

# SOD PRODUCER NEWS

## New Mexico study reveals turfgrass large part of economy

The production and management of turfgrass in New Mexico "has added a new spoke to New Mexico's economic wheel," according to a survey commissioned by the Southwest Turfgrass Association and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.

The survey measured three things: total areas of turf in the State, area of turfgrass by species, and manpower requirements for commercial operations. Turfgrass was defined as that "land area covered by a maintained species of grass used for sports, recreation, general landscape, and commercial sod production."

Total areas of turfgrass, including highway right-of-way, golf courses, airports, schools, sod farms, parks, cemeteries, and other commercial facilities, totaled 359,000 acres. Commercial sod producers accounted for 750 acres. Common bermudagrass is the most common species of turfgrass grown, totaling 16,770 acres. Average man-hours for maintenance during May 1 through Nov. 1 totaled 44,270; between Nov. 1 and May 1, the total was 12,270 hours.

Dr. William Stephens, director of the New Mexico Dept. of Agriculture, said the survey "opened a lot of eyes to this industry in the state." He expects that it will attract dollars in increased sales of equipment, pesticides, and fertilizers.

For a copy of the survey, write Dr. Stephens at: New Mexico Dept. of Agriculture, New Mexico State University, P.O. Box 3189, Las Cruces, NM 88003.

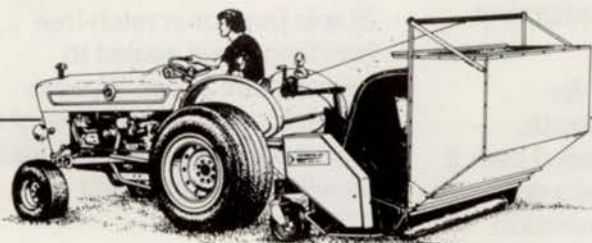
## Sod growers remain active when turf becomes dormant

December brings cold weather and frigid ground to all but the southern tips of the U.S., but work does not totally slack off for the sod grower.

Ralph White, vice president and director of Southern Turf Nurseries in Tifton, GA, is still selling turf to Florida golf courses in late November, but it is a rare load that ships out in December, January, or February. His crew rebuilds, repairs, and paints equipment; it also takes this time for vacations.

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