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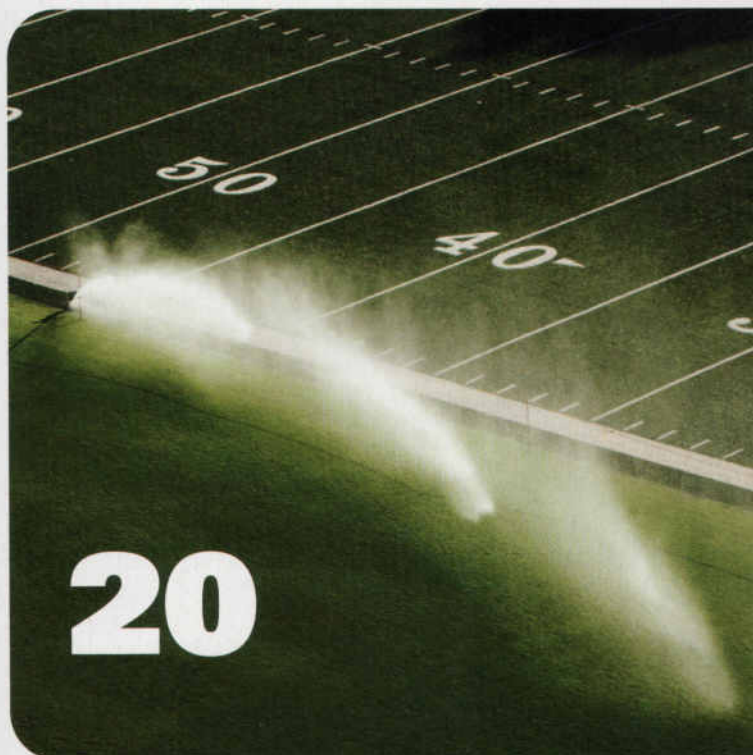
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On the cover: Field of the Year winner Gerald Landby is successful; he takes his work seriously and is proud of the accomplishments of the athletes who benefit from that work.





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## We ain't seen nothin' yet



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**R**ecently I was having a discussion with some sports turf industry folks and someone said, "Every time a major new stadium opens in the country, it should be a cover story in SportsTurf." I didn't disagree but I did go back to my office and Google.

Within 10 minutes I saw ten stories on new stadium openings due in the next 18 months, five in or near New York City alone. (You'd think Mother Teresa operated from the monuments at Yankee Stadium the way some people are going on about that admittedly hallowed ground's final season.)

A new Major League Soccer park named after team owner Red Bull is scheduled to open next year in northern New Jersey, along the Passaic River near Newark. The 25,000-seat venue will feature a full wavy, translucent roof that will cover all the seats but not the pitch.

This year the Indianapolis Colts will play in new Lucas Oil Stadium, which is scheduled to host Super Bowl XLVI in 2012. The stadium features a retractable roof and window wall, allowing the Colts to play "outdoors." In 2009 the Dallas Cowboys will open a new stadium in Arlington that will incorporate some of the historical features of Texas Stadium. By the time he's done, owner Jerry Jones will have spent more than a billion dollars on a stadium that covers 30 total acres, seats 80,000, and features a 660,800-square-foot, single-span roof structure, the world's longest.

I also found an article from this month's *Popular Science* discussing design aspects of the next generation of "Colosseums." The article says fans can look forward to comfortable seats close to the action, interactive screens that provide real-time game stats and architecture that directs the roar of the home crowd onto the field. In 2012 the Tampa Bay Rays will move out of "The Pit" into a stadium overlooking the bay that will feature a 320-foot mast-and-arch design, which will use a system of cables to unfold the Tenara fabric roof like a sail. The stadium will be shaped to funnel sea breezes across fans to keep them cool.

Oakland Athletic fans might be keeping a virtual scorecard and ordering hot dogs via a wireless screen built into each seat at Cisco Field, slated to be the team's new home in Fremont in a few years. The interactive displays will show fans traffic conditions and, more importantly, location of the shortest bathroom lines.

Speaking of which, the article said by 2012, Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles will become the first ballpark in California to have waterless urinals, saving millions of gallons of water annually.

The downside of these new technologies? Ticket prices are sure to increase even more dramatically than normal.

