

CHEMICAL LOG

PLANT GROWTH REGULATORS IN OVERSEEDING

Winter overseeding relies on cooler temperatures to favor development of the newly seeded turfgrass. However, inconsistent weather can cause havoc with even the most carefully planned transition from warm season turf to a cool season variety.

Making a plant growth regulator (PGR) application before seeding into existing warm season turf stands can give the new seedlings a competitive advantage. This may help hasten the establishment of the overseeded grass.

Soil moisture, nutrients and light will be more accessible. Also, the PGR will control the existing turf growth for three to four weeks, relieving the compaction stress from mowing.

For this program, you need to select a PGR, such as Embark, that has a short residual life. The residual life is the length of time in which the product remains active. Although a PGR will control existing turf growth for several weeks, it won't affect newly introduced turf after the residual life period has past. Check the product label for the product's estimated residual life.

The following overseeding transition program can give good results when you seed existing bermudagrass turf in either core aeration holes or by slit-seeding.

*Mow bermudagrass about two to three days before the PGR application. Keep the mowing height extremely low, about 3/4-inch high.

*Apply the PGR at recommended rate at least three days before you plan to overseed. In California, apply the PGR two weeks before overseeding.

*Mow the grass once about two days after the PGR application but before you overseed.

*Overseed with the turfgrass variety you select. You shouldn't need to mow for four to five weeks.

Domination of Favored Species

The PGR application helps favor

the newly planted turfgrass. Bermudagrass is typically an aggressive turfgrass. By suppressing its growth, you tip the competitive advantage over to the newly planted turf.

Ryegrasses germinate quickly, so they can rapidly take advantage of the suppressed bermudagrass. This gives the ryegrass a chance to develop a healthy stand, especially in particularly warm fall seasons when bermudagrass can remain aggressive late into the season.

Fescues don't germinate as quickly as ryegrasses, so the extended time between seeding and mowing can be helpful. Pre-germinating the fescue seed also can help speed the establishment process.

Spring Transition

The same principles apply to spring transition. Cool spring conditions can favor the cool season species well into the late spring. By applying a PGR, you give the advantage to the bermudagrass.

A smaller application rate is needed for fescues and ryegrasses because they are more sensitive to PGRs. Some slight discoloration may occur on ryegrass with some PGRs. Check the product label for the recommended application rate.

Apply the PGR when bermudagrass begins to show consistent green color. At this point, the bermudagrass should be quite competitive. The PGR application to suppress fescues and ryegrasses is about 1/8 of the rate required to suppress bermudagrass growth, so the PGR application won't significantly affect the emerging bermudagrass.

If you decide to seed the bermudagrass, wait at least three days after the PGR application. (Wait two weeks in California.) □

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Gil Landry, Jr.

The Sports Turf managers Association (STMA) board of directors unanimously approved the inclusion of two more chapters into the association this past June: Chesapeake and Iowa. This expands STMA's chapter base to six, which also includes Colorado, Florida, Midwest, and South Carolina.



The East Coast-based Chesapeake Chapter of STMA is headed by chapter president, Raymond Flood, Landscape Tech III, University of Maryland, College Park, MD. This group recently conducted its Second Annual Field Day & Workshop at the University of Maryland. More than 150 sports turf professionals were on-hand to participate in turf-related workshops and listen to speakers, such as the University of Maryland's new football coach, Mark Duffner.

The Iowa Chapter of STMA is headed by chapter executive director, Gary Peterson, Iowa Co-Op Extension Service, Newton, IA. The Iowa Chapter boasts some 80 members dedicated "to working with and improving the quality of sports turf areas in the state of Iowa."

The Iowa Chapter's recent workshop garnered approximately 40 participants and featured 15 exhibitors—exhibiting machinery, equipment, chemicals, and seed.

Meeting Regional Needs Through Institutes And Workshops

The month of July also featured a Northwest Institute, which was held at the University of Portland. More than 50 sports turf professionals enjoyed listening to, among others, STMA Past President Steve Cockerham, University of California-Riverside, Riverside, CA. Tom Cook, horticultural department, Oregon State University,

Corvallis, OR; and Gwen Stahnke, Washington State University, Puyallup, WA, headed this institute.

University of St Thomas' Tom Rudberg was instrumental in developing a workshop held in St. Paul, MN, this past July. More than 90 sports turf professionals participated in this program. Hosted by the University of St. Thomas, this workshop was highlighted by the Minnesota Vikings' Sam Munson, training and facility grounds supervisor.

