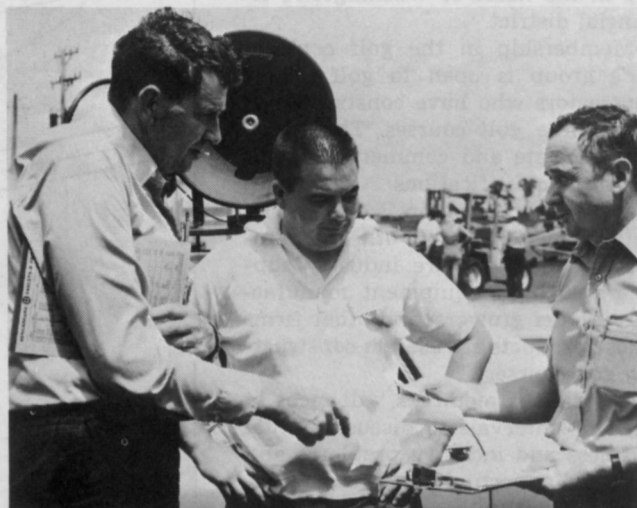




A record crowd of 447 attended the field day at the H & E Sod Farm, Momence, Ill.

## COSTS, QUALITY SEED SUPPLIES, INDUSTRY GROWTH

*These Stories Were Heard  
At Record Meeting  
Of American Sod Producers*



New president of the American Sod Producers Association is Tobias Grether, Cal-Turf, left, discussing field day procedure with host Dale Habenicht, H & E Sod Farm, center, and Dr. Henry Indyk, executive secretary, ASPA. Habenicht is a newly elected director.

**M**EMBERS of the American Sod Producers Association staged their 4th annual conference and field day the last week of July. This 1970 version was the most sophisticated to date. It verifies the fact that ASPA has become a viable organization.

A new feature was a pre-conference tour — a bus tour of Warren Turf Nurseries at Palos Park, Ill.—attended by 187 growers plus additional guests. President Ben Warren of the Warren organization served as host for the entire ASPA annual meeting. An educational tour proved more successful than ever. Registration at this second day climbed to 253. The annual field day demonstration — always a big event for ASPA

drew 447, a record count. Held at the H & E Sod Farm, Momence, Ill., the field day produced 31 special machinery demonstrations. Dale and Carl Habenicht of H & E served as hosts.

Growers are joining this association and more quality-conscious producers need to take this step. They are being encouraged to do so by present members of ASPA in order to better serve the industry. Much of the business meeting was devoted to means by which the group could further enhance the "instant lawn" idea. Along these lines, many feel that communication among growers is tantamount to more realistic pricing

and marketing procedures. Robert Daymon, Emerald Valley Sod Farm, Howell, Mich., enlarged on steps Michigan growers have taken in regular communications with each other. Via a unique reporting system, each reports on sod sales each week. Put together in a communique, the weekly reports eliminate some buyers from shopping and playing the alleged price of one grower against that of another.

During the educational program, Michigan County Extension Director Don Juchartz, Wayne County, discussed in detail how growers in that state organized this system and established it as part of their own



A similar crowd gathered a day earlier for educational sessions.

marketing program.

Also on the educational program, Art Edwards, editorial director of **WEEDS TREES AND TURF** magazine, released information on a new sod survey made in conjunction with ASPA. The new data shows considerable growth in the industry, when compared with a study made two years earlier. Biggest increase is in size of farms and the subsequent acreage of sod sold per farm. Two years ago, sod farms were averaging about 180 acres. Today, the average is 220. Total acres in the earlier study of 1968 amounted to 161,000 grown by just under 900 growers. Today an estimated 938 cultivated sod producers (an increase of 42 growers) in this country grow 217,298 acres. They market (on an annual basis) about 102,000 acres — or an average of 109 acres per farm. Applying wholesale field rates to this total marketed acreage gives some indication of the growth of this industry. The wholesale price of sod alone pushes the industry value to more than \$125 million. At installed prices, this figure may be doubled or tripled. (Complete data on this survey will be printed in a coming issue of WTT.)

