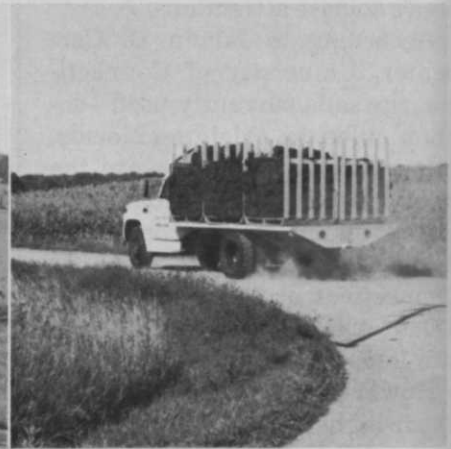




Turf rack pallet at unloading site.



Mowing cultured sod on Mork farm.



Greater highway safety in hauling.

Field To Lawn Sod Handling Equipment Is Basis For New MinnTurf Corporation

Sod producers in all sections of the country are faced with a labor shortage. One, Orrie Mork, Edina, Minn., found labor so short that he was forced to mechanize to stay in business. But, he says, this proved to be a profitable venture. His newly developed sod handling equipment proved successful and popular to the point that he has formed the MinnTurf Equipment Designs Corporation to handle the business.

Mork, who serves as president of the family owned enterprise, continues to operate Minnesota Turf Farms at Edina which produces cultured sod on Mork's farms. The business includes growing, harvesting, delivery, and installation. Mork says that they do the entire job, including fine grading. A large percentage of their sod is Park Kentucky bluegrass for parks, schools, and home lawns. A 2-way General Electric radio system between office, sod farms, and the landscaping operation helps maintain schedules.

New equipment which the Corporation sells includes a turf rack for handling palleted sod

and a series of scrapers for fine grading. These latter are built in various sizes, with ballast optional.

Of primary interest to growers is Mork's turf rack which actually constitutes a container system for handling harvested sod. The rack is designed in conjunction with a flat pallet. Idea behind the container system was development of a pallet with sides permanently attached. Also, Mork wanted a series of units which could be stacked and returned to the field in groups.

Result of the turf racks is a

sod container system at reasonable cost. The units save waiting time for trucks, permit use of forklifts for easy loading and unloading, and help eliminate the need for hand labor. Most important is the saving in time from cutting in the field to final laying on the installation site.

Easy Pallet Loading

The turf rack pallets are built to accommodate both 18 and 24 inch cut sod. Unskilled labor can be used for loading pallets. Sod rolls do not have to be tied in as is the case of sod loaded on

Flat bed unit insures a glass-smooth finish according to Mork.



pallets without sides. This is especially true of peat based sod which is much lighter in weight than that grown on mineral soils. On Mork's turf rack, the weight of the sod holds the hinged sides of the turf rack together.

Also, according to Mork, there is no damage to sod from the tie-in. Pallets will carry more sod, thereby permitting maximum capacity from the forklift. Mork points to the greater safety of sod during highway transport because of the extra stability provided by the container system. This is also a helpful factor in moving pallets by forklift on side slopes. Pallets can be stacked up to 5 deep in open position, making it easy to return stacks of empties to the field.

Turf racks are built of ash

hardwood with steel brackets. Quality construction, Mork says, is the key to units on which a patent is pending.

Fine grading equipment designed and being produced by Mork includes a series of flat bed scrapers for turf preparation finish work. These are made in 78 and 96 inch widths, both of which are 48 inches in depth. Weights are 300 and 350 pounds respectively. Optional ballast adds 200 to 250 pounds to the units.

Advantage of the flat bed scrapers is that they level in both forward and reverse direction. Hand raking, according to Mork, is eliminated. He has found that unskilled operators can successfully level rough graded or loose material such as blacktop, crushed rock or dirt.

The units are made to fit any Category 1 three point hitch. They can be adjusted for pitch and side slant by means of the tractor's right lift arm and top link.

Mork grows and installs 50 acres of sod yearly from his own firm of Orrie Mork Landscaping. In addition to some custom landscape work he also buys cultured sod from other sod growers. Mork believes that the sod industry can be expected to grow as more home owners and industries demand the so-called instant lawn. He also feels that growers will have to continue to mechanize and automate their operations to cope with the labor problem. Not only does labor cost more today, he says, but responsible help is more difficult to find and to keep on the job.

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