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PRODUCER NEWS

Turfgrass association plans soil tests

The New York State Turfgrass Association is planning a research project to develop a turfgrass fertilization program based on soil testing results. It will then make specific fertilizer recommendations to help turf managers of golf courses, athletic fields, sod farms, and residential grounds determine their fertilizer needs accurately. Thus, they will be able to eliminate nutrient deficiencies and also avoid the costly waste of over-fertilization.

Numerous sites will be selected across New York State for soil testing, including eight regional golf courses, two athletic fields, five residential areas, three sod farms, and one lime belt located on a general turf area.

The researchers will take turfgrass quality ratings at monthly intervals

during the growing season. They will note disease and insect occurrence and changes in turf species composition. Several times a year, they will collect samples of soil and plant tissue and analyze them for nutrient content. On high use recreational sites, wear resistance will be tested periodically.

The turfgrass association is currently seeking funding for the project throughout the state. The study is expected to run for three to five years, and each cooperator will receive yearly reports.

Insecticide kills ducks on turfgrass

Ward Stone, wildlife pathologist of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, has expressed grave concern about the death

of ducks and geese on turfgrass areas treated with Diazinon and other organophosphate insecticides. Although half the cases he reported involved illegal or improper use, he advocates discontinuation of these chemicals.

Dr. Haruo Tashiro of the Geneva Experiment Station in Geneva, New York, says, "Turfgrass managers should make every effort to prevent further bird kill by proper and judicious use of all pesticides, so that cancellation of needed products will not result, if it occurs at all, until safer and more effective substitutes are registered."

Oftanol is likely to replace Diazinon and Dursban for grub control according to Tashiro. However, Diazinon and Dursban are basic to elimination of all other turfgrass insects and their cancellation would create hardships.

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