

Growers Visit Michigan

Sod Research/Field Tour

More than 150 out-of-state sod growers joined an equal number of individuals from the Michigan growers sod industry for a combined field day and sod tour at Lansing, Mich., this last month.

The event was two-fold—a Michigan State University sod producers field day, and a summer meeting of the American Sod Producers Association.

Michigan, with 150 plus growers producing over 20,000 acres of sod yearly, has research at the MSU station to back the industry. Primary research shown visitors was on muck soil, yet much of the new data presented applied far more widely.

The recently developed Michigan sod strength and sod rooting evaluation tests were stressed in many of the studies. The sod strength test measures the ability of sod to withstand harvesting and handling. In short, the test shows how well a strip of sod will hold together during lifting, moving, and being transplanted.

The sod rooting test shows how

well sod can be expected to root in a new soil when transplanted. In the rooting test, sod is transplanted and then after 25 to 50 days is pulled up. The force in pounds required to lift the sod is the measure of sod rooting ability.

Sod strength tests showed that blends of the newer varieties were generally superior to pure mixes and far better than the older common bluegrass varieties. Yet, rooting characteristics of the older, common Kentucky varieties proved excellent and often better than the new varieties and blends.

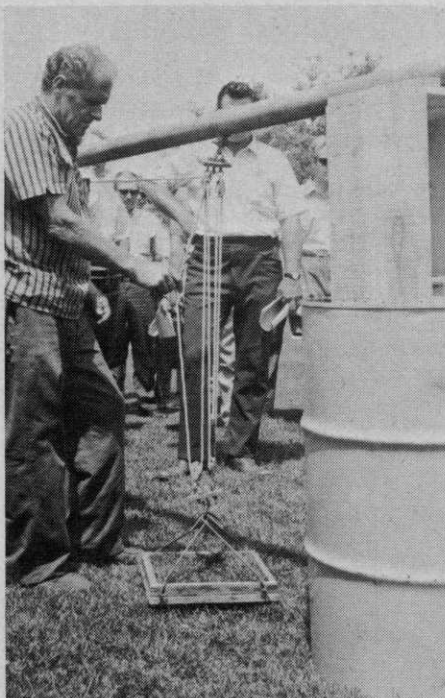
However, researchers pointed out that once laid, if sod is managed well (proper fertilizer and moisture) then any of the varieties or blends tested can be expected to perform satisfactorily.

Studies during the past three years show that as little as 5% Merion, on a seed weight basis, can be planted in a mixture with Pennlawn red fescue and still provide adequate sod strength. However, 20- to 30% Kentucky bluegrass is needed to

achieve adequate uniformity of stand in terms of leaf texture and nonbunchiness of the bluegrass in the red fescue dominant turfgrass community.

Control of *Fusarium* blight on Merion Kentucky bluegrass drew the attention of many sod growers. Professor J. M. Vargas, Jr., in his report said that Tersan 1991 (DuPont) gave excellent control if applied correctly. Successful treatment, he said, for this and similar products being tested, depend on getting the chemical down into the root zone. This is done by spraying on the sod, and following up with an inch of water to literally "water-in" the chemical. Dr. Vargas stressed the importance of soaking the chemical down into the roots before it has time to dry. Five treatments of this and others tested were applied at bi-weekly intervals. With the benomyl (Tersan 1991), 8 ounces per 1,000 sq. ft. were used. Another promising fungicide for control of *Fusarium* blight is Pennwalt 1771.

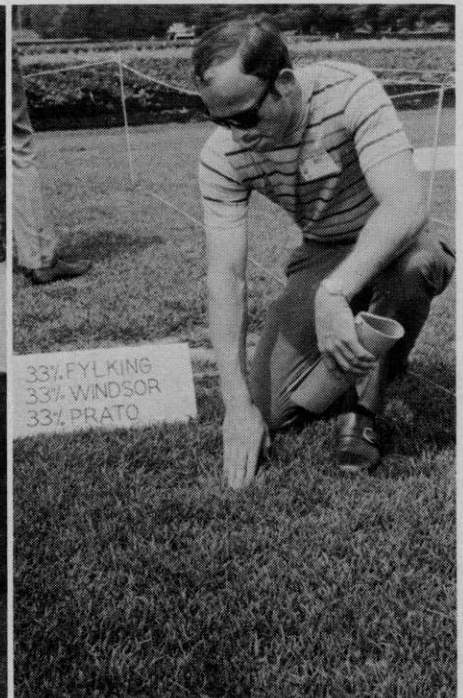
Sod rooting test.

