

**20th
ANNIVERSARY**



In 1915, agriculture and turfgrass seed salesmen proudly stand by their Fords.

NORTHROP KING NEARS CENTURY MARK

This year, Northrup King Co. will celebrate its 98th anniversary.

It is a time to look back for most companies. Instead, Northrup King researchers are hard at work completing the introduction work on a host of new varieties of seeds, and new turf management techniques. This year also marks the beginning of a new structure for Medalist Turf Products, which serves the growing professional turf industry.

In 1884, Northrup King Co. was founded in Minneapolis, MN, on the banks of the Mississippi River. In 1915, its current headquarters were constructed in northeast Minneapolis. Since its beginning, the company has expanded its markets and product lines to serve a growing number of customers.

One of the company's expanding

markets is served by the Consumer Products Division, which provide turfgrass products both to professional and home lawn customers.

The company, which has been selling grass seed since the turn of the century, first entered the professional turf field in 1970, when it introduced Medalist Brand overseeding products, the first overseeding products to ever be introduced to the southern golf course market. Overseeding has since helped keep southern golf courses in top playing condition over the winter months.

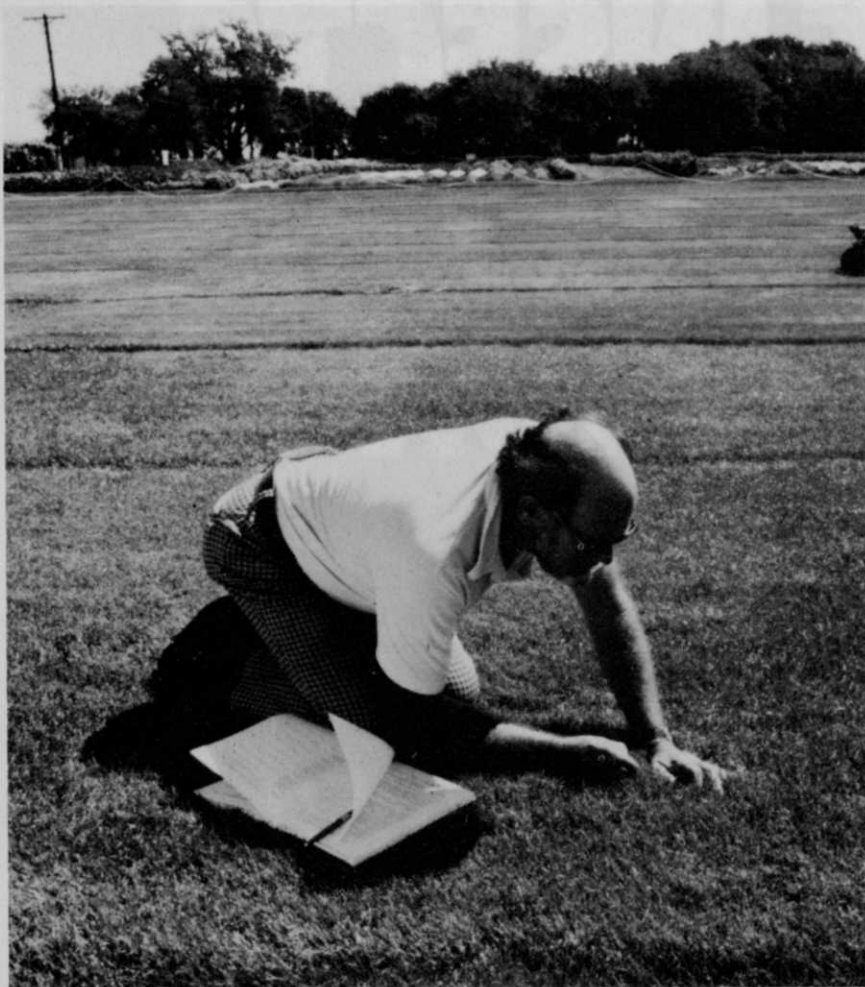
By the mid-70's, professional turf efforts were expanded to include sales of a variety of turfgrass products to professionals with a myriad of needs, in both warm and cool climates.

Today, Medalist Turf Products serve all segments of the professional turf industry. Northrup King grasses are used on golf courses, home lawns and boulevards, in parks and on athletic fields, at office sites, cemeteries and sod farms. In short, they are used for almost any professional turf need.

Part of the marketing strategy for Medalist Turf Products involves offering specialized turfgrass mixes designed for particular purposes, as well as selling straight seed varieties.

The Medalist Turf Products department was given its new name and structure just this year, to reflect its growth in serving turfgrass professionals. Currently, the company's market stretches across the

Continues on page 20



Howard Kaerwer is NK's director of turf research.

southern coast of the United States, into midwestern and western markets. The departmental reorganization brought with it a new distribution system. For a number of years, marketing efforts were concentrated in the southern overseeding market. The new approach to marketing helps bring together all areas by providing direction and increased services from the company's national headquarters. Each Northrup King geographical market is served by an area manager. This manager is a turfgrass specialist who brings professional expertise to the application of Medalist Turf Products. The Consumer Products Division is headed by Vice President Howard Schuler. Schuler, who has been with Northrup King since 1949, supervises all the group's activities, including Medalist Turf Products.

There have also been some notable corporate changes in the past twenty years. In 1976, Northrup

King Co. was acquired by Sandoz, Ltd., a Switzerland-based firm. This multinational company has interest in pharmaceuticals, dyes, agrichemicals and specialty food items. The purchase of Northrup King by Sandoz reflects the worldwide nature of the seed trade, and has helped to enhance the company's long-standing relationship with European seed and breeding firms, known as pioneers in the development of new grass varieties.

During the past two decades, Northrup King has introduced numerous improved grass varieties for professional and home use. Many of these were developed at the company's research stations throughout the country.

A major focus of the company's research has been the development of improved turfgrasses which not only have superior disease and insect tolerance, but which actually require less maintenance. In today's energy conscious market,

newly developed turfgrasses which need less mowing, watering and fertilizing, have met with tremendous success.

Research focusing on the environmental needs of diverse markets led to the introduction of a new, salt-tolerant grass variety, "Fulfs" *Puccinellia distans*, three years ago. This turfgrass performs excellently in saline and alkaline soil. It has stood up to testing under conditions ranging from northern boulevards, where use of salt as a de-icer kills most turfgrasses, to testing on coastal golf courses, which often experience the problems associated with salty soils.

Twenty years ago, Northrup King research led to the introduction of NK100, the first fine-leaved perennial ryegrass. This revolutionary variety debuted in 1962 as a vastly improved alternative to the coarse perennial and annual ryegrasses available at that time. Today, its well-received successors include Eton and NK200, as well as Delray and Goalie perennial ryegrasses.

Northrup King was one of the first companies to introduce improved bluegrasses, when it came out with Prato Kentucky bluegrass in 1962. This bluegrass was followed by two additional improved varieties, Parade and Rugby. These varieties were selected for their exceptional color, and improved disease and insect tolerance.

Low-maintenance, hardy fine fescues, which serve a variety of purposes for the professional and homeowner, have also been successfully improved by Northrup King. These drought-tolerant grasses have performed extremely well under low fertility conditions.

In addition to Medalist Turf Products for the professional turf market, the growing Consumer Products Division serves the home lawn, garden and horticultural market with a complete line of grass seed mixtures, fertilizers, vegetables and flower seeds.

Another Northrup King Co. group produces a variety of agricultural crop seeds ranging from corn to cotton, soybeans to sunflowers.

The past twenty years have seen particularly strong growth for Medalist Turf Products. **WTT**