Communication Is The Key

STMA President-elect Greg Petry, superintendent of parks, Waukegan Park District, Waukegan, IL, is currently working on a program for chapters that will facilitate interaction with the national body. In addition, Petry is researching the possibility of a new policy manual for chapter organization, institute coordination, logo use, etc. We hope to have something for review at the annual meeting.

With proper communication, I'm certain that the regional and national groups can continue to complement each other. On a national level, STMA continues to provide scholarships, awards, research grants, education programs, and hopes to implement a professional certification program and develop standards for athletic field construction. All of which stands to benefit the industry. Regional and the national body working together to fulfill our association's mission.

Fourth Annual STMA Conference Around The Corner

The Fourth Annual Sports Turf Managers Association Conference takes place at the Indianapolis Convention Center and Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis, IN, December 13-15, 1992.

This year we are hosting our conference in conjunction with the 23rd Annual National Federation Conference of High School Directors

of Athletics. Registered delegates from both organizations may attend any STMA or National Federation workshop, seminar and/or general session. Additionally, besides sharing programs, we also are sharing the exhibition hall.

With our annual conference comes the chance to delve into the rapidly changing and compelling world of sports turf management and surface with answers to everyday questions regarding budgeting and communications; maintenance practices; soils and fertilizer management; turfgrass selection; renovation; water management; sports turf safety; synthetic turf and cultivation practices, to name a few.

The Fourth Annual STMA Conference and Exhibition is, quite simply, user-to-user education—sports turf professionals networking and interacting with each other, fostering education and professionalism. Attending the national conference makes simple dollars and "sense." A solution or strategy learned can save your organization time and money. Our conference represents a unique chance for direct one-to-one interaction with industry leaders, vendors, and peers from around the country. Make the fiscally responsible move, attend the national conference—it could be the most cost-effective management decision your organization makes this year.

STMA member David Minner has teamed with Dr. Henry Indyk and our Executive Director, Bret Kelsey, and the National Federation's Assistant Directors Frank Kovaleski and Brad Rumble, to concentrate on conference logistics. These individuals are working diligently to develop a valuable and enjoyable conference. Exhibitor and registration materials are forthcoming. If you are interested in more immediate information, feel free to contact Bret or Susan E. Seibert at (312) 644-6610, otherwise watch for these materials, complete them and send them back to STMA headquarters.

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STMA IN ACTION

ASSOCIATION NEWS

STMA CHAPTER NEWS

Chesapeake Chapter:STMA—The Chesapeake Chapter's Annual Field Day and Workshop held August 5 at the University of Maryland's Byrd Stadium and practice football field was a resounding success. More than 150 attendees enjoyed the combination of workshops, information exchange sessions, and panel presentations.

Special Reminder—The Chesapeake Chapter's Quarterly Meeting will be held at the Reading Phillies Baseball Stadium, Reading, PA, from noon to 3 p.m. on September 23. All members, potential members, and those curious about what STMA might offer them are invited to attend this informational session.

For specific details about this meeting, contact Dan Douglas, head groundskeeper, at (215) 375-8469.

For additional information on the chapter and its programs, contact Ray Flood at (301) 405-3320.

STMA Florida Chapter #1:Note This Date Change—The "Get Dirty Seminar," originally scheduled for November 3 has been moved to November 4. Meeting hours are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the location is Pompano Stadium in Pompano, FL. Registration begins in the stadium at 8 a.m., followed by an 8:45 welcome by Ed Birch at the third base grandstand. Presentations include: "Making of Pitchers' Mounds and Home Plates," by Ed Miller; "Dragging Fields," demonstrated by the stadium staff at the Four Field Complex; "Turface Use on Ballfields," by Ed Miller; "Stenciling: How to Make and Use," by Jim Romeo of Joe Robbie Stadium; and a wrap-up question and answer session. Lunch will be served. Tom Curran is host of the meeting.

For information on the South Florida Chapter, or for details on meetings and chapter activities, contact John Mascaro (305) 938-7477 or Ed Birch (305) 938-0217.

Colorado Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:Special Reminder—The CCSTMA "End of the Seasons" Workshop will be held September 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the City of Greeley Parks. You'll want to

take advantage of the special tips on field winterization for spring play readiness and hints for handling winter season sports events. Contact Mark Leasure of the Colorado Springs Sky Sox at (719) 338-0381 for further details on this workshop.

For other information about the Colorado Chapter and its activities, contact Bill Whirly at (303) 221-6660.