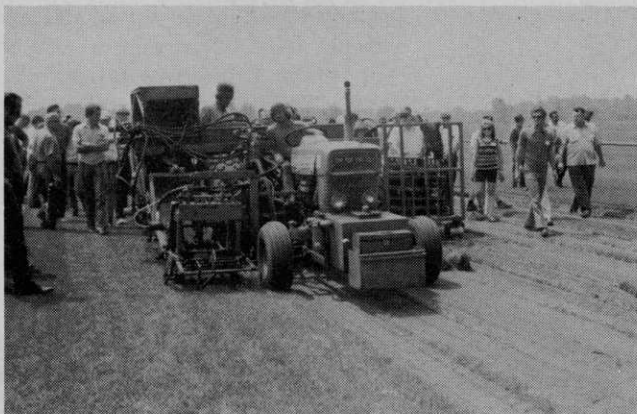


Dr. James B. Beard

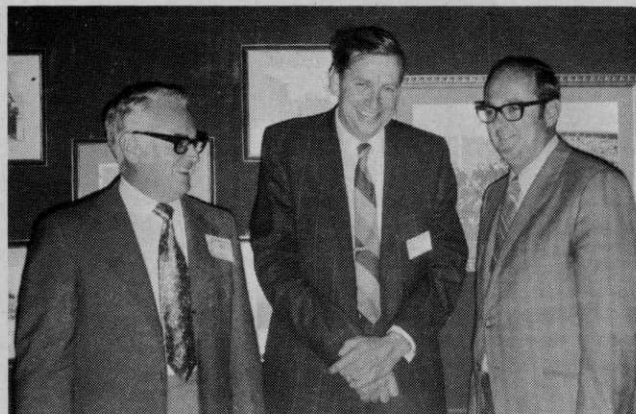


D. P. Martin





Bluegrass Sod Farm harvester in action during sod tour. Besides this farm near Allendale, growers visited Ludema Sod Farms at Clarksville, and Baldwin Sod Farms at Leslie and Stackbridge.



New ASPA board members William Latta, left, and John Nunes, right, pose with Tobias Grether, reelected president at the Michigan summer meeting. Plans are to stage major winter meeting in California.

This product, however, has only undergone one test at the 8 ounce rate in the Michigan studies. Several other similar new products including

Daconil and Elanco experimental are under test.

Dr. Jim Beard reviewed his post harvest sod heating studies. In short,

Dr. Beard said that temperature was the only significant problem in shipping sod. The basic source of heat is respiring grass blades. Thus, he said,

Table 1. Sod strength evaluations of nine Merion Kentucky Bluegrass-Pennlawn red fescue mixtures.
(6 x 15' plots; 3 reps; seeded August 26, 1968, and September 17, 1969)

Seed Mixture on percent by Seed Number Basis*		Michigan Sod Strength Test (in pounds)			
Merion Kentucky Bluegrass	Pennlawn Red Fescue	1968 Seeding Tested in		1969 Seeding Tested in	
		1969	1970	1970	Ave.
100(100)	0(0)	118	92	85	98
90(70)	10(30)	123	111	99	111
80(50)	20(50)	131	94	90	105
70(41)	30(59)	137	103	87	109
60(28)	40(72)	136	128	92	119
50(20)	50(80)	124	112	117	118
40(15)	60(85)	149	132	95	125
30(10)	70(90)	135	134	106	125
20(6)	80(94)	108	134	95	112
10(3)	90(97)	109	106	71	95
0(0)	100(100)	109	54	59	74

*Percentages in parentheses are on a seed weight basis.

Table 2. Sod strength evaluations of eleven Kentucky bluegrass blends.

(6 x 15' plots; 3 reps; seeded August 26, 1968, and September 17, 1969)

Bluegrass Blend Components						Michigan Sod Strength Test (in pounds)			
Merion % of blend	Newport % of blend	Park % of blend	Fylking % of blend	Windsor % of blend	Prato % of blend	1969 Seeding Tested in		1969 Seeding Tested in	
						1969	1970	1970	Ave.
			33	33	33	128	105	119	117
33		33	33			106	106	101	104
50					50	94	105	101	100
50		50	50			109	97	88	98
50				50		83	106	106	98
50				50		93	98	99	97
33			33	33		93	106	84	94
	33	33	33			114	74	91	93
	33			33	33	100	79	95	91
33	33	33				81	97	84	87
50	50					91	88	80	86

the shorter the cut before harvesting, the less the heating problem. Also, he pointed out that grass treated with less nitrogen prior to lifting and transporting suffers less deterioration from heat.

