

# Record Crowd of 2755 Delegates Hails Program, Exhibits at 35th International Turf-Grass Conference, Show Last Month

Delegates to the 35th International Turf-Grass Conference and Show in Philadelphia's Sheraton Hotel Feb. 9-14 hailed the yearly educational meeting and trade exhibit as "best ever."

And they backed up this conviction by flocking to the convention in massive numbers; final registration was 2755 delegates.

Partially responsible for the attractiveness of the 1964 conference, sponsored annually by the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America, was a program carefully attuned to contemporary turf maintenance problems. Advancing research on a newly prominent turf ill called "spring deadspot," a seminar on turf fertilization by a topflight trio of grass nourishment authorities, and a quick review of turf diseases by eminent scientist Dr. Michael P. Britton, were only a few of the well-chosen topics which filled the educational portion of this year's program.

Of course, in the interest of the sponsoring group, many topics not related to turf, but to other golf-oriented subjects, are offered each year.

An added appeal is the fact that the turf-management portion of the program is solidly backed up with a lavish and dazzling trade exhibit, where suppliers of turf maintenance equipment and chemicals come to show off their wares at a time of heightened customer concern with turf subjects.

This year's trade show was no exception to the generally applied epithet, "The greatest show on turf."

## Seek Spring Deadspot Cause

One of the most intriguing addresses in the two half-day sessions devoted to turf technology was an address on spring deadspot by Stan Frederiksen, Distributor Products Manager for Mallinckrodt Chemical Works, St. Louis-based producers of turf fungicides.

Frederiksen, who's Industry Chairman for the 1965 Turf Show, has researched spring deadspot for some time; he delivered his findings in an illustrated lecture which succinctly

outlined the definite facts presently known about the ailment.

Spring deadspot is characterized by circular brown areas which do not green up in the spring when adjacent grass is recovering from winter dormancy. Peculiar thing is that, if not corrected, the same areas will appear every spring, with the lamentable difference that the dead regions are apt to grow larger. The disease attacks Bermudagrass, and is therefore not a problem in the Northeast and North Central States, which do not plant this species. But as Bermudagrass becomes more widely used, obviously spring deadspot will also spread.

Cause of spring deadspot is undiagnosed, and actual nature of the deficiency is unknown; it is not known whether insects are responsible, a fungus disease, some incorection in maintenance, or some completely unknown factor. Besides attacking golf courses, the mysterious lesion has shown up in lush lawns, airport turf areas, and other places planted to Bermudagrass.

Spring deadspot was recently declared the most serious threat to turf in the entire state of Oklahoma (where the state experiment station, incidentally, is frantically researching to discover a cure).

Frederiksen said there have been a number of tests conducted aimed at finding a control, but

most such tests, until recently, were inconclusive. Fungicides and insecticides were tried, and at one time dieldrin seemed to be helping.

Of course, the St. Louis turf expert implied, it's difficult to solve such a problem when the cause is unknown.

Mat- and thatch-removal practices have failed to help, and variations of fertilizer applications have resulted in no significant change in spring deadspot incidence.

A bright ray on this otherwise dismal horizon, however, was sketched by the Mallinckrodt official, who showed tests plots treated with a new compound which went unnamed. Preliminary tests are promising, and when more evidence is gathered, the name of the product, and the results of the test, will be released, Frederiksen told a *Weeds and Turf* reporter in a post-lecture interview.

## Discourse on Aquatics

On hand to tell the assembled turf managers about aquatic weed control, especially as it relates to golf courses, was John E. Gallagher of Amchem Products, Inc., Ambler, Pa.

Gallagher presented slides and a running commentary which touched on many of the high points of water weed management, although his allotted time did not permit a truly detailed study of this most complex subject.

The Amchem scientist reviewed several prominent pest weed species, and said that the maintenance of chemically harmless (either to crops or people) water is a moral responsibility of everyone who works in aquatic weed control.

Control of aquatic weeds is a far more extensive activity than most people realize. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, for example, spends one million dollars every year to control alligatorweed alone. Alligatorweed is a species quite troublesome in the South.

Equipment was pictured, and such spreaders as the Gandy-type, an agricultural device, was recommended.

Gallagher also said helicop-



Aquatic weed control was explained by Amchem's John Gallagher.

ters will play increasing roles in weed control in the future.

### Scanning the Diseases

With Gallagher on the program was Dr. Michael Britton of the Department of Plant Pathology, University of Illinois, Urbana.

