He advised his audience to include this or a similar phrase in each of their lawn spraying agreements.

Nipp also reminded the assembly that in pricing a job, regardless of the size of a lawn, it's crucial to remember the cost of getting the truck and the driver to the premises. Obviously, this is the same whether one is treating an estate or a bungalow-sized lot.

In the discussion following Nipp's talk, Dave Fleming, a



**Equipment demonstration** permitted delegates to wander at will and inspect spray rigs from this portable device to some heavy-duty, complex truck-mounted systems.

lawn spray operator from Philadelphia, said relative to prices: "When you establish a minimum price, all too often it becomes a maximum."

"Yes," Nipp replied, "The price you start with is usually the one you're stuck with."

A second type of service was explained by Jack Cuthrell who runs Mr. Spray Company in Ft. Lauderdale. Cuthrell inspects his customers' lawns twice monthly but sprays them only if the need is determined by this inspection. He contrasted this philosophy with Nipp's, which he described as "preventive maintenance."

Cuthrell has a card on which he lists the results of each inspection. Whatever he finds wrong he reports to the homeowner who can then correct it. Cuthrell guarantees each lawn against chinch bug damage, and theorized he was offering his customers a kind of insurance. He conceded that sometimes his patrons become irritated because he hasn't actually sprayed anything while his monthly bill keeps right on coming in. But, he cautions those who stray from his flock, it's results for which he charges, and it's results he guarantees.

In conclusion Cuthrell had a profitable bit of advice for his colleagues who operate on contracts: "Once," he said, "I used to have all my contracts run out at the end of each year, after which I'd have to renew them one by one. What a simple thing it was to write them up so that they continue uninterrupted

until a customer specifically terminates them."

### **Multiple Choice**

Then a more elaborate concept was explained by Sydney Kirkpatrick who runs Kirk's lawn maintenance firm in Ft. Lauderdale. His customers may choose from a spraying schedule which is monthly, every other month, once every four months, or various combinations of these schedules. They may also elect to have Kirkpatrick add a fertilizer program to his chinch bug services. Of course, the large Florida company which he operates offers a complete line of services including renovation and other techniques.

Kirkpatrick said he used to spray liquid fertilizer from his truck, but now he uses a dry formulation applied with a spreader.

A type of business becoming increasingly rare was detailed by Ft. Lauderdale horticultural operator Ollie Benson, who has the small, custom, personalized lawn service which was so familiar in bygone times. Benson said he is a one-man operation and he in-

**Benson:** Traditional "personalized" lawn service.





**Veteran sprayman** Charlie Johnson had technical questions for the panel of experts.

tends to stay that way. He knows each customer personally, and gives individual care and attention to every lawn, proceeding with a spray program, if needed, singularly contracted as the need arises.

He counsels his patrons to employ good cultural practices, including proper mowing and watering, vertical mowing, etc.

A rousing finale to Friday's sessions was the question-and-answer period which has become an earmark of HSAF conventions. Perennial favorite lawn expert and well-known figure in the turf world Ralph White moderated. He's general manager of Ousley Sod Company in Pompano Beach, one of the largest companies of its type in the world.

On White's panel were: Dr. Stratton H. Kerr, Associate Entomologist, Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, Gainesville; Dr. E. O. Burt, Assistant Turf Technologist, Plantation Field Laboratory; Lewis Watson, Associate County Agent, Broward County; Dr. John F. Cabler, Assistant Ornamental Horticulturist, Agricultural Extension Serv-

ice, Gainesville; and Dr. Thomas E. Freeman, Assistant Plant Pathologist, University of Florida, Gainesville.

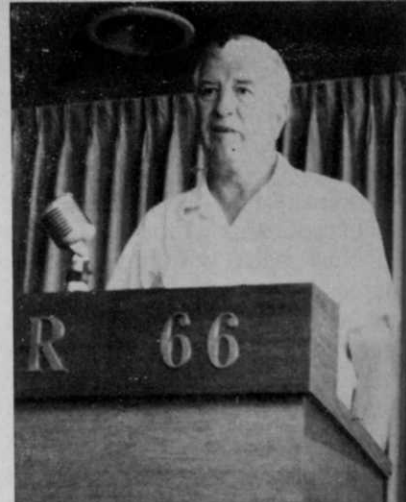
This was a time for the gathering to pose its most perplexing problems and benefit from the five-starred panel of turf specialists, and the carefully phrased advice of chairman White, who's responsible for as much fine turf as any other man in the country. Questions came thick and fast:

—"What's best, a granular or liquid nematocide," queried Mrs. Larry (Mae) Nipp. Dr. Burt told her there's no appreciable difference, in his opinion; then he added that a granular product in general doesn't last any longer than a liquid, though some may be inclined to think otherwise.

—Prexy Kaplan wanted to know what to do about millipedes. He said frequently Florida spraymen are called upon to control these slithering nuisances in customer's lawns. Dr. Kerr said to give them a good, stiff dose of Sevin, the carbamate from Union Carbide, or perhaps Baygon, which he praised. The latter is also a carbamate, this one from the vats of Chemagro Corp. in Kansas City, Mo.