Midwest Chapter: STMA—A University/College Sports Turf Management Workshop will be held

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STMA PROFILE:

KEN MROCK - SETTING TABLES FOR BEARS

Mrock's management responsibilities include McBubble, an air-pressurized fabric structure with an 80-yard artificial turf field that serves as the Bears' indoor practice facility.

By Bob Tracinski

When you talk about home turf, Ken Mrock's is Chicago. From caddying at the private Ridgemoor Golf Club at the age of 12, through supervising the park district's golf courses, to his present position as chief groundskeeper for the Chicago Bears, overseeing the Halas Hall premium practice facility and coordinating the Soldier Field program—Mrock has spent the greatest share of his life “on the turf.”

“I love the outdoors,” Mrock says. “Riding on a tractor is therapy for me. There’s just something about being out on the grass, working out the planning and procedures to make everything come together, that seems to be in my blood.”

Problems aren't part of Ken Mrock's vocabulary. Talk with him for a while and you'll hear of challenges, opportunities, and interesting situations.

Mrock was born and raised in Chicago and has moved up steadily in the turf world. At age 16, he was working summers on the greens crew at Ridgemoor. After attending classes at Chicago's Northeastern Illinois

University, he went to work for the Chicago Park District. By age 26, he was greenskeeper at Columbus Park Golf Course and rapidly developing his hands-on management style.

Learning Opportunities

In 1978, Mrock's skill and dedication earned him the opportunity to work with Wadsworth Golf Course Construction Company on the Ken Killian and Dick Nugent designed Robert Black Golf Course.

“That was an unbelievable experience,” says Mrock. “To work with the course from the ground up, to bring the turf in from seed and get everything into playing condition, then to see the course do 50,000 rounds of golf a year.”

After four years, Mrock became superintendent of all six Chicago courses. With a crew of 70, he was responsible for close to 400 acres across the city. His hands-on style was an asset.

“Just getting around, getting to know all the courses and their individual crews was a challenge,” he says. Then there was the weather. “We have what we call the ‘lake effect.’ Temperatures at the lake can vary 15 degrees from those two to three miles away. There can be



Field at Halas Hall premium practice facility. Says Mrock, “They had never been able to use the field past October. The first thing I did (while still consulting part-time) was order tarps for the field.”

snow at the lake; sun within the city. But the crews were terrific and dedicated, a great bunch to work with. We always got the job done.”

At the same time, Mrock was working with the park district on the baseball and football field programs.

Mrock has long believed in increasing the level of professionalism within the industry. He worked closely with the University of Illinois to get a pesticide testing program established, and saw to it that all grounds related employees and all Chicago Park District exterminators became certified.

Mrock's no stranger to Soldier Field. He was working the Field back in the Astro Turf days, handling the tarping, the heating and snow removal.

In 1985, Mrock met George Toma and a natural affinity developed. Through Toma's suggestion, Mrock began working with the Bears as a part-time consultant on Halas Hall. In 1987, he was one of a team of four original planners who undertook the conversion of Soldier Field to a natural grass PAT system field.

Keeper Of The Bears

January 1, 1988, Mrock left the park district to work with the Bears full time. With his increasing "bearing" on the Bears turf facilities and the ever-present park district responsibilities, something had to give. His upcoming advancement with the Chicago Park District would have made him director of golf course operations, a position heavily focused on the "paper-end" of management—the scheduling of use, the financial procedures. The Bears position offered more of the hands-on, outdoor connections on which he thrives.

The move did not mean less work, rather more work he enjoys. Twelve to 15 hours a day are the norm, with bursts up to 24. Mrock is never more than a phone call away.

"Without the love and support of my wife, Debbie, and kids, Jennifer, Timmy, and Kristina, I just couldn't do it," he

admits. "They make it great to be home."

Mrock is also responsible for McBubble, the air-pressurized fabric structure with an 80-yard Astro Turf field that serves as an alternative practice facility. When temperatures drop and the wind chill hits 20 to 35 degrees below zero, that 50 degree McBubble feels better to the players.

Maintaining that facility has added to Mrock's work load.

"It takes a lot of babysitting," says Mrock, who stops daily to make sure the pressure is correct.

Then there are the Chicago snow storms, during which McBubble must be constantly monitored. In order for pressure to be properly maintained, McBubble has to stay domed. Too much snow on top could bring down the bubble. As snow melts on top, it runs down the sides, building up around the base and pushing in the structure, changing the shape and threatening the proper pressurization. A six-inch snow can easily translate into 10 feet of melted ice buildup. A front-end loader is used to scoop this potential threat away.

