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## MANAGEMENT

December 2021

Vol. 37 No. 12

The Official Publication of the Sports Turf Managers Association

The Research Playbook **10** | Salary and Raise Negotiation **14**  
Addressing Sports Field Issues **18** | Strategies for Overcoming the Labor Shortage **22**

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# Contents

DECEMBER 2021  
VOL. 37, NO. 12



**18**

**10**

**The Research Playbook**  
Optimizing Athletic Field Painting  
Applications on Bermudagrass  
Athletic Fields

**14**

**Personal and Professional  
Development**  
Salary and Raise Negotiation

**18**

**Field Renovation**  
Addressing Sports Field Issues

**22**

**Industry Insights**  
Strategies for Overcoming the  
Labor Shortage

**24**

**Industry Trends**  
Sports Field Management Trends:  
Part 3

**28**

**Social Media**  
Social Media, Blogs, and SEO



**24**



**22**

## DEPARTMENTS

**6**

Editor's Note

**7**

STMA President's Message

**8**

STMA In Action

**17**

John Mascaro's Photo Quiz

**30**

Innovations

**42**

Equipment and Technology Focus

**44**

From the Twittersverse

**47**

Chapter News

**48**

Marketplace

**49**

STMA Chapter Contacts

**50**

Q&A





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# Editor's Note



**John Kmitta**

Associate Publisher /  
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I probably say this at this time every year, but it's hard to believe it is December and we are wrapping up yet another year. And although 2021 presented plenty of challenges ("supply chain issues" anyone?), this year was a marked improvement over 2020.

Case in point is the industry getting back to some sort of normalcy with regard to in-person meetings. As I write this, I am just coming off a trip to GIE+EXPO, the outdoor power equipment industry's showcase event (see our post-show recap beginning on page 30). This was my first work-related travel since January of 2020, and it was great to see so many of my contacts and friends in the industry.

Heading into GIE+EXPO, we weren't sure what to expect, because we didn't know how much the current health concerns would impact attendance and people's willingness to get back to in-person events. But if GIE+EXPO is any indication, industry professionals are ready to get back out there, connect with their peers, attend in-person education opportunities, and see what is new on the market.

According to GIE+EXPO show management, although the number

of exhibitors was down (especially international exhibitors), and the amount of personnel that exhibitors sent to the show was down, the number of GIE+EXPO attendees was up over 2019 and 2018 (according to show management, GIE+EXPO 2021 drew 23,922 attendees).

This is a great sign for upcoming industry events, such as the Irrigation Show (Dec. 6-10 in San Diego), and, of course, the 2022 STMA Conference and Exhibition (Jan. 17-20, 2022 in Savannah, Ga.), as it signals a return to business as usual.

I'm sure many of you are ready to get back to networking with your peers and seeing your friends – and learning something new in the process. As highlighted in our November issue, the STMA Conference and Exhibition is the must-attend event for sports field management professionals. For more information, or to register, visit <https://www.stma.org/conference/>

I hope to see you in Savannah in January, and I wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday season. **SFM**

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# President's Message

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Howdy STMA members! Another month has come and gone, and it's hard to believe its December already! As the end of another year nears us, I wanted to take a moment to look back and reflect.

This past year has brought a lot of changes to most of our lives and, at the same time, has allowed many of us to return to part of our normal routine. Sports have resumed at pretty much all levels, and with it, we as the sports field management industry have continued to do what we do best – provide safe and playable surfaces for athletes worldwide! It has also been an exciting year for the STMA with the release of our BMP project, the launch of our Sports Field Management 101 course, as well as a new advocacy video highlighting the work of sports field managers everywhere. All of these projects were designed to educate people and will hopefully help us recruit more individuals to our industry and allow them to be successful into the future.

It's crazy to think that just eleven months ago, we were hosting our first-ever virtual conference; and although that event was an overall success, I can't tell you how excited I am to be back together in person next month in Savannah, Ga. Speaking of conference, it's not too late to make plans to join us, so beg, bribe or blackmail whoever you need to



**Nick McKenna, CSFM**

STMA President

[nmckenna@athletics.tamu.edu](mailto:nmckenna@athletics.tamu.edu)

in order to make that happen. I'm just kidding about the bribe and blackmail part, but, seriously, find a way to join us. I promise that you won't regret it. The conference is always one of my favorite times of year as the education, networking, camaraderie, and celebration of our peers helps to rejuvenate me for the upcoming year.

As we enter the holiday season, I hope that you all will take some time to recharge your batteries both mentally and physically. I have always found the holidays a wonderful time to spend with family and loved ones and regain an appreciation for all that life has to offer. There is an old saying that goes "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present." During this season of giving and celebration, I encourage you all to recognize and enjoy all the "presents" that you already have, and to give thanks. May you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! **SFM**

*Nick McKenna, CSFM*



## STMA announces Field of the Year winners

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) awarded its Field of the Year honors for 2021. The STMA Awards Committee, led by Scott Thompson, CSFM, reviewed each submittal and independently rated applicants on field quality as impacted by staffing, budget, use, monthly maintenance, and a visual story that documents the fields' challenges and successes.

Winners receive a complimentary registration to the STMA Annual Conference, three nights hotel, signature clothing, a trophy for display, and are highlighted in an upcoming issue of *SportsField Management* magazine.

This year, awards were given to schools/park baseball, soccer, sporting grounds, and softball; collegiate softball, soccer, baseball, football, and sporting grounds; and professional soccer and baseball.

Award winners include:

### Schools/Parks

#### Baseball

Norbrock Stadium, City of Kamloops, Kamloops, Canada – submitted by Mike DeCicco and Shawn Cook

#### Soccer

Walsh Field, Pace Academy, Mableton, Ga. – submitted by Daniel Prince

#### Softball

Tournament Capital Ranch Slo-Pitch Field, Kamloops, Canada – submitted by Mike DeCicco and Shawn Cook

#### Sporting Grounds

Donald Lambert Field, Brentsville District High School, Nokesville, Va. – submitted by Drew Miller and students in Brentsville Turfgrass Management Program

### College and University

#### Baseball

Dudy Noble Field, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Miss. – submitted by Brandon Hardin

#### Football

Moncrief Field at Amon Carter Stadium, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas – submitted by Andrew Siegel

#### Soccer

Garvey-Rosenthal Soccer Field, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas – submitted by Andrew Siegel

#### Softball

Rhoads Stadium, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Ala. – submitted by Jon DeWitt, CSFM

#### Sporting Grounds

Dorrance Field, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. – submitted by Casey Carrick, CSFM

### Professional Stadiums

#### Baseball

Sahlen Field, Buffalo Bisons, Buffalo, N.Y. – submitted by Kelly Rensel, CSFM

#### Soccer

Red Bull Arena, New York Red Bulls, Harrison, N.J. – submitted by Neal Sitzman



## Location set for STMA Volunteer Field Rebuild

The Volunteer Field Rebuild location has been set. This 2022 STMA Conference event will be held at Mother Mathilda Beasley Park Ballfield in Savannah, Ga., Monday, January 17, from 1-5 p.m. Plan to fly in early and volunteer, as sports field managers come together to demo, do infield repair, wall construction and more. STMA is excited to partner once again with Project Evergreen to rebuild this field for the residents of Savannah to enjoy.



