



TURF PROS RATE BETASAN® BEST FROM TEE TO GREEN—AGAIN IN '84.

In 1983, we surveyed state extension authorities and universities. We did it again in 1984 and Betasan, once again, came out the number one choice for crabgrass control and safety to turf.

That should come as no surprise. Comparing published test results from six different universities stretching across the U.S. from Rhode Island to California, no other herbicide consistently scores so high on crabgrass control, yet so low on injury to existing turf. No other preemergence herbicide even comes close for poa annua control.

Betasan is the only safe and effective product on bentgrass. It's also safe on established bluegrass, fescue, perennial ryegrass, Bermuda grass, Zoysia, bahia, centipede, St. Augustine and dichondra.

That makes it safe for your tees, fairways and greens—the safest crabgrass control of all.

Betasan not only offers longer protection than most other herbicides, but with multiple applications, you can achieve control of goosegrass, barnyardgrass, redroot pigweed, sheperds-purse, lambsquarters and deadnettle, as well as crabgrass and poa annua. Keeping more weeds out of play. Longer.

For all those reasons experts say, "Betasan has always been best." For all those reasons, it still is.

Available in granular or liquid formulations, with no settling out problems. Always follow label directions carefully. Stauffer Chemical Company, Specialty Products, ACD, Westport, CT 06881.

BETASAN
PREEMERGENCE HERBICIDE
NO. 1 AGAINST CRABGRASS.



The lawn care industry continues to set records in gross sales and growth. Analysts don't predict a slackening until the late 80s and a leveling off early in the 21st century. Right now, though, the industry is booming with companies becoming more professional and more service-conscious.

A Bull Market

It's a "bull market" in the lawn care industry.

According to the results of a survey done by *Lawn Care Industry* magazine, gross sales of the nation's leading lawn care and landscape management companies in 1983 was a record-setting \$2.22 billion. That represents a 20.2 percent increase over the 1982 figure.

Market growth should continue in the 20 to 25 percent range for the remainder of this decade, but the cloud isn't totally silver-lined. Certification, prenotification, self-policing and expanded services are industry spectres refusing to go away. Market saturation is also hanging heavily over lawn care companies in certain markets.

Industry profile

Respondents to the *Lawn Care Industry* survey indicated that an average of 90.8 percent of their accounts were residential. Translated, that means the readers of the magazine serviced about 6.4 million home lawns in 1983. Overall, more than seven million accounts were serviced.

About 7 out of 10 LCOs are involved in disease control, aeration and/or renovation. Of these add-on services, disease control is slightly more popular with 73.6 percent of the

respondents answering positively. Aeration tasks are undertaken by 71.9 percent of the respondents and renovation by 69.4 percent.

Fifteen percent claim their entire business is chemical lawn care. Another 7 percent claim to do exclusively landscape management accounts.

Where the money goes

The typical survey respondent spends 29.93 percent of his gross receipts on labor, 15.70 percent on fertilizers and pesticides, 7.94 percent on fuel and 4.02 percent on advertising.

The average reader's pretax profit is 20.53 percent. Overall, the predominantly chemical lawn care business scored higher in pretax profit than the predominantly landscape management business, 22.19 percent to 19.58 percent.

Based on these figures, the pretax profits of lawn care businessmen in 1983 were \$456.3 million. They pumped \$665.3 million into the labor market, spent \$176.5 million on fuel for their vehicles and paid \$89.4 million for advertising.

Telemarketing is a relatively new phenomenon to the industry. Just 5.8 percent of the respondents indicated they are involved in a full-blown telemarketing program, though 21.1 per-

cent said they use telephone solicitation as part of their advertising plans. Studies have shown, however, that telemarketing can be more cost-efficient than direct mail, cutting the cost by as much as one-half.

Marty Erbaugh, president of Lawmark Associates, Peninsula, OH, and a former Professional Lawn Care Association of America president, said, "You may choose to avoid the reality of these figures, but telemarketing is here to stay."