A noted authority of turfgrass diseases, the Illinois scholar presented an orderly slide review of typical turf ailments and their symptoms. Throughout his talk, the scientist insisted that disease control, through the application of fungicides, is best carried out on a preventive basis, since once the disease is evident, damage frequently has already been done.

In the case of snowmold, for example, fungicides *must* be applied before snowfall, since the disease forms under cover of snow and doesn't become evident until thawing occurs.

### Probing the Causes of Wilt

Another discussion of singular importance to turfgrass managers was a review of research into the causes of wilt, presented by Harry W. Meusel, Superintendent, Yale University Golf Course, New Haven, Conn.

Meusel's highly detailed studies involve microscopic analysis of the paths water takes when distributed through blades of grass. Understanding these patterns, Meusel feels, will help to discover maintenance practices which will alleviate the wilting problem in fine turf.

So far the Connecticut turf expert has found that phenylmercuric acetate with a nonionic wetting agent is useful in helping prevent wilt.

Heavy watering and fertilization in conjunction with a wetting agent has also proved helpful. Sometimes wilting can be caused, in part, by compacted soil, conceivably because of shallow root systems which exist in such packed-down areas.

### Avoiding Ravages of Winter

Last winter's inordinate severity has made turf managers more cognizant than ever of the damages wrought by cold, snowy, windy weather, so the resumé of winter damage problems presented by Alexander M. Radco was most welcome.

Radco is Director, Eastern Region, U. S. Golf Association Green Section, and does his re-

search at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

Damages which occur in winter range from rodent problems (burrowing animals) to inundation caused by melting snows.

One way to alleviate the latter, Radco said, is to remove a strip of the sod and dig a ditch through which water may run off. The turf which is removed is placed somewhere else to grow, and can then be replaced when winter is over.

### Weather and Insects

An adjunct to the winter damage study was offered by John C. Schread, a Professor of Entomology from the University of Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven.

Professor Schread's observations about Japanese beetles and the chinch bug were particularly notable. Theoretically, a temperature of 15° F. will kill Japanese beetles, but because snow layers protects the pests even when they're near the soil surface, there are recorded instances of survival of even -28° F.

In his discussion of the effect of weather on insect infestations, the Connecticut entomologist said that the chinch bug is adversely affected by heavy rainfalls in late June or early July. This applies, of course, to the Connecticut area, which until recently did not number the chinch bug among its important turf pests.

"Since 1960, however, the chinch bug has been a major pest in turf in Connecticut—in lawns, parks, and other large turf areas," the professor proclaimed.

### Fertilizer Trio

"Understanding Fertilizer Behavior" was the theme of another half-day session, in which a trio of turf-feeding specialists discussed the rudiments of their field of interest.

The ecology of nitrogen breakdown was explained by Dr. Roy E. Blaser from the Department of Agronomy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Va.

Dr. Blaser hastened to warn that overstimulation with nitrogen had increased other problems in turf maintenance. For example, grass heavily fertilized with nitrogen produces more thatch, increases the wilt hazard, and ups the weight of clippings.

Nevertheless, nitrogen is the

key to quality control in turf, the Virginian commented.

Role of other major elements in turf nutrition (phosphorus and potassium) was examined by Dr. Marvin S. Ferguson, National Research Coordinator, USGA Green Section, Texas A&M College, College Station, Tex.

"You can't depend on deficiency symptoms to indicate when and how much to feed the turf," Dr. Ferguson said, "because it will be too late and the damage will have been done."

It is therefore important to understand the mechanics and technicalities of turf fertilization so proper feeding can be carried out continuously.

Along this line of thought, delegates were told that they should be able to tell the pH of the soil in every green, and if not, should take a soil test to determine the factor. Why? Because the acidity or alkalinity of soil affects the availability of trace elements such as boron, copper, iron, etc.

This observation was part of a talk on trace elements by Dr. J. R. Love, Department of Soils, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

"A cold wet spring may herald iron deficiency," Dr. Love indicated in his catalog of tips on trace-element management.

The other educational sessions of the 35th International Turf-Grass Conference and Show were given over to matters affecting golf course people only. Next year the meeting will be in Cleveland, Ohio, at the Sheraton Cleveland Hotel, January 31-Feb. 4.

### New Name for Ansul

Stockholders of the Ansul Chemical Company voted recently to change the corporate name to The Ansul Company, it was just reported.

In addition to chemicals, the Marinette, Wis. firm also manufactures tanks, pumps, and related equipment for fire fighting and other uses; refrigeration components, and other products.

Ansul spokesmen predict significantly higher sales gains in 1964, as a result of, among other things, the development of the company's "Ansar" line of herbicides.