## Share STMA's new video about the profession

STMA recently completed a video about the profession, and it is available for your use. It is close to five minutes long, but STMA also has it cut into shorter segments.

The video provides a great look at the profession of a sports field manager, but, more importantly, it provides a key message for students that this is indeed a profession that they should consider pursuing. Show it to your constituents – on a video board at your sporting events and on your website! Take it to high school career days or share it with high school counselors you know and with local associations. It can be used anywhere that you want to highlight the profession, so please distribute it broadly.

The video can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkym4ba2xNs>. Contact [STMAinfo@STMA.org](mailto:STMAinfo@STMA.org) if you wish to receive the 30-second segments.

## Start preparing for STMA Conference education sessions

The 2022 STMA Conference Education Program is packed full of exciting and informative presentations. This year speakers have volunteered to present short 15- to 30-minute webinars prior to the conference as an introduction to their education session. Don't miss this terrific opportunity to prepare for conference education sessions! Webinars will be recorded and available for On-demand access with STMA's 2022 Conference Education. For more information, visit <https://www.stma.org/conference/>.

## Renew for 2022 now to avoid uninterrupted STMA membership

Renew your STMA membership online at [STMA.org](https://www.stma.org) for a quick and seamless process. When you submit your renewal, you will immediately receive a receipt by email. The membership year ends Dec. 31. You do need to be a 2022 member to receive the discounted rate of \$375 to attend the annual conference in Savannah, Ga.

Your STMA membership is an investment for your

future, that's why STMA prides itself in providing a membership that connects you with a network of peers who are willing to share their best practices, provides opportunities for education to help you do your job better, and quick access to information and resources to help you save time.

Benefits of membership:

- A monthly electronic newsletter that communicates association and industry information.
- Access to the Member's Only section of *STMA.org*, which has a real-time membership directory and hundreds of technical educational resources that are specific to sports field management.
- Access to Michigan State's Turfgrass Information File, the green industry's greatest resource for up-to-date technical information (a \$100 value).
- Ability to enter your field in the nationally recognized Field of the Year awards program.
- Opportunity to become a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) to showcase your professionalism and to have your facility certified as Environmentally Responsible.
- Significant savings on registration to STMA's annual and regional conferences, and discounts to other organization's education.
- Opportunity to participate in volunteer leadership positions.
- Opportunity to join one of STMA's affiliated chapters for a strong local network. (Each chapter sets its own local dues.)
- *SportsField Management* magazine each month (a \$40 value).
- The ability to apply for scholarships (students only).
- Discount on advertising in *SportsField Management* magazine and discounted exhibitor booth at the annual conference (Commercial Members only).

Renew your membership before the Dec. 31 year-end deadline to avoid missing out on these great benefits! Renew online by logging into your account and adding your membership to your cart through STMA's "Products" page. You are also able to include your 2022 dues when you register for the 2022 STMA Conference. Any questions about membership or how to renew can be directed toward STMA HQ at 800-323-3876 or [stmainfo@stma.org](mailto:stmainfo@stma.org). **SFM**



# Optimizing Athletic Field Painting Applications on Bermudagrass Athletic Fields

By Bryan Ogle, MS CSFM, Kyley Dickson, Ph.D., and John Sorochan, Ph.D., University of Tennessee

Figure 1



Sports field managers develop painting protocols that produce vivid markings without applying excessive amounts of paint that restrict plant growth or severely damage turfgrasses. The minimum required white markings for a NCAA college football field, for example, consist of 2,400 ft<sup>2</sup>. When these managers paint large end zone logos, mid-field logos, decorative borders, and other special symbols, the area in which athletic field paint is applied can quickly increase to 11,840 -13,993 ft<sup>2</sup>. This higher amount of painted area often covers 15-20% of the playing surface and requires multiple paint applications throughout the season. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine if athletic field paint can be applied in lower volumes while obtaining the high brightness values producing clear and cost-effective applications.

## Materials and methods

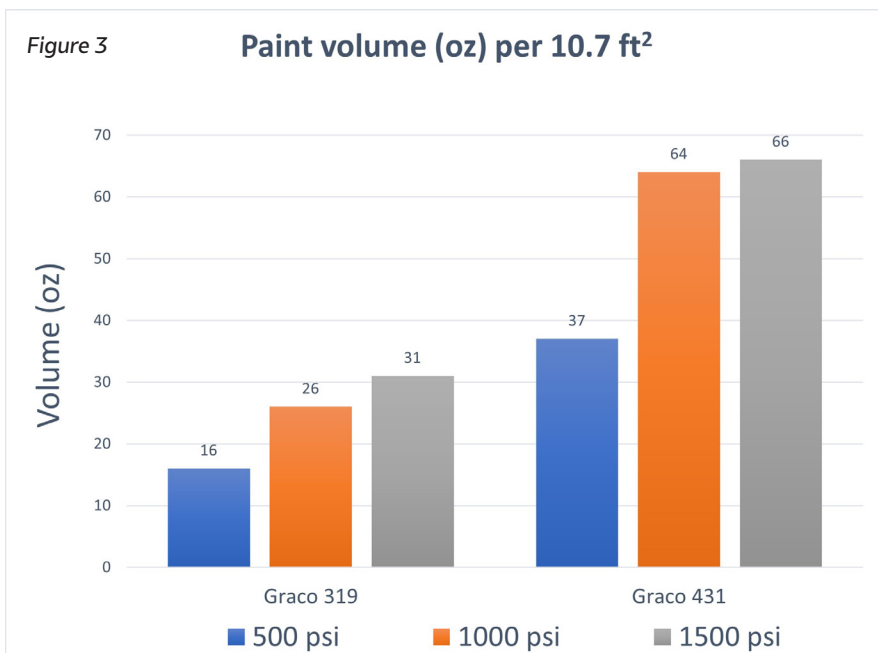
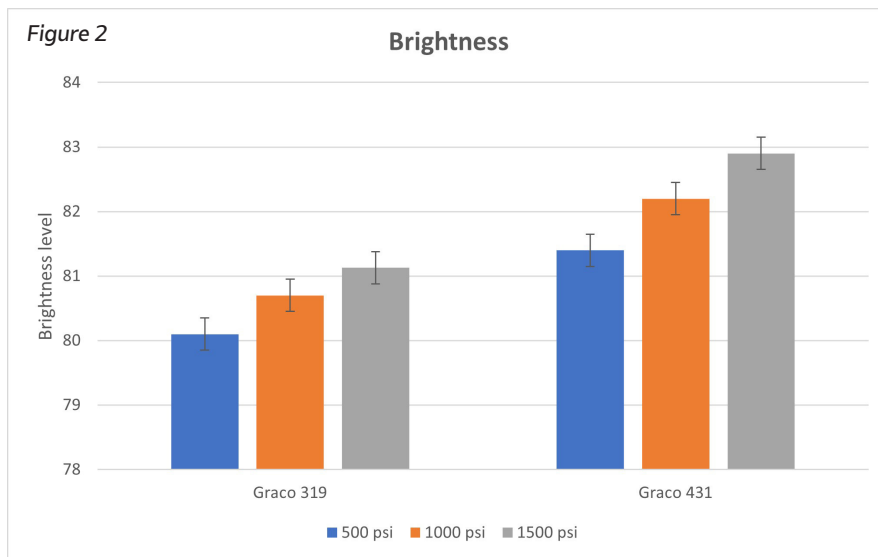
Treatments were selected upon review of a nationwide survey of athletic field managers regarding nozzle tips and pressures being used to apply paint (**Table 1**). Beginning September 5, 2015 and August 30, 2016, treatments were applied once per week, totaling eight applications, throughout a 13-week period mimicking a collegiate football home-game schedule in Knoxville, Tenn. Treatments were applied to established 'Tifway' (*Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. x *C. transvaalensis*, Burt-Davy) bermudagrass.