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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](http://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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# ASTM developing new sports field standards

By J.T. Brosnan and M. DePew

**A**t the recent meeting of the ASTM F08.64 and F08.65 subcommittees, new sports field standards were proposed that will benefit Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) members and all turf managers in the near future. The issue of lead chromate in synthetic turf fibers was also discussed at the meetings in great detail. The F08.65 subcommittee on synthetic turf athletic fields has formed a task group to work on this issue.

The STMA is actively involved with ASTM International, one of the world's largest and most recognized standards writing organizations. The standards produced by ASTM are reference documents that attempt to limit variability between the products and services of many different industries. ASTM standards exist for a wide variety of products including both natural and synthetic turf athletic fields.

**Guide for Quality Control Procedures During The Construction of Natural Playing Surfaces.** This new standard outlines proper practices to be used in the sampling and quality control testing of rootzone materials used during the construction process. The standard covers gravel, sand, organic amendments, and finish-blended rootzone mixes. It will be a valuable tool in future construction specifications.

**Evaluating Warm and Cool Season Athletic Field Maintenance Programs.** These two proposed new documents will provide a standardized method for evaluating the quality of maintenance programs used to for warm- and cool-season athletic fields. Factors such as soil testing, aeration, fertilization, and mowing frequency (including many others) will be weighted in order to assign a rank/grade to a facility's maintenance program.

**New Equestrian Surfaces Sub-Committee Formed.** Increased attention has been given to "alternative sports" within both STMA and ASTM over the past 2 years, with the majority of

this interest focusing on horse racing. Little scientific information exists regarding how to properly maintain surfaces used for horse racing. Furthermore, acceptable levels of surface quality have not been outlined. The new ASTM subcommittee is Equestrian Surfaces, F08.28.

**The Issue of Lead Chromate on Synthetic Turf Fields.** Lead chromate is a pigment used to color synthetic turf fibers. Fibers with lead-based pigments are brighter than those with non-heavy metal pigments. Lead chromate is often confused with lead carbonate, which was a principle component of lead-based paint. Lead chromate must be encapsulated in order to be incorporated into synthetic turf fibers.

In light of the recent media controversy regarding potential health hazards to athletes

competing on synthetic turf fields from lead chromate exposure, ASTM subcommittee F08.65 formed a task group to work with the Synthetic Turf Council (STC) on this issue.

The STC released a statement in April 2008 on this issue. The STC said, "Trace amounts of lead exist in everyday products. The key issue is ensuring that quantities of lead that might be harmful to health cannot be absorbed into the body. Used to extend the yarn color lifespan in some synthetic turf products, lead chromate is encapsulated in plastic to prevent any health risks."

*James Brosnan is Assistant Professor of Turfgrass Weed Science at the University of Tennessee. Michael DePew is agronomist/soil scientist for Environmental Technical Services, Tekonsha, MI.*



John Mascaro, president of Turf-Tec International, smells a soil sample during a tour stop at this year's STMA Conference in Phoenix.



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# Tall fescue can work for high school baseball

By Brad Park



common mistake among park and recreation, public works, and board of education sports field managers as well as engineers and architects

responsible for authoring specifications is the failure to select the best adapted turfgrass species for establishment on fields with unique site characteristics.

Too often turf managers will select commercially available seed sold as a "Sports Turf Mixture" or "High Traffic Mixture" without examining the turfgrass species and individual varieties used to compose these mixes. In some cases, a blend of improved varieties, as opposed to a mixture of different species, is a better choice. This article describes a case study where I made a seeding recommendation for a blend of tall fescue varieties on a high school baseball field based on climate, ability for field closure, projected management inputs, and turfgrass variety performance data generated by university-based research.

## Site assessment

I visited a high school varsity baseball field in Cumberland County, NJ (southern, transition zone climate) in late fall 2007 for the purpose of assessing existing turfgrass conditions and providing recommendations for playing surface improvement. The field consisted of a light colored, low-density, coarse textured tall fescue variety (likely Kentucky 31), small patches of Kentucky bluegrass, and crabgrass (weed skeletons and voids in perennial turfgrass apparent). School personnel reported that turfgrass management inputs were limited to mowing. There were no records of fertility applications and although there was a water source available and the high school owned a water reel, it was seldom employed to irrigate the baseball field.



A high school baseball field in Southern New Jersey was a great candidate for renovation and establishment with tall fescue given the transition zone climate and minimal management inputs in the future (Photo by Brad Park).