



SOD INDUSTRY SECTION



Mechanical Wheel-Move Irrigation System Saves Field Time For McGovern Sod Farms

As any sod grower knows, "You are out of business if you don't irrigate." And on the larger sod operations, getting an adequate amount of water applied during the time grass needs it most may be a frustrating task. This is especially true during the dry months of summer, when sprinklers must be kept in constant operation to fulfill the demands of rapidly developing root systems.

The reason for such frustration lies primarily with the time lost in moving standard irrigation piping. Naturally, pipe cannot be moved while the sprinklers are in operation. The system must be shut down and restarted after the pipe-moving operation has been completed. Such time lost generally requires 20% of the total time allowed for sprinkling. For example: A given field may be irrigated for 2 hours before movement is necessary, and such movement may take three men ½ hour. This large amount of time lost has prompted many growers to invest in mechanical wheel-move irrigation systems.

McGovern Sod Farms of Melville, N.Y., is one of these innovation-minded growers. To date, McGovern has invested in two of these systems, each able to keep a ¼-mile length of 4"-diameter pipe in constant sprinkling operation. McGovern's new

mechanical irrigation systems have the aluminum pipe sitting on an "A" frame, mounted on a set of steel wheels, neither pipe nor sprinklers ever turning. This new system features an exclusive hydraulic drive with a self-starter and utilizes forward, neutral, and reverse by means of an easily controlled hand valve.

Moving at the rate of 15 feet per minute, all wheels drive at the same time from the center source of power, a gasoline engine. In the event one wheel bogs down or meets some obstruction, a safety design feature shuts off the power to prevent twisting the line. As the power goes off, the wheels are auto-

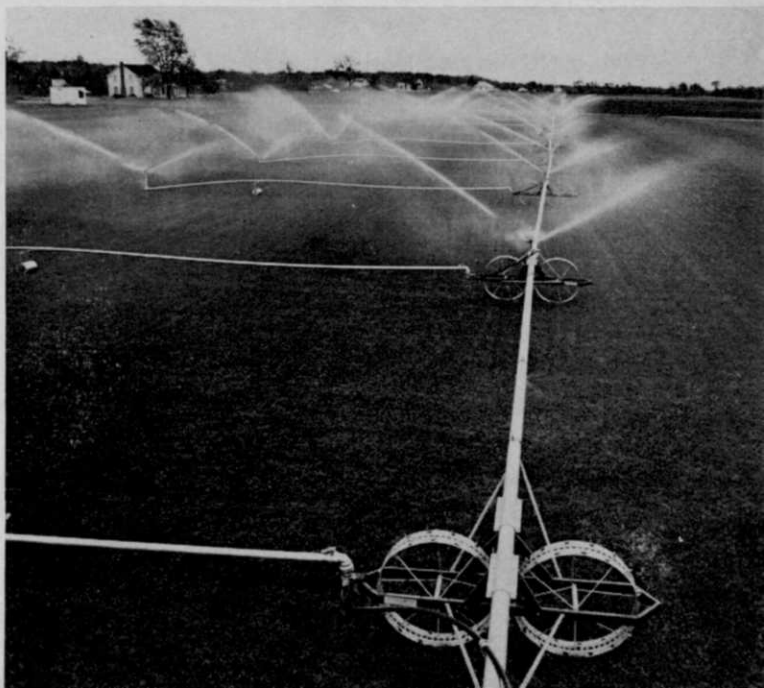
matically locked so that the movement due to wind, incline, etc., is precluded. Another noteworthy feature is the fact that the self-draining sprinklers stay upright at all times.

First East Coast System With Drag Line On Wheels

The East Coast distributor of these systems, National Irrigation, Inc., of Roosevelt, New Jersey, informs McGovern that, "This is the first mechanical irrigation system in the east that has a drag line following the wheels with a sprinkler at the end of each pipe."

Both Dick and Ed McGovern,

McGovern's wheel-move irrigation system travels at the rate of 15 feet per minute, all wheels being driven by a gasoline engine. Should one wheel lag, power is shut off automatically. Wheels lock in place when power is shut off. Big advantage of system, according to owners, is labor and time saved.



the owner-operators of McGovern Sod Farms, Inc., were impressed with the laborsaving benefits of these irrigation systems. Not only can more water be applied in a given period of time, but also less manpower is needed to operate the systems during this same time period. With a standard system, crews of three men each are needed to work at pipe moving, tending generally two or three sod fields per crew. Under the new mechanical wheel-move system, any worker can move a sprinkler line (up to 1/4 mile wide) in five minutes.

It is estimated that cost of the basic wheel-move components; i.e., power unit and wheel units, is approximately four times the cost of standard system components, i.e., pipe and sprinklers. However, it is felt that the advantages in laborsaving and timesaving will more than justify this extra cost. Furthermore, says Ed McGovern, "This system will enable us to continue growing top-quality turf in greater quantity."

Sod Producers Form National Group

Sod growers formally organized into a national group on July 11 at East Lansing, Mich. Considered a key move for the nation's growers, the formal action followed naming of a committee for the purpose earlier this year at the International Turfgrass Conference.

The new group organized as the American Sod Producers Association with a charter membership of 40 growers. Membership fees for the new organization will be \$50.


Elected president of the group was Ben O. Warren, Warren's Turf Nursery, Palos Park, Ill. Vice-president is Robert Daymon, president of Emerald Valley Turf Nurseries, Howell, Mich. Elected treasurer was Louis DeLea, Louis DeLea & Sons, East Northport, Long Island, N.Y.; and secretary, Richard Horner, Horner Sod Farms, Wind Lake, Wis. Other members elected to the 7-man board besides the officers were: To-

bias Grether, Cal-Turf, Inc., Camarillo, Calif.; J. E. Ousley, Sr., Ousley Sod Company, Pompano Beach, Fla.; and Wiley Miner, Princeton Turf Farms, Inc., Cranbury, N. J. Acting for the secretary and treasurer is George B. Hammond, Paint Valley Bluegrass Farm, 71 E. State St., Columbus, O. Hammond is coordinating requests for membership in the new organization and is answering queries directed to the group.

Final Applications For M.S.U. Turf Training


Michigan's 18-month-long technical training program in turfgrass management will begin next month. The program which starts September 21 includes 1 year of campus study and 6 months of industry employment.

Dr. James Beard, of the department of Crop Science, reports that 28 of a full complement of 35 students are now enrolled. Final registration date is September 18.

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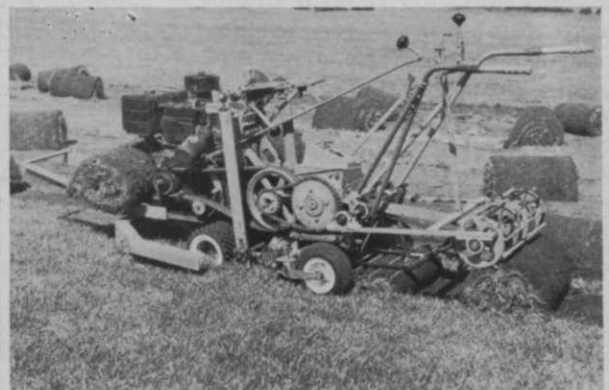
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