The experimental design of the study was a randomized complete block with three replications. The 18 sample plots were 3 feet x 3 feet in size (**Figure 1**). A Graco 3400 paint machine (Graco North America, High Point, N.C.) was loaded with Pioneer Brite Stripe white paint



**Table 1:** Summary of athletic field paint application treatments applied to hybrid bermudagrass [*'Tifway' Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers. x Cynodon transvaalensis, Burt-Davy*] turfgrass sample plots weekly at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.

Treatment	Graco Paint Nozzle Size	Pounds Per Square Inch
1	319	500 psi
2	319	1,000 psi
3	319	1,500 psi
4	431	500 psi
5	431	1,000 psi
6	431	1,500 psi



(Pioneer Athletics, Cleveland, Ohio) mixed at a 1:1 paint and water ratio (**Figure 1**). Factors consisted of two nozzle types and three paint application pressures (**Table 1**). Painting was conducted, inside a wooden stencil, using a 50% fan overlap one foot above the surface with a vertical pattern and a horizontal pattern to ensure the turfgrass blades were evenly coated.

Digital image analysis was conducted weekly: 1, 3 and 5 days after painting according to methods of Karcher et al. for brightness and uniformity (2003; 2017). Each treatment was subjected to a cost analysis using \$80 per concentrated bucket of Pioneer Bright Stripe white paint (Pioneer Athletics). Cost per bucket was determined using a 1:1 paint and water ratio for eight home games per season.

## Results

The interaction of nozzle sizes x pressure settings was significant when analyzing color brightness. No differences were found between years, therefore data was pooled and analyzed. The 431 nozzle and highest pressure produced the highest brightness values; however, it is of note that all treatments had brightness levels over 80 (**Figure 2**). The increases in nozzle size and pressure corresponded to higher brightness values (**Figure 2** and **Figure 3**). The higher the volume applied, the greater the brightness values. The brightness of athletic turf paint was determined to be correlated to volume of paint applied. No differences were found in paint uniformity among treatments. No significant differences were detected in color brightness or uniformity 1, 3, or 5 days following paint application.