Tim LeFevour, director of administration for the Bears, is in charge of all stadium operations at Soldier Field. Mrock "helps." He makes all the calls on

the field—handles all the pre-game field preparations, including calls on tarp placement and removals, last minute painting touch-ups, setting up the bench areas, cooling and heating equipment, for both teams. Then he oversees a few other "minor" tasks, like transporting injured players to the locker room for X-rays, monitoring the weather for any changes, referee and chain-gang needs, and even getting the players from both teams lined up for their pre-game T.V. introductions, and seeing to it that the V.I.P.s are all comfortably in place.

Mrock says, "With the very capable assistance of Soldier Field groundskeeper, John Nolan and Jim Duggan, Soldier Field stadium manager, these jobs all get done. These guys do a terrific job."

On September 5, Notre Dame and Northwestern played. The next day, the Bears held their season opener. A switch had to be made from the college hash-marks and field design to the pros. The field had to be put back into shape and the stadium prepared for the arrival of the next crowd. Because both games were televised nationally, the next set of T.V. crews needed to set up.

Says Mrock, "I called George Toma and Steve Wightman, the masters of change-

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STMA Profile: Ken Mrock

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overs, for some pointers on this one.”

Mrock is an active member of the Midwest Chapter of STMA and serves as treasurer of the national STMA.

Year-Round Preparations

“When I first started here [at Halas Hall], the Bears never had a groundskeeper before,” Mrock says. “They had never been able to use the field past October. The first thing I did (while still consulting part-time) was order tarps for the field.

“Then we concentrated on getting the turf back to a strong, healthy state. We covered the field when needed, blew heat under the tarps to keep the ground from freezing, and kept the rain and snow off.”

Mrock has continued to build on that program in his current position. He credits the support of assistant groundskeeper, John Berta.

“We use the covers a lot more now,” he explains. “By early January, the center of the field has nothing left. We reestablish the turf each year. Traditionally, along the lake we con-

tend with Northeast spring winds about 40 odd degrees, which greatly affects the soil temperatures. We use Evergreen Turf Blankets, which are greenhouse-effect covers, early in the year so we can establish a good foundation.”

The Bears football program goes year-round, which means the practice field must too. Athletes start workouts in the beginning of February, preparing for the mini camp and the upcoming season. These workouts are conducted in the McBubble. In the beginning of April, they're back outside. Then comes mini-camp, with 80 guys on the field for three days. Mrock then has three weeks to whip things back into shape. This year's program consisted of some spot regrading, aeration, the addition of calcined clay and starter fertilizer, the application of pre-germinated seed, and the help of the turf covers. This season brought a late spring and early summer drought, adding to the 'challenge.'

Mrock is always looking for a new and better way of doing things.

“We're trying out a new seed from Germany, *Poa supina*, a grass they are using in parks, athletic fields, practice fields, even Olympia stadium,” he says. “It's more drought-resistant and it seems that the more traffic it takes, the more aggressive it becomes. We've added 18 percent of it to our regular 50/50 mix of bluegrass and perennial ryegrass.”