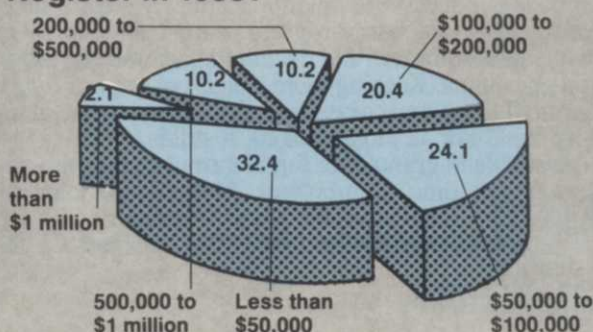
LCO profile

Three out of every four businesses in the lawn and tree care industries DO NOT belong to either a state or regional professional organization, according to the National Urban Pesticide Applicators Survey. The survey, done by Frederick W. Immerman of the Center for Survey Statistics, found that 74.37 percent of all tree/lawn care firms did not belong to a regional or professional organization. Just 18.73 percent of the 3,208 companies said that they did, compared to 41.14 percent of 5,496 structural pest control operators.

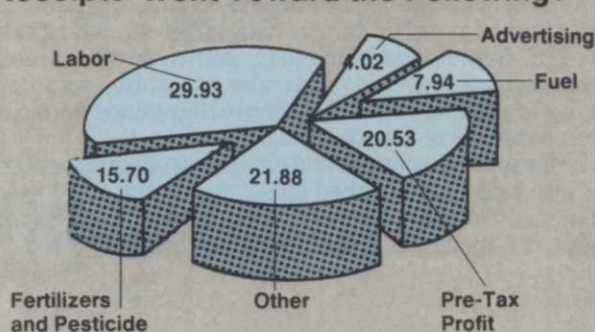
According to the Immerman survey, most of the companies involved in tree or lawn care fell into a bracket of less than \$25,000 gross sales per year.

continued on page 36

How Much Gross Sales Did You Register in 1983?



What Percentage of Your 1983 Gross Receipts Went Toward the Following?



QUALITY WORK AT OUR END MEANS QUALITY WORK AT YOURS.



The Melroe Company insists on maintaining the highest standards of quality in design and manufacturing in their versatile Bobcat loader line. Like landscapers, we demand high quality materials and workmanship, and that goes into every machine we build. Even with those stringent requirements, we supply you with a top quality loader at a competitive price.

That quality is reflected in ever-increasing demands for Bobcat loaders and attachments by landscapers in every segment of the landscape industry. Bobcat durability, ease of operation and maintenance, comfort and safety, parts and service reliability, and a strong dealer support network, give you job performance that can't be equalled by any other loader.

The Melroe Company's dedication to building quality machines is your assurance of value and performance. Landscapers have learned to rely on Bobcat quality to help build their own business on that same reputation.

Quality work - we're in it together!

MELROE COMPANY



A BUSINESS UNIT OF CURR EQUIPMENT COMPANY

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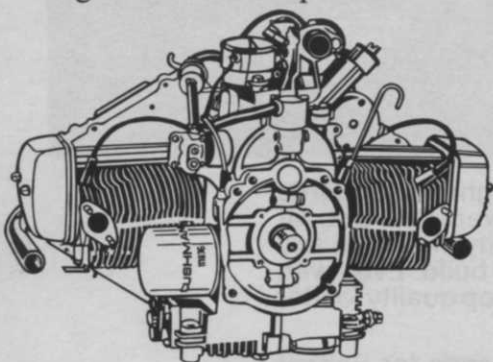
Circle No. 129 on Reader Inquiry Card

WHAT MAKES THE CUSHMAN GRASS GROOMING SYSTEM WORTH THE INVESTMENT:

*Twenty-two percent more horsepower.
Improved performance. Increased work value. Nothing cuts, catches
and dumps as fast or as economically.*

The problem with most mowers is that no matter how fast they cut, your work slows to a turtle's pace when it comes to cleaning up the clippings.

That's why we created the Cushman Grass Grooming System. With it, you can cut, catch, dump and resume cutting without interruption.



A NEW 22-HP ENGINE.

At the heart of our Grass Grooming System is the Cushman Front Line™ mower.

And at the heart of the Front Line is a remarkable new 22-hp gas engine.

It gives you the power to maintain blade speed through tall grass, dense weeds and other conditions that might stop other mowers.

It's built the way you want an engine built—tough. The crankshaft is forged alloy steel.

The cylinder heads are reinforced for extra strength under stress. And all the details—from the Teflon-coated O-rings and swaged-in-place valve guides to our exclusive Clean-Air Induction System—were designed with one goal in mind.

Years of dependable performance.

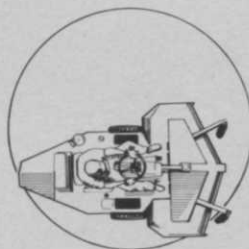
FIRST CLASS MOWING.

Here's where it all pays off: the quality of a Front Line mowing job.