Volume difference among treat-



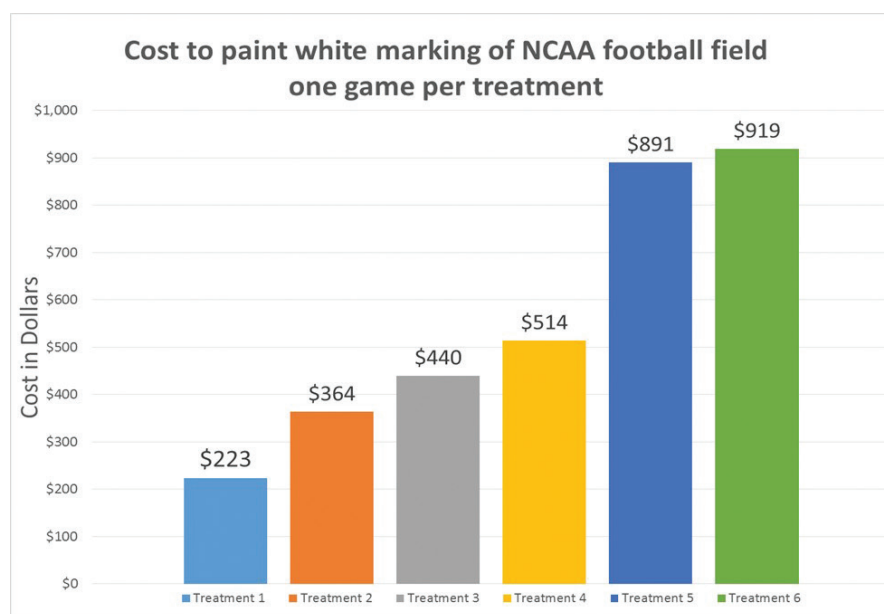


Figure 4

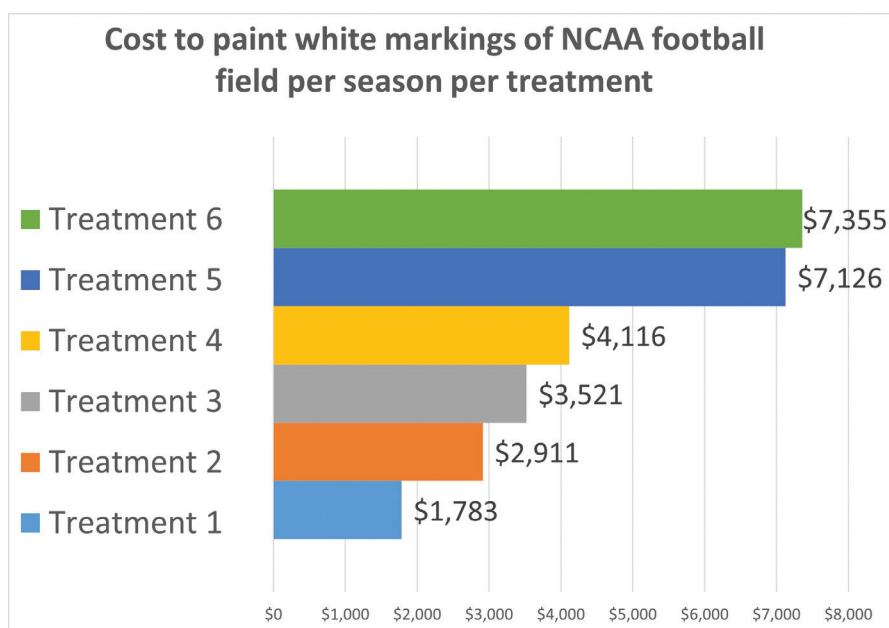


Figure 5

ments was measured by collecting the output of each treatment combination when painting a 10.7-square-foot area (Figure 3). Cost analysis of treatments ranged from \$223 to \$919 to paint white markings on a NCAA football field for one game (Figure 4). When compared to Treatment 1, Treatment 6 resulted in a 312% cost increase over eight paint

applications (Figure 5). Most fields are painted with more than white paint alone, which could lead to greater overall savings than what is reported in this study. The authors suggest that sports field managers consider Treatment 1 or 2 when the objective is to provide good paint coverage and visual qualities while saving the most money.

## Conclusion

Brightness of athletic turf paint is dependent on the application volume. Additionally, an increase in nozzle size or pressure setting resulted in higher brightness values by increasing volume applied. Results of this experiment recommend that sports field managers use combinations, which include nozzles with larger orifice sizes and lower pressure settings or smaller orifice sizes with higher-pressure settings on the paint machine being used. This study illustrates that lower quantities of athletic turf paint can be applied without sacrificing brightness or other aesthetic qualities while saving money.

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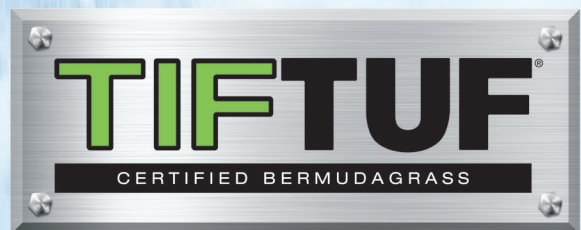
## About The Research Playbook

This special section is devoted to sports field and turfgrass research. As such, we would like to get information regarding your latest research updates. If you have research updates to share, please e-mail the update to John Kmitta, associate publisher / editorial brand director, at [jkmitta@epgmediallc.com](mailto:jkmitta@epgmediallc.com). If you have images or graphics tied to the research update, you can include those via e-mail in JPG format (no ZIP files please). **SFM**



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# Salary and Raise Negotiation

## *Know wage trends and your worth*

By Erin Wolfram and Melissa Johnson



Have you ever asked for a raise or tried to negotiate a better job offer? According to a recent survey by the staffing firm Robert Half Talent Solutions, just over half (54%) of workers said they attempted to negotiate their salary during their last job offer. In addition, 70% of hiring managers said they expect candidates to negotiate job offers. Whether you are applying for a new job or have been working for the same employer for several years, do not be afraid to negotiate a higher salary if and when you feel it is warranted. The key to a successful outcome is preparation, research, and timing. Some tips to help you effectively navigate the salary and raise negotiation process are as follows:

### **PART 1: NEGOTIATING SALARY DURING THE HIRING PROCESS**

A prospective job change can be exciting, but it can also be stressful. Because so many unknowns exist when making a professional move, it is important to weigh the pros and cons to make a well-informed

decision. One of the deciding factors regarding an individual's decision to accept or reject an offer often is the salary associated with the new position, which may be something you can influence. The salary negotiation process can seem daunting, but it is a crucial part of any job search. The following tips will help you be prepared the next time you consider a job offer.

- 1.** Research your industry and current salary trends. When preparing to negotiate, it is imperative to determine the typical salary range for the position you have been offered. Use online tools such as Salary.com, Payscale, Glassdoor, and LinkedIn to search similar salary ranges for job titles related to the position. Also, remember, salary is typically associated with years of experience and level of education; therefore, make sure you access salary data that aligns with your qualifications.

The type of facility can also impact salary. For example, a director of grounds managing the property of a small college, typically, will be

paid less than a director of grounds within a Major League Baseball organization. To help you gather comprehensive information, it is also recommended that you search for other job postings with a similar title in an equivalent organization to find comparable salaries. You may find such positions listed on the STMA job board (<https://www.stma.org/job-board>) or resources such as Indeed.com or LinkedIn.

*Tip: Avoid negotiating any part of the salary or benefits package until after you have received a formal job offer.*

- 2.** Thoroughly review the benefits package. While base salary is important, benefits can make a significant impact on total income and your overall wellbeing. If you currently hold a position, compare the entire offer to your existing package and expenses.

For example, organizations may:

- Offer health insurance at a rate higher (or lower) than your current employer
- Provide a vehicle and/or phone that can, within reason, also be used



for personal use

- Have an accessible gym or pay for a gym membership
- Offer free or reduced counseling services
- Match retirement plan contributions up to a certain percent
- Provide life insurance
- Pay for additional education or professional development opportunities
- Offer free parking or other commuter benefits

These are expenses you may currently pay for on your own that could potentially be covered by a prospective new employer, which can result in significant savings. If you are not sure if an organization provides a certain benefit or service, be sure to ask!

**3.** Calculate the cost of living (if applicable). If you are considering relocating, the cost of living in your new location may vary drastically from your current location for better or worse. For example, if you make \$50,000 in Salt Lake City, you will need to make around \$69,500 in San Diego to live a similar lifestyle.

Utilize free online resources to help you estimate your salary needs if you are planning a move:

- NerdWallet: <https://www.nerdwallet.com/cost-of-living-calculator>
- BestPlaces: <https://www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living/>
- CNN Money: <https://money.cnn.com/calculator/pf/cost-of-living/index.html>
- Salary.com: <https://www.salary.com/research/cost-of-living>

*Tip: If you are relocating, do not forget to ask if the new organization offers cost reimbursement or a stipend to help with moving expenses.*

**4.** Know your value, and be able to articulate it. Once you have done your research and have identified the typical salary range for the position, organization, and location, it is time to evaluate your value so you can effectively demonstrate why you deserve a higher salary than what was offered to you. It is not enough

to simply think you deserve more money. You need to prove it with specific examples of how you could bring value to an organization!

