

Buying vs. leasing?

Everyone loves new equipment. But the boss gets grumpy when asked to pay for it. What finance options should one consider?

"A first step is to define the strategy for each piece of equipment," advises Rhonda Flanery, manager of sales and marketing, Golf & Turf Leasing, John Deere Credit. "Is the goal to own the equipment or to replace it frequently?"

"A facility may have a different strategy for each category of equipment, or even each unit," she says.

Brian Melka, director of product management at Jacobsen agrees that all options should be considered. He says a good salesperson will walk through an operation, looking at requirements – acres mowed, quality of cut, personnel on hand.

Cash flow considerations then come into play. There are several finance tools available to address such concerns for sports turf facilities. For example for municipalities, Flanery says, John Deere Credit offers a municipal lease that spreads payments over a specified term (as much as 60 months), with ownership of the equipment resulting at the end of the lease.

"Some customers can make the most of their budgets by selecting our operating lease for equipment that is slated for frequent replacement (every three or four years)," she says.

On the other hand, equipment that isn't replaced as often is generally well suited for a lease-purchase (or \$1 buy-out lease).

When it comes to the leasing vs. buying decision, it's critical for sports turf managers to turn to local experts. Each field, fleet of equipment, and operator is unique. There simply isn't a "one size fits all" approach to this decision. Rather, determine needs, consult with experts, and seek acquisition solutions tailored to a specific situation.

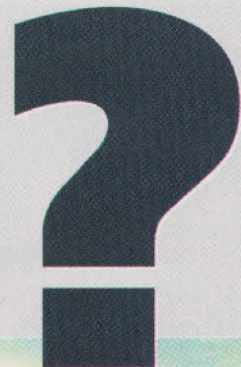
"In many situations, spreading payments over a longer term tends to suit cash flow-conscious operations better than a capital expenditure," Flanery says.

When is it time to change out equipment? "When the continuing preventive maintenance is more expensive than the ownership cost," Melka says.

Chris Harrison is a veteran free lance writer who specializes in turf topics.

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

Can you identify this sports turf problem?



Problem: Soccer goals are not in correct position

Turfgrass Area: Soccer Field

Location: St. Louis, Missouri

Grass Variety: AstroTurf

Answer to John Mascaro's Photo Quiz on Page 33

*John Mascaro is President
of Turf-Tec International*



John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

Answer:
from page 14



The Soccer goals are not in correct position because the field has moved. This photo is from the Saint Louis Soccer Park during the summer flood of 1993. The park is located between the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers and during the flood, the synthetic Astroturf field floated off of the blacktop foundation. In fact, the entire synthetic turf soccer field became a large raft and is actually floating 4 feet off the ground, notice the field height relative to the soccer goal. Synthetic turf in a flood plain can be risky... even the new rubber infill systems can pose a risk as the rubber has a potential to float away.

Photo submitted by Dr. Dave Minner, Iowa State University Horticulture Dept, Ames, Iowa.

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz please send it to Turf-Tec International, John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Suite # 13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 or email to john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted become property of SportsTurf Magazine.

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