

FERTIGATION UPDATE

The sports turf market continues to grow as do sports complexes. Some larger complexes now encompass more than 50 acres. These major complexes are assets to their cities and turf quality is crucial to their success. Heavy, constant turf traffic can make maintenance a problem, of course.

To complicate this problem, maintenance budgets are heavily scrutinized and subject to cuts, meaning quality sometimes can be compromised.

Turf managers looking for solutions should consider fertigation, the practice of injecting liquid nutrients into the irrigation system.

Fertigation converts ordinary irrigation water into fertile water. Notice after a summer thunderstorm the dramatic growth and restored green of turf. This phenomenon is caused by the lightening in the storm, which converts nitrogen in the air into nutrients in the rain, therefore creating fertile rain. Fertigation can provide a thunderstorm for your sports field each time you irrigate.

This method of feeding the turf lightly with each irrigation cycle will control plant growth, build the health of the plant and soil, and produce a deeper and

denser root system. Fertigation gives the option of pushing the growth after heavy play, reduce labor, completely eliminate or reduce the use of pesticides, and conserve water.

How can fertigation save water? It is the most efficient way to apply fertilizer both through foliar and deep root application. The soil and the plant health are allowed to reach maximum health and stability. Healthy plants do not require as much water, nutrients, herbicides, or pesticides. A horticulturist for a casino in Las Vegas reported that he had not used a single drop of pesticide in the past 5 years since he began injecting special organic fertilizers, and has significantly reduced water use.

There are fertigation systems to accommodate 1-acre baseball fields as well as large sports complexes, including sites as large as one with a pump station that runs at 3,000 gal/min @ 150 psi. **ST**

This article was supplied by Turf Feeding Systems, Houston, TX, a leading fertigation company, www.turffeeding.com or 800-728-4504.



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