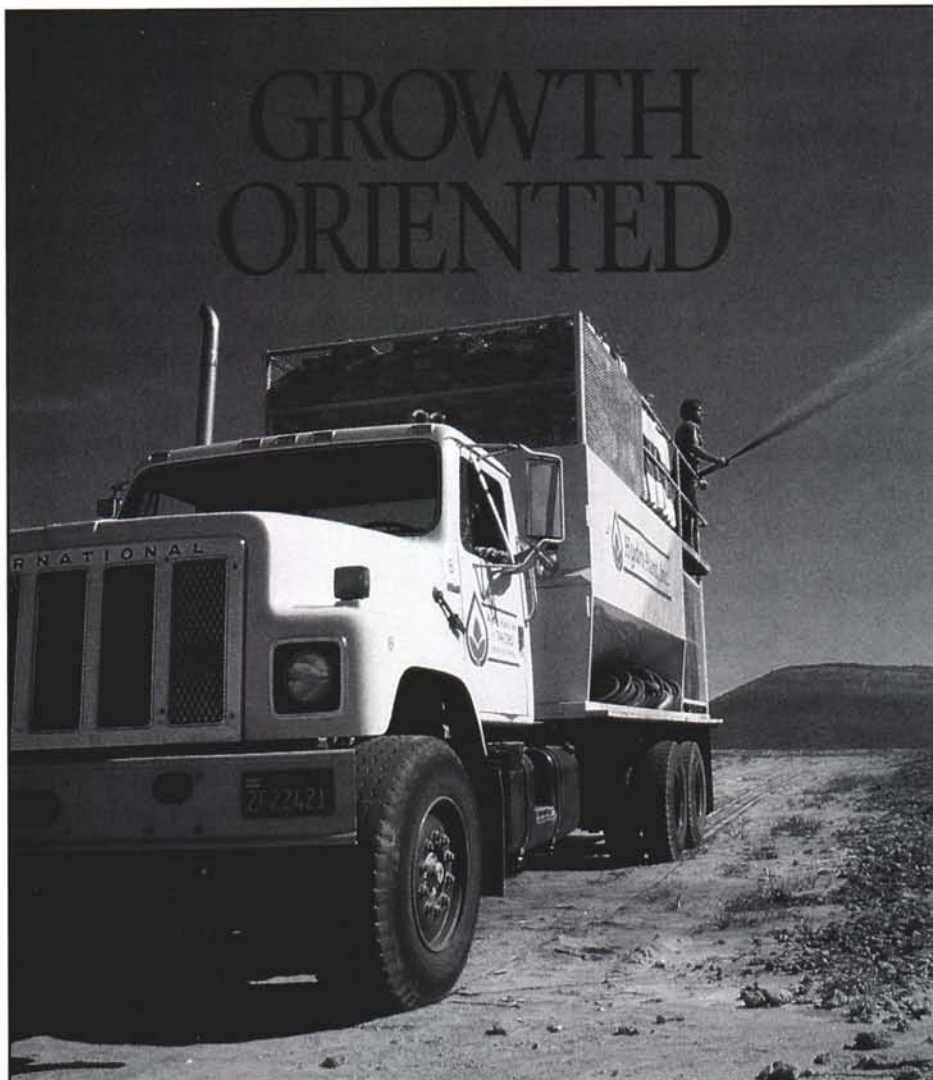
Once the three weeks of renovation are completed, the off-season football program begins again. Thirty to 50 guys spend two hours a day conditioning and running patterns. Mrock says, “It's not as intense as practice, but it still gives the field quite a workout.”

On July 22, the players headed out, giving Mrock and Berta a chance to “beef things up” for their return and the regular season action, which will last into January. In addition, five college games will be played on this same field. The “beef-up” program included knotweed control, aerification, hand work, and spot seeding.

Does the premium practice facility, McBubble, and the improved Soldier Field make a difference? In the past seven years, the Bears have made the play-offs six times.

Mrock says, “We set the table for the athletes. It's our job to get that table perfectly set.” □

Editor's Note: Bob Tracinski is the manager of public relations for the John Deere Company in Raleigh, NC, and public relations chairman for the Sports Turf managers Association.



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STMA In Action

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October 22 at the Illinois State University in Normal, IL, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The program will include a tour of the facility and fields. Educational presentations will be made by: Chuck Scott, ISU superintendent of grounds; Mike O'Grady, ISU athletic turf supervisor; Ron Wellman, ISU athletic director; Jeff Stewart, ISU baseball coach; and Dr. Hank Wilkinson, plant pathologist at The University of Illinois. For more information on this workshop, contact Don Michaels at Lake-Cook FS (800) 300-4887.

For information on the Midwest Chapter and its activities, contact Mike Trigg, Waukegan Park District, (708) 360-4750.

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association—Nearly 40 people attended the Special Sports Turf Clinic held at the Carroll, IA, Community Schools on August 11. Informative presentations and industry exhibits combined to provide a fact-filled forum for the attendees. A rare cool, dry day offered an excellent opportunity for hands-on demonstrations of commercial equipment on the football and baseball fields.

For information on the Iowa Chapter, its goals and activities, contact: Gary Peterson at (515) 792-6433.

Carolina Chapter: STMA—Planning sessions continue for The Carolina Chapter as newly elected president, Joe Wilson, works with the board to outline future events.

For information on the Carolina Chapter and its activities, contact Marc Farha (facility manager of the Charlotte Knights) at (704) 332-3746.

The New England Chapter: STMA—This newest addition to the STMA regional chapters was officially formed August 12. Approximately 140 people attended the sports turf institute and workshop at the New England Patriots facility at Foxboro, MA. A tour of the facilities, informative speakers, and cooperative exhibitors combined to set the tone for an active new chapter.