Dr. Fred Grau, Grasslyn, Inc., State College, Pa., gave the group his views on the future of the turfgrass industry. As banquet speaker, Dr. Grau related steps taken in founding the H. B. Musser Turfgrass Fellowship, Inc., an international turfgrass foundation which is commonly becoming known as the International Musser Turfgrass Foundation. The organization has been

established to raise funds for teaching and research in the turfgrass industry throughout this nation, and the world as well. The name chosen is in honor of the late H. B. Musser,

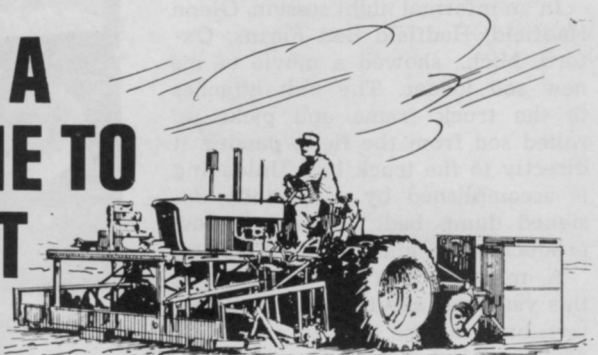
professor emeritus of agronomy at Pennsylvania State University, who was known throughout the world for his leadership in this industry.

Seed availability which affects the success of every sod producer was discussed at length by Doyle Jacklin, Jacklin Seed Company, Dishman, Wash. "More Fyiking than ever will be available this year," he said. "To elaborate somewhat," Jacklin continued, "We have had extremely hot temperatures in spells during the month of June and early July which has reduced the set of seed in the panicles or seed heads. Within the florest are many blanks instead of seed. Most of the fields produced good seed with good weight and fill, however, some fields in some areas are producing some withered seed of light test weight per bushel."

Jacklin continued by saying, "Although the common Kentucky bluegrass varieties were affected some by the higher temperatures, Merion seemed to be the variety hurt the most. We expect, therefore, a shortage of Merion seed this year and a continued strong Merion market. It's hard to believe, I know," he said,

(Continued on page 26)

# AT LAST A MACHINE TO HARVEST SOD



*the Growers way!*

- WILL ELIMINATE UP TO 10 MEN FROM YOUR LABOR FORCE.
- DEPENDABLY PRODUCES 1500 PLUS YARDS OF NEATLY ROLLED AND PALLETIZED SOD PER HOUR.
- THE "HARVESTURF" NEVER TRAVELS ON THE SOD, ALLOWING HARVESTING UNDER MOST WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND NEVER DAMAGING THE TURF.
- ALL POWER IS FURNISHED BY HYDRAULIC MOTORS WHICH ARE FULLY ADJUSTABLE AT ALL SPEEDS.
- THE "HARVESTURF" IS ABLE TO HARVEST SOD AT WIDTHS UP TO 24 INCHES AND LENGTHS TO 82 INCHES.



**BIG 'J' PRODUCTS, INC.**

A DIVISION OF

**SHAMROCK  
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"particularly when only 14 months ago Merion was less than half the price of what it is today. It demonstrates further, however, the influence of not only weather, but the grower's ability and desire to switch from crop to crop, depending on price, which creates major market fluctuations based on supply and demand.

"As expected," Jacklin pointed out, "We are learning more and more about Fylking Kentucky bluegrass seed production and expect a slightly higher than average crop this year.

"The heat didn't affect it nearly as much as Merion. This will mean a continued stable price and as we continue to learn more about this variety's seed production idiosyncrasies, we naturally expect a somewhat higher seed yield sometime in the future, providing we can find a substitute for field burning."

Jacklin reported harvesting about 40% completed as of July 29, and, barring any unforeseen windstorms or long, rainy spells, he believes the crop essentially made in the swath, and ready for cleaning.

In summary, he said, total availability will be lower this year and generally stronger prices across the board will predominate.

In an informal night session, Glenn Hadfield, Hadfield Sod Farms, Oxford, Mich., showed a movie of his new sod loader. The unit attaches to the truck frame and picks up rolled sod from the field, passing it directly to the truck bed. Unloading is accomplished by a specially designed dump bed. Hadfield is now producing and marketing the loader.

