

GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS

TURF

Lawn care growth evident at Ohio Turf Show

Lawn care appeared to dominate other turf interests at the Ohio Turf-grass Conference and Show in Columbus, Dec. 5-7. Dave Martin, OTF executive director, said that there were more representatives from lawn care companies than golf courses, and this was only the second year separate sessions for lawn care were offered. More than 1,500 turf managers attended the three-day event which enjoyed good weather for a change.

Chemicals and business dominated the lawn care sessions. Late fall fertilization and turf insect control drew large crowds. Dr. J.R. Hall of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University said supplying nutrients to bentgrass, after temperatures stay below 55 degrees but before the grass goes dormant, enables the grass plants to build up carbohydrate reserves for the flush of growth in spring. Early spring fertilization can cause carbohydrate depletion in root systems by June, Hall said, because of excessive shoot growth. Hall recommended use of soluble nitrogen for late fall fertilization. His data was limited to a band across the center of the U.S. from the East Coast to the Midwest. A fertilization program where one pound of nitrogen is applied in October, November, December, January and February was recommended.

Drs. Niemczyk of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center and Hellman of the University of Maryland spoke on turf insect control. Niemczyk reported data from tests on chinchbugs and treatment timing, the ataenius beetle, and the greenbug aphid.

Both Niemczyk and Hellman compared treated and untreated chinchbug areas. Niemczyk showed that an April application of Dursban controlled chinchbug damage throughout the year, although



Dr. Harry Niemczyk



Dr. John R. Hall, III

chinchbug migration in September into previously treated areas was found. Hellman said the place to check for chinchbugs is where dead and healthy turf meet.

Other tips offered by Hellman were that bluegrass billbugs overwinter in shady areas and then migrate into open areas in April when populations peak. One sign of a sod webworm infestation, Hellman said, is the presence of large numbers of birds on a turf area.

Niemczyk stressed the possible seriousness of two relatively new turf pests, the ataenius beetle and the greenbug aphid. Damage levels from both pests have showed remarkable increases.

Business sessions, including a four-member panel on starting a lawn care business, also received good attendance. Subjects covered were business expansion through diversification, cash management, and computers for routing and billing.

Perennial ryegrasses and proper overseeding were covered in both lawn care, golf course, and general sessions.

Hall said strengths of perennial ryegrasses include: medium texture, blends well with Kentucky bluegrass, fast germination, withstands low mowing heights, extended green season, good seedling vigor, and toleration of short-term drought without losing color. Weaknesses, Hall said, are: disease susceptibility, slow lateral growth, faster growing requiring more mowing, and color contrast.

Hall said, "Drs. Reed Funk, Bill Meyer, and Joe Duich have made tremendous contributions in breeding perennial ryegrasses." Bill Meyer, of Turf Seed Co. and Pure Seed Testing in Hubbard, Oregon, spoke to the Golf Course session on Turfgrass Varieties for Overseeding Golf Courses.

Other golf course topics were redesigning greens by Dr. Mike Hurdzan, managing *Poa annua* by Bill Burdick, and sand topdressing by a panel of three superintendents.

The panel pointed out that once sand topdressing is started, it must be maintained or else a layering effect will retard water percolation.