—A round of questions from inquisitive delegates touched on several aspects of fungicide usage; the following points were collectively put across by the panel: Fungicides are primarily preventive. They can be more effective if applied with a spreader-sticker. Sometimes, a fungus disease will "cure itself." That is, if not treated, a fortunate cooling period or a dry spell will sometimes heal the fungus-induced wounds. But turf pros can't wait for this "let-nature-do-it" routine because of its very fortuitousness.

—"Anything we can do to control scale?" a sprayman asked. "If



**Kirkpatrick:** "Multiple choice" for his customers.

you're a professional with professional know-how, I'd say use parathion," Dr. Kerr advised. "Even better," he continued, "is parathion with a summer oil emulsion added (about 2 qts. per hundred gallons)." "Or," he went on, "you can always use malathion. This too will act better with the oil additive."

—What's the broadest scale fungicide? The organic mercurials. What trade names do they go under? Memmi, Panogen Turf Fungicide, among others.

—If the pH of the soil is higher than 7 (on alkaline side), would sulfur be beneficial? "It certainly would help," Dr. Cabler said. "Use one or two pounds per thousand square feet."

—Do you think high fertilization rate causes brown patch? "I doubt it," said Dr. Freeman. Do you get damage from brown patch other than the usual brown circle? "You can," Dr. Freeman said, "especially in shaded areas where the grass may thin out."

—Has anybody noticed a decrease in fungus after a lawn is sprayed with the nematocide Nemagon? Several said yes. Nipp said the use of a nematocide invariably improves the lawns he works on, and he thinks operators should do more nematode work. "We use Nemagon," he said, adding that he tries to get 10 or 12 inches of water on it to increase effectiveness. He uses about eight dollars' worth of the product on the average lawn, he said.

—Several questions pertained to mechanical renovation, and

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**A question** from the floor engrossed Dr. E. O. Burt (left) and panel moderator Ralph White.

## Patterson to Head New Mexico Turf Group; Conference Studies Turf Varieties, Mowing

A. S. Patterson of Albuquerque was named president of the New Mexico Turfgrass Association at the 10th annual Turfgrass Conference on the New Mexico State University campus at University Park, October 9.

Other officers named were Bernard Corley, El Paso, vice-president, and C. E. Watson, NMSU agronomist, secretary-treasurer. Bill Leftwich of Holloman Air Force Base, Julian Serna of Albuquerque, and Harvour Jones of Los Lunas, were named to the board of directors.

In a report on new developments in grasses, John A. Long of O. M. Scott Company of Marysville, Ohio, said Texturf 10, also known as T-47, and Tifway, two varieties of bermudagrass, are the best all-around warm-season grasses for lawns and play areas. Tifgreen is recommended for putting greens but not for general planting because of the extra care it requires.

Windsor, Park, and Newport varieties of bluegrass have shown more disease resistance than Merion or common Kentucky bluegrass of the cool-season grasses.

J. R. Watson of Toro Manufacturing Company, Minneapolis, Minn., in a report on mowing, said "growing grasses for lawns and turf defied the natural processes of the plants. The extreme mowing required for the neat-appearing lawn requires that everything else be ideal. Mowing removes the parts of the grass that manufacture food for the plants weakening them and if other conditions of moisture and fertility are not ideal the plants don't make it," he said.

Bunch-type grasses—ryegrass, tall fescue, and bluegrass—need higher mowing than the creeping grasses, Watson said, because the bunch grasses grow upright and more of each plant is removed in mowing.

Zoysia and bermuda can be

clipped closer because they naturally grow close to the soil and only occasionally send up shoots which are clipped by a mower.

A sharp mower is important to lawn appearance. A dull mower bruises the ends of the leaves as it cuts, leaving a burned appearance. A sharp mower cuts cleanly.

Marvin Ferguson, U.S. Golf Association, Green Section, College Station, Texas, said golf courses in recent years have too often been designed without regard to drainage, foot, and car traffic, and efficiency of watering systems. He reported an excessive number of golf courses are in trouble because these factors were not considered when the courses were laid out.

The two-day conference was attended by about 50 persons.

### HSAF Convention Takes Steps To Form National Trade Group

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prompted skilled turfman White to say he uses the Mott hammer knife back on the sod farm. He added that many commercial lawn companies, such as the ones gathered at the Pier 66, are now using the Ryan and the West Point machines. These were developed initially to prove them-

Two kinds of spray programs for lawn service companies were described by horticultural spraymen Larry Nipp (left) and Jack Cuthrell during the 1964 convention at Pier 66 Hotel in Ft. Lauderdale. Out-of-staters found the various programs offered by Florida industry men of particular interest.



New recreational areas management curriculum at New Mexico State University was explained by Arden Baltensperger (left), Head of the Department of Agronomy, and C. E. Watson, Associate Agronomist, at a meeting of the New Mexico Turfgrass Association. The new course is one of the few offered in the U.S. to specifically train superintendents for golf courses, parks, forest areas and to build a background for research in this area. The course is offered jointly by NMSU's departments of agronomy and horticulture.

selves on the fairways, but now they're keeping the nation's lawns green as well.

Smaller in number than usual, bigger than ever in ambition, and as cordial and warmhearted as always, the Florida 1964 convention was universally praised when it came time to wind up the note taking and step out to a banquet and dance on the last day. Officers promised to continue in the same fruitful spirit throughout the coming months as the national trade association takes its last wavering steps before striding full-fledged into the future of vegetation maintenance and control, a billion dollar business in America today.

