

USDA PROVIDES OFFICES FOR SPORTS TURF COUNCIL

The National Sports Turf Council (NSTC) hopes the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can contribute to its growth today as it did to the growth of the United States Golf Association (USGA) in the first half of this century.

Back then, the USDA provided the fledgling USGA with office space, support services and research facilities at the USDA Turf Gardens located in Arlington, VA, now the site of the Pentagon. That assistance organized golf turf research in the country for the first time and led to the rapid development of improved golf turf technology. The USGA spread this new technology by creating the Green Section and publishing the Green Section Bulletin.

When the Pentagon was built for World War II, the USDA moved its turf research facilities to the Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, MD. Fred Grau, who was director of the USGA Green Section in 1945 is today the chairman of the NSTC executive committee and lives in Beltsville. He and the executive board of NSTC agree that public sports fields today need the same centralization of turf research that golf courses did 60 years.

Dr. Jack Murray, research leader at Beltsville, approached the director of the facility, Dr. W. Klassen, and proposed that USDA enter a cooperative agreement with NSTC to speed up and centralize sports turf research. Klassen jumped at the idea and an agreement was signed during the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference in Phoenix, AZ, this month.

Under the terms of the agreement, USDA will provide NSTC with an office at the research center, secretarial support and space for field and laboratory research, all at no charge. The office will be staffed by Grau and Murray until a full-time executive director is hired. "We hope to have a director and perhaps two researchers with NSTC when enough funds can be raised," says Murray.

"There is a growing interest worldwide in playing field safety and higher interest in contracting out athletic field work," states Murray. "In this country sod farms do between \$300-400 million in wholesale business. Americans spend another \$24 billion each year on lawn care. But, sports fields are often neglected. Priority from the playground to professional sports."

NSTC is a non-profit organization working cooperatively with other turf organizations to improve the state of abused, over-used athletic fields and school playgrounds in the U.S.

The new address for the National Sports Turf Council is: c/o USDA Agricultural Research Station, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, MD 20705. (301) 344-3655.

IMC'S INDUSTRY GROUP SOLD, RENAMED AIMCOR

The Industry Group of IMC Corporation, which manufactures and markets Turface soil conditioner, has been purchased by Weise Peck and Greer, a New York investment group, and renamed AIMCOR (Applied Industrial Materials Corporation). William Wrobel, Aimcor's director of corporate communications, says IMC sold the group to help pay for its purchase of Mallinckrodt Chemical Corp. last year.

Aimcor will be moving its headquarters from IMC's headquarters in Mundelein, IL, to the Northbrook area shortly says Wrobel.

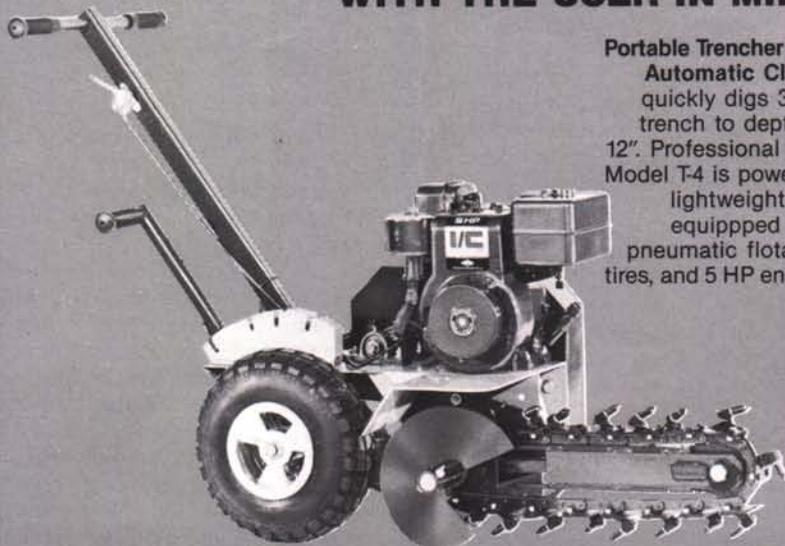
It will also have group headquarters in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. The Minerals Group, which produces Turface, will operate out of the Illinois corporate offices. Charles Gallagher, former chief executive officer of Susquehanna Corp. and vice president of building products for Owens Corning, is the new CEO for Aimcor.

Turface, a processed-clay soil conditioner used for basepath mix, is one of 75 products manufactured by the corporation. Wrobel says marketing of Turface, a product closely related to "kitty litter," will be more aggressive under Aimcor. One plant in Blue Mountain, MS, produces all soil conditioner and kitty litter for the company. It has been expanded recently to increase production.

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