The three cutting blades are positioned to overlap each others' swath slightly. So no grass is left uncut. The driver can maneuver around bushes, trees and sidewalks with incredible precision, thanks to the Front Line's Dual Traction Assist pedals—separate braking for each of the two front wheels that gives you a tight, zero turning radius.

THE FINISHING TOUCH.

Mounted to the Front Line's right side is the Cushman Grass Caddy™—a durable, non-stick



Dual traction assist pedals provide a tight, zero turning radius.

polyolefin hopper that collects up to 16 bushels of clippings and debris.

When it's filled, just back the Front Line up to a truck or container, engage the hydraulic control and the Grass Caddy hopper lifts 4½-feet above the ground and dumps.

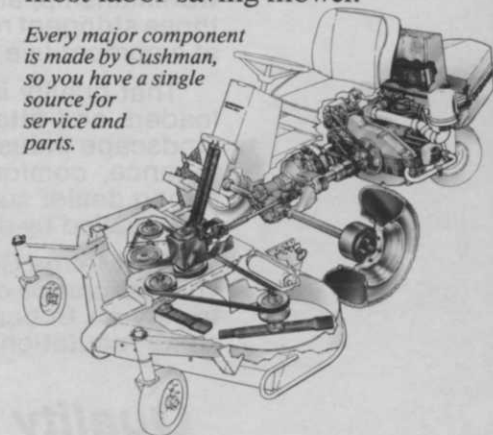
In seconds, you're back on the turf mowing again. And you've never once left the driver's seat.



The Grass Caddy collects up to 16 bushels between dumps.

All of which makes the Cushman Grass Grooming System the world's most labor-saving mower.

Every major component is made by Cushman, so you have a single source for service and parts.



A FREE DEMONSTRATION.

See the Cushman Grass Grooming System in action. Call toll-free:

1-800-228-4444.



MAIL TO: 3621 Cushman, P.O. Box 82409, Lincoln, NE 68501

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Please send me the Cushman Front Line catalog.

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FACILITY _____

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STATE _____

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It works harder because it's built better.

RELIABLE



Straight-forward engineering and clean, simple design make HUSTLER worth the difference!

Nothing wastes budget dollars more than unreliable, high maintenance equipment. That's why Excel designed HUSTLER with a simple, low maintenance dual hydrostatics system.

HUSTLER's dual hydrostatics are the key to minimizing your daily and scheduled maintenance. This time-proven concept eliminates expensive, high maintenance items like gears, chains, clutches and pulleys.

Instead, two reliable hydrostatic pumps power two hydraulic motors, one on each drive-wheel. The system works half as hard at half the pressure of a single hydrostatic system. Therefore, the HUSTLER drive system lasts much longer. And, HUSTLER has only **three daily lube points** compared with 10 - 15 on other competitive units.

HUSTLER dual hydrostatics mean less maintenance and service costs.

For you, it means more productivity and reliability. A HUSTLER is ready to mow when you're ready to go. That's why HUSTLER is...worth the difference!



This drive-wheel hydrostatic drive system is HUSTLER'S key to low maintenance and high productivity. Its simple, sound design makes HUSTLER the ultimate in reliability.

There are six HUSTLER models ranging from 18 to 32 hp with a host of attachments to meet year-round needs.



EXL-6B-284



GS-07S-10622

To see a **FREE HUSTLER DEMONSTRATION** on your own turf, **CALL TOLL FREE**

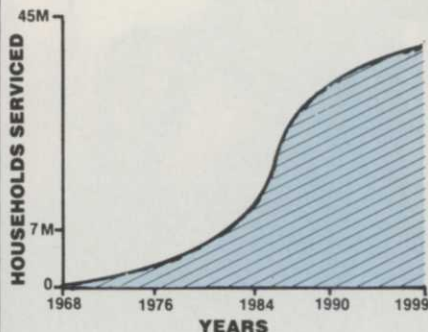
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SURVEY from page 32



Lawn Care Growth Curve

Homeowner attitudes also provide insight into the market. Six percent of 45 million owner-occupied single-family homes with lawns in this country contract for professional lawn care. That percentage increased to 13 for homes with incomes more than \$20,000 per year. Of all lawns contracted for professional lawn care, 34 percent are under 5,000 square feet. Fifty-four percent are under 7,500 square feet. Homeowners' biggest lawn problems are weeds (summer annual broadleaf); insects (white grubs); disease (Fusarium blight); and drought injury.

LCOs contacted for the survey had a generally upbeat outlook for the future of the industry.