■ Ask any clarifying questions to help you better understand the job you will be performing, the expectations, time commitment, benefits package, etc.

■ Compare the offer to your current salary and the typical salary range you found through your research.

■ Thoroughly review the job description and compare your experience and qualifications with the required and preferred qualifications, as well as the job responsibilities.

■ Make a list of all the qualifications that you meet and/or exceed.

■ Consider any assets you have that make you a unique candidate.

If you find that you meet or exceed most, if not all, of the qualifications and requirements of the job and/or have unique credentials that few other candidates possess, you likely have room to negotiate. Use this information as evidence to prove your worth and advocate for additional compensation.

**5.** Request a meeting to discuss the job offer. Start by expressing gratitude for the offer and enthusiasm about the position. It is important to maintain a positive tone throughout the negotiation process. Next, demonstrate your value and propose a new salary based on your research. Be respectful with your request. You do not want to offend the organization by demanding an unreasonable amount of money. A requested increase of up to \$5,000 is usually appropriate, but this will vary depending on your industry and specific situation. Be prepared to discuss where you accessed information on comparable salaries. Additionally, prior to the meeting, you need to decide how much money you are willing to take and when you will walk away from the offer entirely. Your initial request may not be accepted; however, you may re-

ceive a counteroffer that meets your requirements.

*Tip: Practice what you are going to say with a close friend, mentor, or career coach before you meet with the hiring manager.*

*Sample Salary Negotiation Conversations:*

**Sample 1:** "I sincerely appreciate your offer and all of the details you shared throughout the interview process. Before accepting your offer, I did want to discuss the proposed salary. As I stated in my interview, I have more than 10 years of experience successfully leading grounds crews at a variety of collegiate and recreational sports complexes. I also recently completed my certification in horticulture. Based on my background and experience as well as the requirements of this position, I feel that a salary of \$93,500 would be a fair figure. I would love to discuss this with you in more detail."

**Sample 2:** "I am very excited about this position and the opportunity to work for such a highly regarded organization. After researching comparable positions in the area, I found the average salary for someone with my level of experience and skills is in the range of \$75,000 - \$85,000. Would you consider increasing the salary for this position to achieve this range?"

**6.** Consider alternative forms of compensation. Due to a variety of factors, some organizations may not be able to budge on salary. However, that does not mean you cannot negotiate other benefits that may add value to the compensation package.

For example, you may be able to negotiate:

- Additional vacation days
- Late start or early release during the slow season
- Memberships in professional associations
- Covered expenses for a new certification, license, or training
- Relocation cost reimbursement or stipend
- Your start date



**7.** Get it in writing. If you choose to accept the offer (or counteroffer), make sure the agreed-upon salary and any additional negotiated information are included in a written offer letter and/or contract before you submit your formal letter of acceptance.

Remember, when an offer is made, you do not have to accept the job or the initial proposed salary. It is important that you and the organization are a good fit and the professional relationship is mutually beneficial. By thoroughly evaluating all aspects of the offer and not making a rushed decision, it is more likely you and the organization will be happy with the final outcome.

## PART 2: ASKING FOR A RAISE

Requesting a higher salary can seem intimidating at any stage of person's career. However, if you have recently taken on more responsibilities, made significant contributions to your organization, or received an exceptional performance review, it may be an ideal time to ask for a raise. Many of the steps for negotiating salary may also be beneficial when asking for a raise; however, there are a few additional key considerations.

**1.** Determine the best time to ask for a raise. Timing is key when requesting a raise in salary. If the facility has been experiencing budget cuts, hiring freezes, furloughs, layoffs, etc., you may want to wait to initiate a pay increase discussion until after the financial situation improves. It is also important to understand the fiscal year within your organization and when the budget is typically set. To help the leadership and accounting teams plan accordingly, it is recommended to discuss a potential raise before the next annual budget is finalized. Additionally, consider when raises or merit increases have been awarded in the past. These often occur at certain times of the year based on annual evaluation or budget cycles. Preparing to discuss a salary increase during one of these times,

likely, will be most appropriate.

**2.** Demonstrate why you deserve a pay increase. If you have taken on more responsibility in terms of tasks, oversight, or staff supervision, document this information to help demonstrate you have been doing more work for the same amount of pay. Identify measurable outcomes that resulted from your actions that made a positive impact on the organization. This will help you prove your worth, especially if any of the results saved the organization money, reduced time on task, or increased revenue. Write down additional training or education you have received. If you have earned a degree, license, or certificate or participated in an extensive training program that has provided added value to the organization, share direct examples of this contribution.

**3.** Carefully consider your worth. Use the online tools recommended for salary negotiation to determine what the current market value is and how your salary compares to peers in similar positions with comparable experience/background.

**4.** Present your case. Schedule a meeting with your direct supervisor at a time that makes the most sense based on your organization's fiscal calendar. During the meeting, keep the conversation positive, respectful, and professional. As outlined in the salary negotiation section, be sure to present the salary data you found during your research and demonstrate your value by sharing a list of your achievements, goals you have met or exceeded, and concrete ways you have contributed to the organization to help you negotiate an increase.

If an increase is not possible, remember, you may be able to negotiate other benefits such as a few extra vacation days per year, professional development funding, or a more flexible work schedule. Finally, don't be afraid to revisit this conversation in the future.

When approaching any wage ne-

gotiation, preparation, research and timing are key! Knowing how and when to request a higher salary is critical to a successful outcome. Negotiating your salary should not be a one-time occurrence. As you take on new roles and responsibilities, be sure to reassess your salary and research industry trends to ensure you are being fairly compensated. Remember, in the words of Wayne Gretzky, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Therefore, if you feel you deserve a higher salary, then build a strong case and ask for it! **SFM**

*Erin Wolfram has more than 15 years of experience in career services, and owns and operates Career Advantage Golf (<http://careeradvantagegolf.com>), specializing in career services for those in the turf management field. She has a podcast called *A Year of Career: 52 Practical Answers to Your Questions*, where she provides quick career and job search advice. Wolfram has a Bachelor of Science in Secondary English Education, Master of Science in Counseling Psychology, Master of Science in Educational Technology, and is a certified professional etiquette consultant. She can be reached at [erin@careeradvantageresumes.com](mailto:erin@careeradvantageresumes.com).*

*Melissa Johnson has more than 20 years of experience working with individuals from a variety of careers and industries. She specializes in one-on-one career coaching, resume and cover letter development, and job search assistance. Johnson has a passion for providing individualized support and guidance for each of her clients to ensure they can achieve their career goals. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Education in Counseling Psychology.*

## References:

<https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/compensation-and-benefits/salary-negotiation-0>

## JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ

### CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

**PROBLEM:**

Circles in grass

**TURFGRASS AREA:**

High School Multipurpose Field

**LOCATION:**

Southern United States

**TURFGRASS VARIETY:**

419 bermudagrass and other grasses

*Answer on page 33*

*John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International*



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As Paul Zwaska makes his move back to soil science, we pay tribute... and now look forward.