Of more than passing interest was Dr. Beard's report on the use of grass clippings. The MSU station has developed research dealing with pelletized grass clippings. While of potential practical use for livestock, small animal or poultry feed, the pelletized clippings, may prove to be an exciting product when used for laboratory animal litter. Dr. Beard pointed out that 60 million lab animals are used in this country and that their litter is changed about twice weekly. Grass clippings conceivably could compete with the ground corn cobs, shavings, and similar products now in use and costing about \$70 to \$100 per ton.

ASPA members reelected Tobias Grether, Cal Turf, Camarillo, Calif., as president. They also set their coming annual meeting dates as February 22-24, with the convention to be held in California near Disneyland. Details will be forthcoming as plans for the winter session are firmed up.

Other officers and directors were named as follows: Jack L. Kidwell, Kidwell Turf Farms, Culpeper, Va., vice-president; William Latta, Princeton Turf Farms, Kansas City, Mo., secretary; George Stewart, Karandrew Turf Farms, Suffield, Conn., treasurer. New directors elected were: John Nunes, Nunes Turfgrass Nurseries, Patterson, Calif., and Latta.

Spence Davis Co-Authors Insect, Disease Leaflet

A new leaflet on insect and disease control for lawn and turf areas has just been released by Rutgers University.

Authors of the publication include Plant Pathologist Spencer H. Davis, Jr., who besides being a staff member at Rutgers also serves as executive director of the Consulting Arborists Association, and Entomologist Louis M. Vasvary.

Subject matter includes a section on chemical pesticides, special lawn pest problems, lawn insects and insecticides, lawn diseases, and fungicide use on lawns.

Single copies are free by writing Bulletin Clerk, Ag Communications, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, N.J. 08901.



Doyle W. Jacklin

Doyle Jacklin Elected President Seed Trade

Doyle W. Jacklin was elected president of the Lawn Seed Division of the American Seed Trade Association at a St. Louis, Mo., annual meeting. He is sales manager for Jacklin Seed Company, Dishman, Wash.

The American Seed Trade Association is a national and semi-international organization which promotes the general business interests of persons, firms and corporations engaged in the seed industry in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Headquartered in Washington, D. C., the organization considers and attempts to solve problems of the seed industry, and to promote a high standard of business ethics in the seed trade.

Jacklin will serve as president of the Lawn Seed Division for a period of one year, during which time he will also assume a directorship of the association.

Ohio Turfgrass Conference Firm For Dec. 7-9

Executive Secretary Robert W. Miller reports that the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation has set firm dates for their annual Conference and Show. Dates are December 7-9.

The show which has become probably the largest single state show annually attracts both exhibitors

and show visitors on a regional and national basis. This year it will be held at the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, O. Exhibit details are available directly from Miller, 1827 Neil Ave., Columbus, O. 43210.

Lofts Pedigreed Seed Retains Name of Baron

Peter S. Loft, president of Lofts Pedigreed Seed, Inc., Bound Brook, N. J., has announced that the company will retain Baron as the name for the company's new Kentucky bluegrass variety, which was recently released to the industry.

The name, Baron, was found after being registered and marketed on a worldwide basis, to be in conflict with a Dow Chemical Company herbicide by the same name.

Loft reports that Dow, headquartered at Midland, Mich., released the name at a very fair price and he commended the company for its cooperation and fine attitude in the negotiations.

Loft states that the new crop of Baron looks particularly good and will be available shortly as certified Baron Kentucky Bluegrass.

LTV Aerospace Corporation Acquires R. L. Wilson Co.

R. L. Wilson Co., Inc., known in the weed control industry for its FoamSpray, has been acquired by LTV Aerospace Corporation, Dallas, Tex.

Wilson supplies facilities support service for the petroleum and petrochemical industries. The Wilson acquisition will operate as a wholly owned subsidiary according to Forbes Mann, LTV president. Robert L. Wilson, Sr., company founder, 69, will shortly retire but will remain as a consultant for a period of time.

The Wilson agri-chemical division, formed two years ago, produces fungicides, herbicides and insecticides that are marketed nationally for industrial, home and garden use.

This division recently introduced a chemical additive that causes pesticides to form larger droplets and foam when being sprayed. Called FoamSpray, it reduces wind drift and helps hold chemicals on foliage for longer periods of time.