Down the road

Jim Chapman of Lawn Aid, Bellevue, WA, says he sees the industry growing in two directions.

"There will be companies like mine involved in full service and I also see a need for specialty companies like ChemLawn which may perhaps become even more specialized. There's more money in specialization because there's more satisfaction in full service if you do a good job."

Joe Williams of Lawn Master, Pensacola, FL, ranks pesticide regulation at the top of his list of things affecting his industry's future. Says Williams, "It could be very damaging if it got out of hand. If we don't monitor it ourselves and get control of it—misuse of pesticides, that is—we've got enough of it that environmental groups will definitely take advantage of our mistakes and hurt us all in the long run."

One industry analyst sees lawn care industry sales conforming to a standard bell curve. This means the sales growth rate will start to decrease late in the 80's, and level off early in the 21st century.

WT&T

Quality turf production is no accident



and quality turf producers aren't either.

We know, because it's for the sake of quality that we exist. ASPA consists of, and exists for, sod producers like you who want to be the best, as sod producers and as business people.



AMERICAN SOD PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Like you, American Sod Producers Association members know that quality is a result of hard work, excellent resources, and experience.

And that's one of the major reasons they join ASPA—to put the years of experience of more than 450 other quality sod growers immediately into their hands, to produce better sod and to run better businesses.

We invite you . . . a quality turf producer . . . to join ASPA and add your experiences to the wealth of knowledge already pooled together from our members across the U.S., Canada, and 11 other countries.

Of course, there are other benefits ASPA members enjoy, too. Like the two national conferences every year (the next one coming up in January!), the members-only trade magazine and business newsletter, the special seminars and tours, and the advertising and sales aids at a cost well below what you would pay on your own. And, the benefits list continues to expand with such additions as group insurance programs.

But the primary reason we invite you to join us is because we think you're probably like us, striving to be the best and looking for every advantage to achieve it. ASPA is that edge.

We'd like to tell you more. Send us the coupon below, and we'll send you membership information describing in detail all of the benefits awaiting you as an ASPA member. Or, call us collect at 312/449-2890, and we'll describe the ASPA Quality Advantage by phone.

YES! I want all of the Quality Advantages I can get. Send me information immediately about ASPA membership.

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Sod producer since 19_____.
Total acreage in production _____ acres.

- Count me in!** Experience is the best advantage I can have; just tell me when my benefits begin.
- Tell me more** about the upcoming ASPA Midwinter Conference and Seminar scheduled for Jan. 30-31 & Feb. 1 at the Walt Disney World Contemporary Resort in Florida.

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ASPA, 4415 West Harrison, Hillside, IL 60162. For even faster action, call ASPA collect at 312/449-2890.

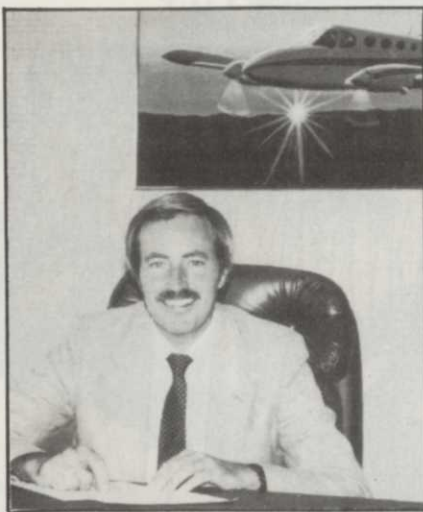
With only six years in the business, Jim Marria's Perma Green, based in Boise, ID, continues to sprout branches in a multi-state area. Even in a saturated market, Perma Green's brand of quality and service has kept it on top of the lawn care market.

Gentleman Jim

by Maureen Hrehocik, managing editor

Six years ago, Jim Marria sat in the garage/office of his newly-formed company, Perma Green. He had one truck, one employee and a secretary—his wife, Karen.

Today, Marria sits in a new office complex overlooking the Boise, ID, airport (where he keeps the company plane), has 45 vehicles, 120 employees, five multi-state branches with plans to open a sixth next year, and has sampled the sweet taste of success. This year Perma Green will do about \$4 million in business; ninety-five percent of that will be residential, the other 10 percent commercial. His



Jim Marria, president and founder of Perma-Green flanked by a drawing of his twin-engine Cessna.

company is a leader in the industry and not even overtures of a buyout by the largest lawn care company in the country has deterred Perma Green's growth and determination.