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#### THANK YOU, PAUL!

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Beacon Athletics

▶ LISTEN TO PAUL  
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# Addressing Sports Field Issues

By Mary Helen Sprecher



Photo courtesy of The Motz Group

It's the time of year when fields, having hosted months of practice and games, look rutted, muddy and even skinned in places. Nothing seems to be helping, and the field manager can see a renovation is on the horizon.

The knee-jerk reaction of the owner, though, is to blame the grass or even the builder. After all, the field is made to host sports, right? It logically follows, then, that the turf should be able to withstand use.

Field builders and design professionals say that's not always the case. A host of problems can be presenting themselves – and it is essential to have an open dialogue

about what is happening.

According to Amy Fouty, CSFM, field consultant at The Motz Group, an open dialogue should start upon installation and continue on a regular basis.

"When a field is installed, there are certain expectations regarding the safety and playability of the surface," said Fouty. "Each end of year (or season), the field should be discussed in terms of these expectations and the amount of maintenance practices being performed on the surface. Sports field managers are stewards of the field and will advocate for the things needed to meet these expectations."

But there's another factor that can be just as important, although it is often overlooked in such discussions, said Fouty.

"If activity occurs on the surface that is contradictory to the expectations set, discussion should occur, and additional funds set aside, to mitigate poor outcomes."

Examples might include a sports field that is also pressed into service to host non-athletic events, such as festivals, concerts or graduations. Make a list of these events and plan well in advance to avoid problems.

According to Brian R. Lee, CFB, of Hellas Construction, there are telltale signs – poor drainage, bald spots in





*Photo courtesy of Hummer Turfgrass Systems, Inc.*

the turf and hard pan areas – that point to a field in need of renovation. And at least some of the blame for that, he noted, can be set squarely on a need for better maintenance practices, as well as knowledgeable personnel.

“Field managers need specific time to perform routine preventative measures,” said Lee. “There should also be training for personnel, and proven field superintendents to do or oversee the work being done.”

If funding is tight, however, it’s likely the fields aren’t getting the care – or the attention to detail – they require. That means the steps that are being taken to remedy a problem aren’t necessarily going to be in the turf’s best interest, such as immediately watering the field to try to encourage growth and repairs, said Todd Smith, PhD, PE, LEED AP, of R&R Engineers-Surveyors, Inc.

“Whenever a field ‘stresses,’ the solution seems to be ‘add water.’ When a field thins out or isn’t as green as it was, that’s a sign of stress, but from what? It could be bad soil, too much water causing shallow roots, too much water or too much use causing soil compaction, temperature variations, disease or a

number of other things,” said Smith.

Instead of turning on the sprinklers, Smith added, “checking the soil profile and root depth, and other tests of the grass blades should be done to determine the cause and then apply a solution.”

Another important issue, he noted, is to discuss the amount of use the field is getting. Although many

schools will adjourn for the summer, the field is often kept busy hosting league play, travel tournaments, combines, college showcases and other sports events. And all that use adds up.

“Overuse is the second-biggest problem,” said Smith. “Natural grass is a living thing and, as such, it needs rest. I often ask clients how



*Photo courtesy of Hummer Turfgrass Systems, Inc.*





many all-nighters they can pull in a row before they can't function. I then explain grass is also living and needs rest to recharge, uptake nutrients, and repair itself just as humans do. There are many charts and opinions online that take an educated guess on how many different kinds of use the different kinds of grass can take per day. Beyond that, it doesn't matter what the rootzone, fertilization, overseeding and watering is."

Additionally, noted Matt Wimer of Hummer Turfgrass Systems, it's not as though field problems appear full-blown overnight.

"A lot of times, an issue will develop over time and worsen until it becomes a safety or playability issue," said Wimer. "Examples are the middle of a high-use field is getting thinner and thinner year after year as overseeding can't keep pace with the wear."

Wimer added that it's essential to remediate the source of a problem immediately or else it is likely to continue.

"One issue we see a lot of is heavy stands of *Poa annua* on fields or

portions of fields; this is one of the underlying causes of fields not draining well," he said. "That issue needs to be corrected in order to fix the issue that can be seen, which is the drainage problem. Getting to the root cause of the issue that you can see is something that a sports field contractor can help with."

But if a field owner is still insisting the field wasn't built correctly, said Wimer, he or she may just be right – although they may not like the conclusion that is drawn, particularly if the contractor was selected on the basis of a low bid.

"One of the biggest issues with natural grass sports field construction at the high school and small college level is unqualified contractors being hired to perform the initial installation. That is an issue that leads to a lot of post-construction renovations that could have been avoided if the fields were built right from the beginning," Wimer added.

Working with a contractor who has field-specific experience is an absolute necessity – just as necessary as having a skilled field manager to oversee the facility once it goes in. Finally, the field manager should have ongoing communication with the contractor. If issues crop up, a proactive approach on the part of the field manager and the contractor can help head off problems at the pass.

"The biggest concern in many organizations is often in the areas of the communication, and educa-







Photo courtesy of Hummer Turfgrass Systems, Inc.

tion, of folks in the organization regarding safety, playability, and maintenance practices needed for the playing surface,” said Fouty. “For any game or match, you need two teams, or two competitors, a ball, and a place to play. This simplistic perspective can often add perspective to discussions if used appropriately.” **SFM**

Mary Helen Sprecher wrote this article on behalf of the American Sports Builders Association ([www.sportsbuilders.org](http://www.sportsbuilders.org)), the national organization for builders, design professionals and suppliers of materials for sports fields, running tracks, tennis courts and indoor and outdoor courts and recreational facilities. It offers several resources to those interested in field construction, maintenance and repair:

#### **Sports Fields: A Construction and Maintenance Manual (2020)**

This book promotes the quality construction, maintenance and repair of synthetic turf facilities by providing information to facility owners, administrators, coaches, builders, architects and engineers. The publication is available both in hard copy and via electronic download. For ordering information, go to ASBA's website, [www.sportsbuilders.org](http://www.sportsbuilders.org), and select the tab on the blue menu bar labeled “Publications.”