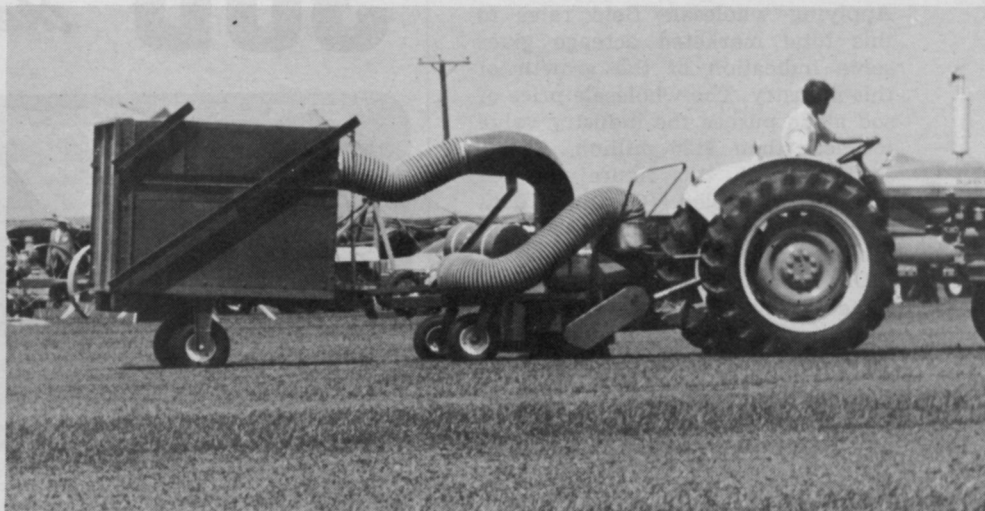
A major action at the meeting this year was addition of two directors, bringing the total to nine. New directors elected were George Stewart, Karandrew Turf Farms, Suffield, Conn., and Dale Habenicht, H & E Sod Farm, Momence, Ill., and the site of the field day. Officers for 1971 are: Tobias Grether, Cal-Turf, Inc., Camarillo, Calif., president; Joe McDermott, Loveland Lawns Sod Farm, Omaha, Neb., vice-president; J. E. Ousley, Sr., Ousley Sod Company, Pompano Beach, Fla., secretary; and Jack L. Kidwell, Kidwell Turf Farms, Culpeper, Va., treasurer. Dr. Henry Indyk, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., continues as executive secretary. Other directors are: Ben O. Warren, Warren's Turf Nursery, Palos Park, Ill., Robert Daymon, Emerald Valley Sod Farm, Howell, Mich., and Wiley Miner, Princeton Turf Farms, Inc., Hightstown, N. J. Miner is the outgoing president.



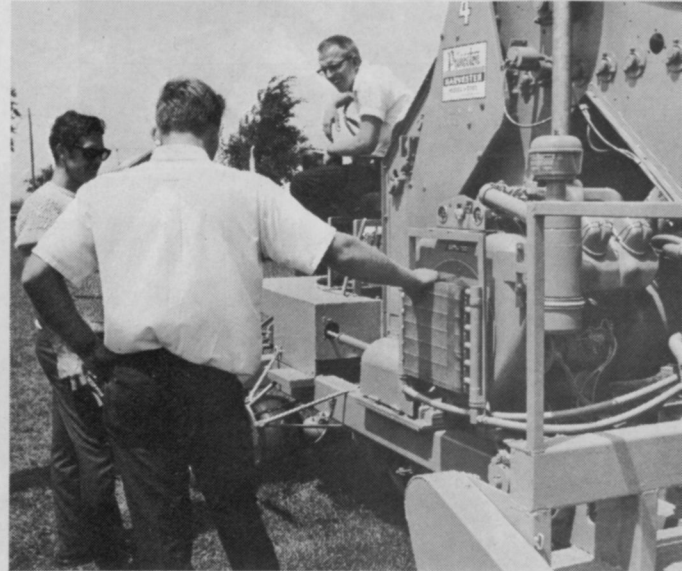
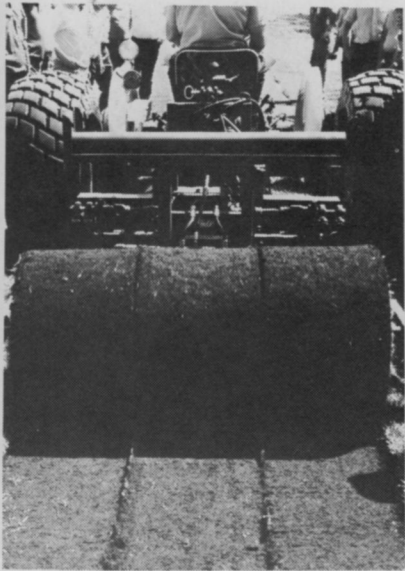
Gieringer Mfg. Co. showed its "Sod-Cropper," built around a lawn-garden size tractor.