Newly elected officers include: John Barry, facilities manager for Phillips Academy in Andover, MA, president; Pierre Landry, field manager for the New England Patriots, vice president; Mary Owen, extension specialist in turf, University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension System, secretary; Bernie Keohan, department of facility maintenance, Harvard University, treasurer, and board members: John Connelly, Evergreen Lawn; Bob Romano, O.M. Scott & Sons; Donna Dolven, Hamden County Day School; John Schmidgall, tree and grounds supervisor, Danvers Park Dept.; Joe Kovolyan, Interstate Landscape; and alternate board member Jim Berardo, parks and recreation dept., East Lyme, CT. The executive board will be formulating plans for future activities to be announced soon.

For more information on the New England Chapter, contact Mary Owen at (508) 831-1225.

SOUTHWEST TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Southwest Turfgrass Association will hold its Annual Conference October 7-9 at the Las Cruces Hilton in Las Cruces, NM. Dr. Don White from the University of Minnesota will be the keynote speaker.

The conference will include workshop sessions on Sports Turf Management, given by Mark Doble, and Equipment Maintenance, given by James Eby. There will also be educational sessions, a golf tournament, and an annual awards breakfast.

For registration materials, contact Lynn Ellen Doxon, Executive Director, 9301 Indian School Rd., NE, Suite 201, Albuquerque, NM 87112, or call (505) 275-2576.

GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURES REPORT

The Golf Course Maintenance Expenditures Report offers detailed information on more than 25 specific maintenance budget areas, including water usage, golf car maintenance, and capital expenses.

The 150-page report also addresses capital expense trends, the effect of a course's longevity on its operating budget, and maintenance cost comparisons on new designs versus older, established facilities. The report's information is broken down by specific demographic categories and regions.

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RANSOMES NAMES DIRECTOR



Peter Whurr has been appointed director of sales and distribution for Turf Products at Ransomes America Corporation. He will be responsible for overall marketing efforts for the company's turf products, including Cushman, Ransomes, Steiner, and Brouwer equipment.

The native of England joined the England-based company of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies in 1966. He worked in the engineering division for their grass machinery product line. He was also an international sales representative, European service manager, and a product marketing manager.

MINOR CROP PROTECTION ASSISTANCE ACT

Senators Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) and Richard Lugar (R-IN), ranking minority member on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, introduced the "Minor Crop Protection Assistance Act of 1992" (S. 2980), which would preserve the availability of safe minor use pesticides and encourage development of non-chemical pest management tools. It is a companion bill to H.R. 4764 introduced by the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, E. "Kika" de la Garza.

The Minor Crop Farm Alliance says that minor use pesticides are endangered due to economic reasons rather than safety reasons. The MCFA believes an understanding among legislators has been reached, concluding that federal policy needs to be changed in order to ensure the availability of safe minor use pesticides.

The Senate bill, identical to the House bill, provides for a new minor use program to be established within the USDA, as well as the enhancement and effective coordination of current programs in the USDA and EPA. The bill directs the EPA to grant conditional registrations of pesticides that would not create an adverse effect on the environment. In the case of voluntary cancellations, data from previous registrations could be utilized when an application for a similar minor use was made.

In the current reregistration process, more than 200 scientific data requirements can be involved. This process can be time consuming and expensive, and in most cases, the data requirement costs exceed the projected sale of the pesticide. Manufacturers decide to cancel the minor use rather than incur the cost of reregistration. This bill would provide incentives for manufacturers to reregister minor uses.

Minor crops include nearly all fruit, vegetables, floral and nursery crops, nuts, and other specialty crops.

SUPERINTENDENT WINS BRITISH OPEN TRIP

Skip Wade, superintendent of the Cherry Valley Country Club in Amityville, NY, won a trip to the 1992 British Open in Scotland. Sponsored by the Professional Business Group of The O.M. Scott & Sons Company, the trip was given away at the Scotts booth during the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show in New Orleans, LA.

Scotts provided Wade's week-long trip for two with round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for six nights, ground transportation, three rounds of golf, and four days admission to the British Open.

FOUNTAIN BECOMES SEACOAST REPRESENTATIVE

Seacoast Laboratories, Inc. of Dayton, NJ, has appointed Gerald B. Fountain as their technical representative to the golf course industry. He will be responsible for the sales and marketing of Seed Research Grass Seed and Twin Light "On Course" professional turf products.