#### **ASBA Membership Directory**

ASBA offers, free of charge, a directory of its members, categorized by state, as well as by profession. By going to the association's website, [www.sportsbuilders.org](http://www.sportsbuilders.org), it is possible to access a complete list of professionals available. The directory is in the center of ASBA's home page, with various search options. A hard copy of the directory can also be requested by calling 866-501-ASBA (2722) or sending an e-mail to [info@sportsbuilders.org](mailto:info@sportsbuilders.org).



Photo courtesy of The Motz Group



# Strategies for Overcoming the Labor Shortage

The Opening General Session of the 2022 STMA Conference, *Labor of Love: Strategies for Overcoming the Labor Shortage*, will feature a panel of experts discussing the labor shortages affecting the industry. Trends that will be discussed include seasoned sports field managers pursuing positions on the commercial side, fewer young people pursuing turfgrass science as a career path in college, fewer interns available to gain on-the-job experience, and the shrinking pool of qualified job candidates.

The General Session Moderator, Keith Winter, head groundskeeper for the Fort Wayne TinCaps, will lead the discussion in an interview-style format and add his own experience with difficulty finding and hiring personnel. Dr. John Sorochan, distinguished professor at University of Tennessee, will address the decreasing rate of enrollment in turfgrass science programs at the collegiate level and some strategies to attract young people to the field. Abby McNeal, CSFM, CPRP, CABI, field superintendent, City Wide Operations for Denver Parks and Recreation will discuss unique ways she has been balancing the labor shortage. Andrew Miller, program director for Brentsville Turfgrass Management Program will discuss his recruitment and retention strategies at the high school level. And Tyler Bloom, owner of Tyler Bloom Consulting, will discuss opportunities available in the industry that provide training to prepare individuals to enter the sports field management profession.

As a preview of the Opening General Session, *SportsField Management* recently spoke with Winter regarding labor issues.



## **SportsField Management (SFM):**

The labor shortage has been an ongoing issue in the sports field management industry – and many other industries. What are the biggest challenges you have experienced firsthand with regard to finding, and retaining, qualified personnel; and/or what are you hearing from others in the industry with regard to the challenges they are facing?

**Winter:** Pre-COVID, finding interested and qualified assistants, interns and game day workers was a challenge. Now it is nearly impossible! Students coming out of university turf programs are either heading into golf or other areas related to the industry, such as commercial sales or landscaping. The hours and pay scale in professional baseball are part of the hesitancy for post-graduate candidates, but I also think there is currently a lack of a strong work ethic within this country. Sitting behind a computer or handling a smart

phone is relatively easy and something “everyone” seems to be good at. In professional baseball, once the preconceived novelty of stepping on the field wears off, whether it be at the Major League or Minor League level, the reality of the time commitment and physical effort results in an incredibly low retention level from year to year. I talk with colleagues from around the country on a weekly basis – from all levels of Minor League and Major League Baseball – who are experiencing an identical set of circumstances.

**SFM:** What has been your approach with hiring (full-time, seasonal, assistants, interns) and retaining qualified workers, and what advice do you have for others when it comes to finding, hiring, and keeping good help?

**Winter:** The resources we have used in the past (STMA website, word of mouth, networking with fellow

groundskeepers) are simply not enough. This past spring, I contacted nine area college baseball head coaches, asking if they had any former or current players who might be interested in positions as interns or game day employees. Not knowing whether they passed the information on to their respective teams, I got three individual responses from a possible 270-plus candidates. I interviewed all three, and two fell by the wayside after they heard about the hours and time commitment. I hired the third as an intern, who never joined us due to a “family situation” that came up two weeks before the start of our season. My approach and advice to field managers is to be extremely creative and proactive in recruiting. Whether it’s using social media or websites, or in conversations, let as many people as possible know you are hiring.

**SFM:** What are the keys to getting young people interested in careers in sports field management, and what needs to occur to promote better awareness of this industry as a potential career?

**Winter:** This question is the “hot button” topic in our industry today, and NO ONE seems to have the answer. I am involved with the STMA MiLB Task Force that has been charged by Major League Baseball to come up with outcomes to increase the number of qualified individuals to take care of baseball fields across all levels, to improve competencies, increase awareness of careers in MiLB and MLB, improve recruitment and retention of employees, and improve the work environment (compensation, resources, staffing, hours, special events demands, etc.) of affiliated teams.

Our annual MiLB Symposium, which occurs at the conclusion of the STMA National Conference, will also be addressing this topic. It is paramount that the current generation of field managers at the Major and Minor League levels not only address, but come up with solutions to the issue at hand.

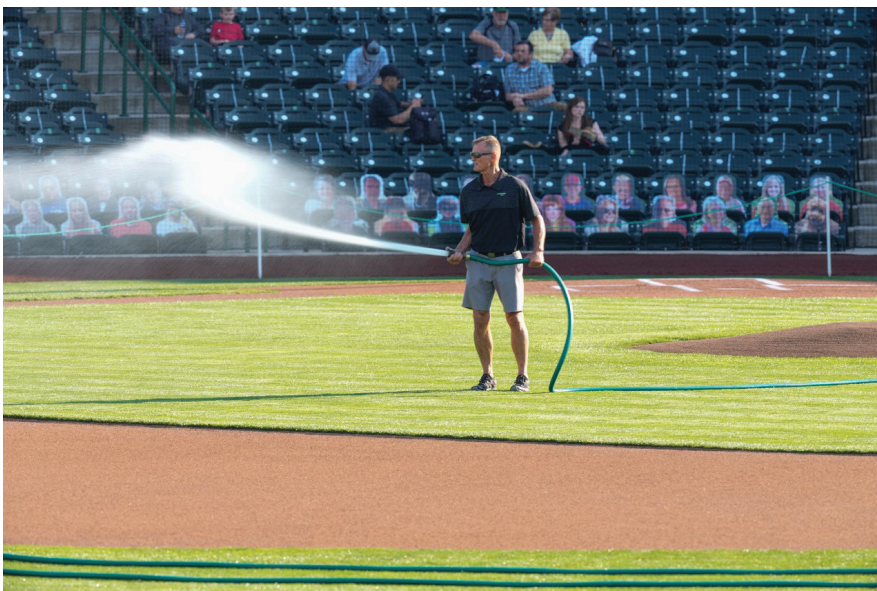
**SFM:** What advice do you have for young people who are already pursuing a career in sports field management with regard to getting noticed, landing a job, getting ahead, and building their career?

**Winter:** If you are pursuing a career in sports field management, there has never been a better time for you to not only get a job, but to be selective in where you want to work. There is not a single Major or Minor League head groundskeeper who won’t want to talk with you. Having some experience working on a baseball field may be helpful, but right now, my motto is, “If you have a pulse, let’s talk!”