Growth has been so great that Marria, 35, even got his pilot's license. His twin engine Cessna is a much more efficient way of getting to his company branches in Reno, Spokane and the Tri-City area than driving or commercial flights.

The branch visits have been cut down, though, usually to once a month.

"When you have good managers, you don't need to supervise as much," Marria says.

For all his success, Marria prefers a low profile and downplays his accomplishments. "I'm a good organizer and can accomplish a lot in a short while."

"When you have good managers, you don't need to supervise as much."

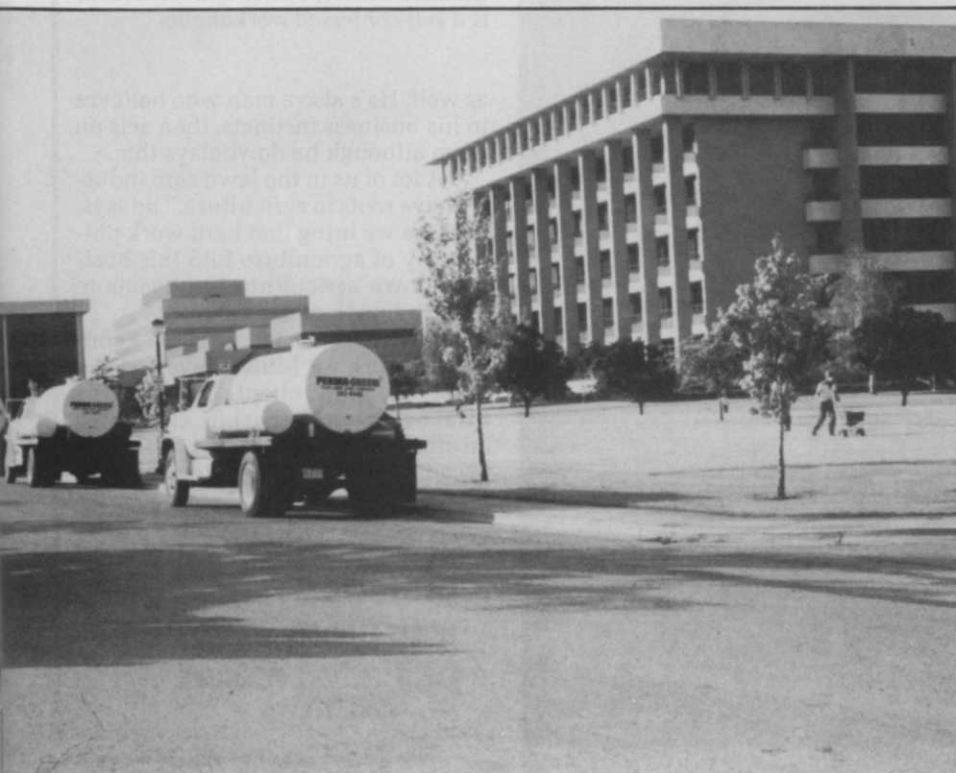
Where it all started

Marria's gut feeling that he knew what he was doing and knew the industry well prompted him to start his own business back in '78.

"I also knew we had good people," he says. Much of what Marria learned about lawn care he credits to his eight year tenure with the Davey Tree Service Co. of Kent, OH. There, along



Marria's company is very safety conscious. Worker pictured is wearing boots and mask to apply Oftanol.



Part of Perma-Green's fleet lined up by one of its larger commercial clients, Morrison-Knudsen in downtown Boise.

with Marty Erbaugh, (now owner of Erbaugh Corp., Lawnmark Division, Peninsula, OH), they started Davey Tree's lawn care division.

"We did a lot of research on lawns back then," he relates. "I also read a lot. It was difficult to convince people they needed lawn care. Word of mouth and seeing the product was, in

"It really scares me (pesticide regulation). It's a larger threat than most people perceive."

the end, what convinced them." Marria continues his people-oriented philosophy. He says he looks for people who are willing to give 110 percent.

He, in turn, practices what he preaches. He makes visits to branches as often as necessary, usually about once a month. Before he had the man-

agerial manpower to delegate some of that responsibility, he made visits more often.

"I'm still there to support my managers when they need it."

Marria has two managers who report directly to him. Lowell Troyer is the branch manager and Mike Spicer is division sales manager. There is also a marketing manager and a corporate office manager. All marketing work, including marketing studies, is done internally.

Marria's efficient corporate team affords him time to indulge in one of his favorite pastimes—running. The 35-year-old puts in about five miles a day and in May ran his first marathon—in Paris. Summing up the grueling experience, Marria says, "I finished."

