

HOT TOPICS

No peace in the green industry?

...Not until its image improves, says Dr. James Watson.

COLUMBUS, Ohio—A millenium is “any period of great happiness or peace,” says one of its definitions. It’s also defined as a 1,000-year period.

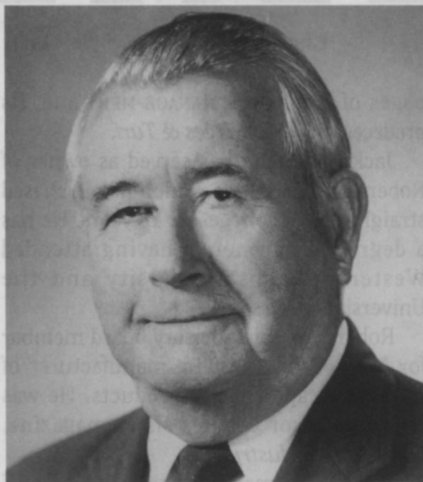
The year 2000 brings a new millenium but, Dr. James Watson says, the green industry can’t count on unbridled happiness or peace, not at least until it can bolster its image to the public.

“Many of the same concerns we have today will still be with us in the year 2000,” Watson said in a keynote speech at the Ohio Turfgrass Conference this past December. Watson is a former employee of Toro Inc. who has been, for four decades, one of the industry’s most respected spokesmen.

Among the concerns he cited:

1) The green industry will have to defend its use of scarce water resources. “Turfgrass is a valuable resource and it serves too many beneficial purposes to be ignored,” said Watson.

2) The green industry will have to prove that it doesn’t pollute either surface or underground water. “Turfgrass is second only to a forest in its ability to purify



Watson: Green industry must gain public’s respect.

and filter our waters,” claimed Watson.

3) Claims that turfed and landscaped areas drive away animals and birds. This often isn’t true, claimed Watson. “Many of our natural sites are enhanced aesthetically and are improved for recreational purposes when they are landscaped.”

Trends likely to continue into the next century include, according to Watson:

- Continued improvement of turfgrasses by plant breeders.
- Extension of the use of some warm-

season grasses northward, and some cool-season grasses south.

● Continued growth of the use of organic-based fertilizers.

● Bio-engineered grasses, not by the year 2000 but “more likely by 2010 or 2020,” said Watson.

● Reduced chemical pest controls. “Certainly we should anticipate that the use of chemicals—and in that group I would include soluble fertilizers and pesticides—will gradually decline on turfgrass sites,” he added. “They will not be discontinued, but the amount and frequency will be reduced.”

The biggest challenge facing the green industry as it approaches the 21st century, however, involves gaining the public’s respect, claimed Watson.

“Our publicity and public relations campaigns aren’t the best. They don’t do the job that they should,” he said. “Why, for example, are the experts in the green industry not recognized, not perceived as authorities and often get over-ridden on decisions involving turfgrass?”

“We must not let our future be decided by political entities, by environmental extremists, or anyone not familiar with the green industry. They must not dictate our future.”

—Ron Hall

LM names six to new edit panel

CLEVELAND—Two golf course superintendents, two landscapers, a lawn care businessman and an athletic field manager comprise the second LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT Editorial Advisory Panel, named this month by editor-in-chief Jerry Roche.

They will serve an 18-month term, through December, 1995.

“These six professionals were chosen for their commitment to the green industry, their experience, and their occupational and geographic diversity,” says Roche.

“We are proud to have them affiliated with the magazine.”

Joe Alonzi is golf course superintendent at Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y., where the Buick Open was held last month.

Alonzi has been a superintendent for 20 years, the last three at Westchester. He is a 1972 graduate of Rutgers University who is current president of the Metropolitan (New York) Golf Course Superintendents Association. He is a Certified Golf Course Superintendent and a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

Rod Bailey is president of Evergreen

Services Corp., Bellevue, Wash. He is a past president of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and the Association of Landscape Professionals.

Bailey has been with Evergreen since 1971. In 1982, he won the Outstanding Service Award from the Pacific Coast Nurserymen’s Association and in 1991 was named *Landscape & Irrigation* magazine’s “Man of the Year.” He obtained the title of “Certified Landscape Professional” from ALCA earlier this year.

Alan Culver, like Alonzi, is a Certified Golf Course Superintendent and a member of the GCSAA. He has been superintendent at Mahoney Golf Course, Lincoln, Neb., since construction began in 1975.

Culver is past president of the Nebraska