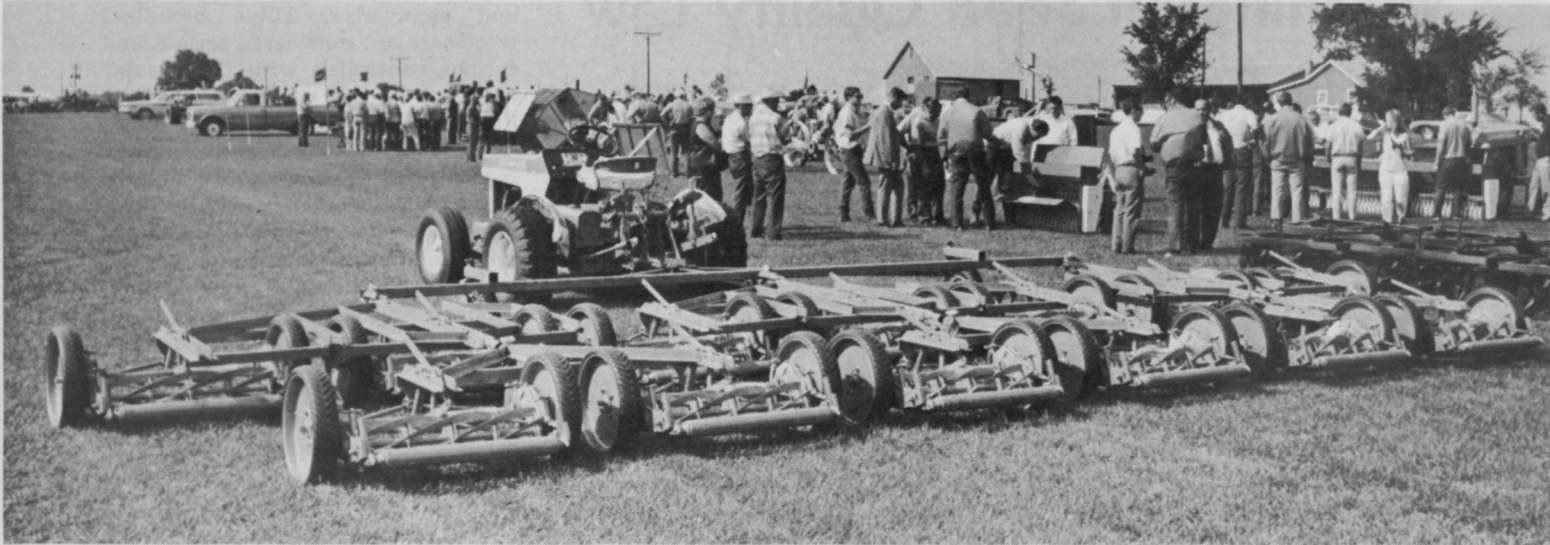
Mowing equipment ranged from this three-gang flail . . .



Four companies operated sweepers and grounds groomers. The one above is made by Giant-Vac Corp.



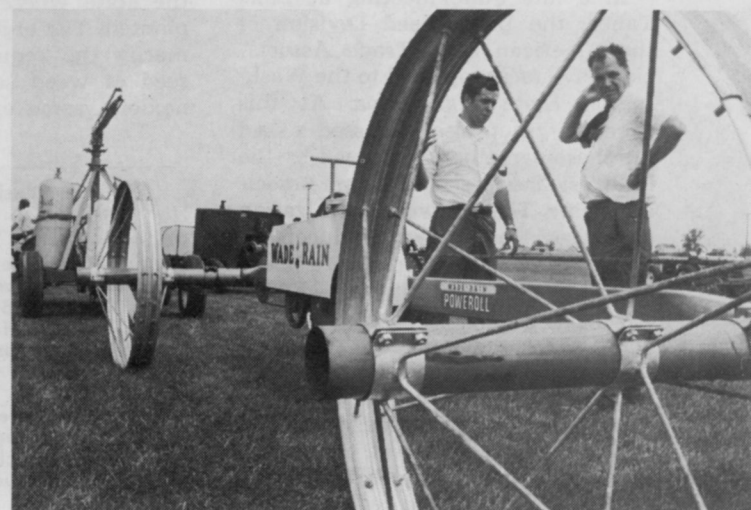
Beck Mfg. Co. demonstrated a new concept in sod rolling. Its Sod-O-Matic rolls three strips at a time, each 16" wide and up to 60 ft. long. Improved versions of big equipment, such as the Princeton Harvester, also performed for field day visitors.



... to 9-, 11-, and 13-gang reels cutting up to a 28-ft. swath.



Larson Machine, Inc., Princeville, Ill., demonstrated several models of seeders, fertilizer spreaders and sprayers.



This is the Wade Rain Powerroll sprinkler irrigation system. Thirty-one companies displayed products.