

LETTERS

NTEP Canceled

With the presentation of the FY97 budget by President Clinton to Congress in late March, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) canceled its funding of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) effective October 1, 1996. The ARS apparently considers the US turfgrass industry a very low priority because, with this action, the USDA canceled essentially its only funding in support of the turfgrass industry. If this decision is not reversed, the USDA will have severed ties to the turfgrass industry after more than *seventy* years of financial support.

The good news is that there is still time to reverse this decision. The USDA and ARS need to know the following.

1. Turfgrass is a \$30 to \$35 billion industry in the US.
2. The turfgrass industry is growing faster than any other segment of agriculture. Many states, including Florida, Maryland and North Carolina, have documented that turfgrass is their number one or two agricultural industry.
3. NTEP fits perfectly into USDA objectives, such as integrated pest management and sustainable agriculture (reduction of inputs while maintaining quality). NTEP is an excellent example of how private industry, state universities and the federal government can cooperate to address critical issues in a cost-effective manner.
4. Much positive publicity has resulted from past USDA support of turfgrass research and the NTEP. This publicity is crucial to a positive image of USDA among a growing urban population.

If you are interested in saving this program, we would appreciate you contacting your senators and representatives and telling them you support turfgrass research funding by USDA. Also, the following individuals within USDA need to hear from you:

Secretary Dan Glickman; USDA; Jamie L. Whitten Federal Bldg., Room 200A; 14th & Independence Ave. SW; Washington, DC 20250; phone: (202) 720-3631.

Dr. Floyd Horn, USDA, ARS Administrator; Jamie L. Whitten Federal Bldg., Room 302A; 14th & Independence Ave. SW; Washington, DC 20250; phone: (202) 720-3656.

Dr. Edward Knipping, Deputy Administrator; USDA, ARS, NPS; BARC-West; Bldg. 005, Room 125; Beltsville, MD 20705; phone: (301) 504-5084.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact NTEP by phone (301-504-5125), fax (301-504-5167) or the Internet (kmorris@asrr.arsusda.gov).

Kevin N. Morris, national program coordinator
National Turfgrass Evaluation Program
Beltsville, MD

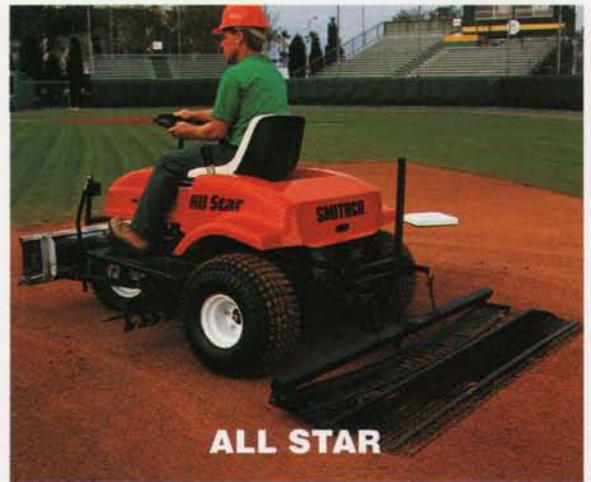
Munson Amendment

The article in the March *sportsTURF* on the Thurman Munson field, and the recognition of the field, was great to see. Unfortunately, the information on where all the materials for the construction of the project came from was overlooked.

Being the supplier of the turf and being curious of the origin of other materials, I feel the article fell short of the informative side, so other sports field managers might learn more about the extremely tough conditions all the material went through and still came out beautifully.

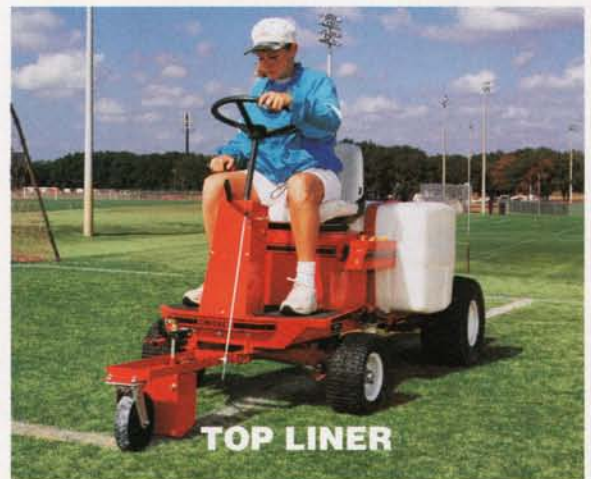
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