"I was supposed to run the Seattle Marathon, but a week before it, I hurt my leg during a run in San Francisco. I was going to Europe anyway and decided to try to run the Paris marathon. It was a goal."

Back home in Boise, Marria runs frequently in local races.

Biggest threat

Like other concerned lawn care company owners and operators, Marria feels the single thing that could bring the industry to its knees is governmental pesticide regulation.

"There are so many things we (lawn care industry) could cope with, but not this," predicts Marria. "It really scares me. It's a larger threat than most people perceive.

"Our business is to provide green, weed-free lawns," he continues. "If chemicals such as 2,4-D are limited in non-agricultural applications, it could do us in."

Marria feels exposure as an industry is 98 percent of the solution.

"Lawn care operators must join associations and become involved in

"Our service and quality will continue to grow; that's how we will continue to offset the competition."

the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and with the Pesticide Public Policy Foundation."

Nowhere but up

Marria's business continues to grow. Last year, business increased about 30 percent. But, Marria is quick to admit the market is small and it's becoming somewhat saturated.

"Our service and quality will continue to grow; that's how we will continue to offset the competition."

With his increasing managerial responsibilities, Marria does admit missing being out in the field and dealing with people.

Looking back on his experiences and on starting a business, Marria says two things have definitely changed about him.

"I've become a much better businessman. Now there is more and more of a need to do things right. My decisions have a major impact on the future of this company." He pauses and adds with a smile, "I've also gotten a lot more grey hair." **WT&T**

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT



Richard Miller, owner of Ever-Green, is a self-confessed workaholic.

as well. He's also a man who believes in his business instincts, then acts on them although he downplays this.

"A lot of us in the lawn care industry have roots in agriculture," he says. "I guess we bring that hard work philosophy of agriculture into this business. Iowa agriculture just seems to breed a bunch of workaholics."

Chuck Kirkpatrick, who does consulting work for Miller, revealed the other side of his client, "He's willing to take risks for the payoffs. He creates an atmosphere that we like. It's a fast-paced, entrepreneurial atmosphere."

"I would have preferred farming, but was pretty sure I'd be broke the rest of my life."

Ever-Green's Gold

The largest lawn care company in Colorado attributes its success to knowing its territory and delivering a quality product.

by Ron Hall, assistant editor

You can tell the boss from the others because he's the only guy wearing bluejeans.

Richard "Dick" Miller, the boss of Ever-Green Lawns, stepped from his office wearing jeans with his sport-coat, a tipoff of sorts that in spite of being the owner and operator of the biggest lawn care business in Colorado, he's about as down to earth as a person can get.

How much more down to earth do you want?

Son of an Iowa farmer, Iowa State University ag graduate. "I would have preferred to have farmed but I was pretty sure I was going to be broke the rest of my life," he says almost wistfully; and, at the relatively young age of 36, he isn't ruling out some farming yet which would be good

news for his competition in the front range of the Rocky Mountains which, when the sun is setting nice and big and red, throw a heck of a shadow well out over the lawns of Miller's 40,000 lawn care customers.

Discard any notions about plans for Miller's imminent retirement, however. His lawn care company is prospering with five branch operations serving customers from Fort Collins to Colorado Springs. Ever-Green Lawns employs 300 and uses more than 70 pieces of equipment.

In spite of his background—or, more correctly because of it—Miller is certainly no hayseed, a hard worker for sure, but no rube. He's the kind of guy who believes in getting to work at 8 a.m. and putting in a full day, which is what he expects from his employees

Revolutionary new truck

In line with that assessment is Miller's latest project, the development and manufacture of a stainless steel tank truck specifically designed for the lawn care industry by Denver Leasing and Manufacturing, the manufacturing arm of Ever-Green Lawns. Like the lawn care business, it too is based in Golden on the fringes of Denver.

"I think this (truck) will be a big deal for us," Miller says. "We've entered the marketplace and we will have a booth in Tampa (Professional Lawn Care Association of America Show Nov. 12-15). I think we've got a better mousetrap and we've accomplished what we set out to do—to produce an extremely high quality item."

The truck, designed and engineered by Bob Smith and Steve Tangsrud, features a low center of gravity, automatic transmission, power steering and handles beautifully, Miller explains, while cutting maintenance and fuel costs in half over models presently in use. "This fits into our philosophy of minimum maintenance. We're not in the lawn business to maintain trucks. We're in business to satisfy customers," he adds. "It (the truck) is a little bit more expensive, but a lot less costly to maintain."