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Getting "good milk"

I'm a big fan of inspirational quotes. There are books I cherish loaded with quotes used to get points across at special times. As my career was evolving into a management role, I went searching for philosophies about leadership. A quote from Mary Kay Ash struck like lightning, and I try to hold its message close. "Everyone has an invisible sign hanging from their neck saying, 'Make me feel important.' Never forget this message when working with people." Ross Kurcab, CSFM, put it more succinctly in a chapter newsletter years ago when he wrote, "Happy cows give good milk."

As managers our success depends on how we juggle our operations. Most critical is how we juggle the dynamics of our team. What are you doing to make each team member feel important? Simply, are your cows happy? Each of us wants to feel worthy and gratified. A sincere "thank you" goes far in reinforcing to each crew member that he/she plays an important role in the team's success. When we have the chance to do more than say thanks, we should.

I challenge you to take the acknowledgement of your crew and your entire operation one step further. STMA's "Field of the Year" program is a perfect way to say "job well done" to your teammates. All year long you've implored them to give extra effort, or as George Toma says, "...and then some." Sports turf managers succeed or fail depending on the passion of our crews. Going through the process of developing an entry for Field of the Year is a fabulous exercise. Engage your crew in the effort, and everyone will gain a better understanding of how your year unfolded. See the entry online at www.STMA.org.

STMA's Awards Committee meets in November to review all entries and determine the facilities to be recognized as Field of the Year winners. This year we're offering a new division that recognizes sporting grounds. This includes polo, lacrosse, horse tracks—any sport played on grass that isn't covered in our traditional application.

STMA Awards recognition is not like winning a beauty contest. The judges work very hard to acknowledge sports turf managers who "did the most with the least" relative to demands, budget and resources. STMA sincerely strives to honor progressive managers and crews. There's no better way to honor your team than to bring home a national Field of the Year award. Put aside your humbleness of not wanting to draw attention to yourself. This effort is for your team. The award is one way to let constituents and the public know that finances are being maximized. It's certain that the award will hang for years in a visible place and that many groups will leverage it.

Most of all, you'll be able to walk the award around, and let each person on the team know how he or she helped to make the recognition possible. I promise you'll have a happy cows giving good milk for a long time.



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