

this guess may be exceedingly low.

James B. Beard, assistant professor of crop science at Michigan State University, believes that Michigan's sod industry alone approaches \$50 million in annual revenue. Elwyn Deal of the Maryland Extension Service estimates that state's annual dollar volume in sod to be about \$2 million. Florida claims to have an \$11 million capital investment in the sod industry. Massachusetts typifies states with little or no sod production where sales of sod shipped in from other areas still reaches several hundred thousand dollars.

Regional Prices Vary

If the variations in aggregate figures seem wide, the differences in sod prices are even more extreme. An Ohio sod grower

reports that Merion bluegrass sells for from 65c to \$1.00 per sq. yd. and the price is rising as demand goes up and supplies fall. He adds that bentgrass markets for about \$1.85 per sq. yd.

These prices for northern strains contrast significantly with the prices of southern grasses as reported in a 1963 Florida study. St. augustinegrass then cost less than 25c per sq. yd., bermudagrass was 38c per sq. yd., and zoysiagrass sold for 67c per sq. yd. In all regions the primary market for sod includes landscape contractors and homeowners as well as golf courses and some industrial accounts.

With this wide fluctuation in size, volume, and prices, the reasons for the lack of mutual understanding become clearer. Some states (Florida and Wisconsin, for example) exempt sod

from the definition of nursery stock. An Iowa horticulturist notes that in his state there is more acreage sold from pasture grown sod than from nursery grown sod. Reports from the Pacific Northwest indicate that sod production is relatively small because climate conditions usually favor good growth from seed-planted lawns.

These varied reports again affirm the substantial lack of communication within the industry. And this Sod Industry Section seeks to fill the void in what is obviously a growing field.

Vast Potential Market

Sod uses are many. WTT's introductory survey uncovered sod producers who sell to golf courses, parks, highway departments, and other industrial/municipal/institutional markets. One New Hampshire grower provides the sod used at Boston's Fenway Park stadium. Even in the Northwest where seed-planted lawns flourish, Norman Goetze of the Oregon State University extension service speculates a "real potential for the sod industry because of the difficulty in maintaining (turf) on heavy wear areas such as golf course tees and football fields."

The future is bright for the multimillion dollar sod industry in America. The comment of a New England agronomist wraps up feeling across the nation. "Frankly," he confided, "there is a market for more sod growers in this area if someone is interested in growing grass sod under good conditions."

And that is the purpose of this new Sod Industry Section: to help both present and potential sod growers develop their businesses. Future editions will include studies of preferred grass species, seeding and fertility rates, weed control practices, and market development tips. There will also be "portraits" of leading sod producers.

Sod growers have asked WTT about turf equipment, seed mixtures for specific areas, trade associations, and business practices. Coming issues will answer these and other questions important to the sod grower. As



This Cyclone Model 99 is a new pull-type broadcast spreader/seeders designed to spread fertilizer, seed, and other materials without stripes and double overlaps. Cyclone makes a manual model also.

Cyclone Spreader/Seeder Out

A new Model 99 pull-type broadcast spreader/seeders designed to give the same spreading results as older Cyclone Model B is now being marketed by The Cyclone Seeder Co.

Hopper capacity is 100 pounds of average material; it is constructed of galvanized steel and finished in baked enamel. Spreading mechanism consisting of feed guides, rotary agitator, and control cable is made of stainless steel.

Designed for spreading fertilizer, seed, granular herbicides,

granular insecticides, ice melters, soil conditioners, etc., Model 99 can achieve a spread width up to 10 feet, depending on the material being dispensed.

Another spreader, Model 100, is a new push-type spreader/seeders and is equipped with wheelbarrow-type handles for manual operation. It has the same features as the pull-type. Spreading mechanisms of both machines are ground driven.

Applicators interested in obtaining more information on these products can write to the company at Urbana, Indiana.