**SFM:** A large portion of our readership includes sports field managers who are not national STMA members. What is your advice to non-members regarding the value of being involved in STMA (or even at the chapter level) and attending STMA Conference?

**Winter:** Attending the STMA Conference has always been a highlight of the off-season for me. By the time January rolls around, your battery has been re-charged, and taking advantage of the education, trade show, networking, and camaraderie – plus traveling to a great city – breaks up the doldrums of winter. If you are currently working in the sports field management industry, or interested in discovering an interesting and rewarding new career, membership into the Sports Turf Managers Association will provide valuable resources, continuing education, and the initiative to succeed. **SFM**

*The 2022 STMA Conference Opening General Session will be held Tuesday, January 18, from 8-9:30 a.m. Questions from the audience will be encouraged during the conversation. For more information about the 2022 STMA Conference and Exhibition (January 17-20, 2022, in Savannah, Ga.) please visit <https://www.stma.org/conference/>.*





# Sports Field Management Trends: Part 3



Photo provided by DLF North America

In an effort to keep the pulse of the industry, *SportsField Management* recently reached out to industry professionals for their insights regarding current trends in the industry. For Part 3 of our coverage, we delve more deeply into the topic of the seed market. The following is expert insight regarding seed trends, current challenges, and projections for the coming year:

## Pratum Seed Companies (Mountain View Seeds, and Landmark Seed)

Many are aware that 2020 brought a host of challenges to the Oregon seed industry. A gray-tailed vole endemic was followed up by wildfires in September and an ice storm in February 2021. This left many looking forward to 2021 and a new season. It didn't take long to realize that 2021 would have its own unique challenges. Fields that were struggling to recover from voles had to endure a dry spring, which limited spring growth and nitrogen uptake. This was followed up by the hottest June and July on record, including a 117-degree record high in Salem at the end of June. This saw yields being reduced 10 to 50 percent depending on the crop, soil types, and availability of irrigation.

The drought and heat reduced yields outside of Oregon's Willamette Valley as well. Irrigation limited losses for much of the Kentucky bluegrass crop in the Columbia Basin of Washington and eastern Oregon, but

dryland production areas were severely impacted and saw total crop losses in some fields. The Peace Region of Alberta realized yields one-third of normal, adding to losses of the fine fescue crop from Oregon, and Manitoba estimates perennial ryegrass and tall fescue crops were down 60 percent. Minnesota didn't escape unscathed, and estimates a loss of 20 percent or more on perennial ryegrass due to heat and drought stress.

We expect pressures on the supply chain to continue in 2022. High pricing on commodity crops has limited



Photo by Jonathan at Pratum Seed Companies

the availability of new acres in Oregon, Washington and Canada. We expect stable acres in Oregon and Minnesota, a slight increase in acres in the Columbia Basin of Oregon and Washington, but a limited supply of Kentucky bluegrass from dryland areas in Washington and Idaho. Canada is also reporting lower acres of fine fescue, perennial ryegrass, and tall fescue for harvest 2022.

– Jonathan Kuenzi, seed production manager, Pratum Seed Companies

## Alliance for Low Input Sustainable Turf (A-LIST)

The comments I heard consistently this fall from many in the industry were, “We’ve never seen anything like this before.” The last year represented the perfect storm of weather and crop issues combined with supply chain woes. Low yields and trucking/shipping issues hampered every facet of the grass seed industry from farm to field. Prices skyrocketed, but that didn’t mean the seed was available. When seed was available, it didn’t mean it could be shipped. Lack of containers and LTL trucks tripled pricing and extended delivery times. As we all know, seed shipments are time-sensitive, and even slight delays can often be catastrophic. The industry pulled together to do the best it could, but price adjustments happened frequently – often just days after quotes had been sent out. But there was a silver lining; relationships between seed suppliers, distributors, and sports field managers were strengthened.

As planning begins for next spring, there are several factors to consider. The move toward elite varieties is continuing at a rapid pace at the farmer level. Inferior commodity varieties are being phased out as producers realize that seed companies are willing to pay a premium for clean, high-turf-quality seed. The days of calling around for the best price may also be coming to an end. As supplies remain tight, allocations within each organization are being made. Distributors and sports field managers are now being encouraged to establish solid relationships to ensure seed availability. This past season, if the order wasn’t placed when the call was made, the seed most likely wasn’t available the next day. Establishing strong distributor relationships with the seed suppliers was one of the best ways to ensure order fulfillment. Getting orders placed in the queue as soon as possible is key to ensuring you were able to get what varieties you wanted, when you want them.

While we don’t see any of the issues ending soon, we can all work together to ensure success for sports field managers across the country. Communication and early planning are key.

Some other things you can do to help ensure a successful planting season next year are as follows:

- 1) Establish a good relationship with your distributor.
- 2) Order early.
- 3) Consider moving to improved varieties.
- 4.) Talk to your seed suppliers in advance, as they will have more information that may help you plan for a successful spring.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2022 STMA Conference and Expo in January. Don’t be afraid to seek us out to discuss improved varieties.

– Jeremy Husen, executive director, A-LIST

## Barenbrug

This last crop year seemed like the one where everything that could go wrong, did. Many folks in the seed industry are working on the assumption that this hole could take a year to climb out of, and acknowledge it can be hard to predict with prices as high as they are now. The current environment of crop costs and demand is conducive to a natural phenomenon in the grass seed industry, which is most often seen in ryegrass and tall fescue. Acres are easy to place, and supply can quickly swing and outweigh demand. A swing this large isn’t expected to occur in a year’s time, though, so field managers should still be on the lookout if they have crucial seed needs for the next year or two.

Depending on the end user – whether sports, golf, or lawn/landscape – a spectrum of managers set their thresholds on what cost they’re willing to invest. The overseed market experiences this the most, where some decide to have seed no matter the price or, rather, draw a line in the sand and pursue alternatives. Alternatives, in this case, almost always trickle down to other species or non-seed options entirely. With ryegrasses and tall fescue being the first dominoes to fall, bluegrass and even bentgrass are considered more during times such as these. The seeding rates of these species bring total cost well below ryegrass and fescue, but the end user



Photo provided by Barenbrug



must ensure these options fit their specific application.

Another way seed companies can combat the current shortage is by coating seeds with enhancements. For Barenbrug, this would include our Yellow Jacket technology. These coatings have a niche purpose, with ours improving seed survivability in high-stress environments in the peak of summer or hard-to-grow environments like interseeding. While this is an excellent strategy for meeting the needs of more customers than with raw seed alone in such a short market, raw seed may take precedent in applications that require immediate density and cover, like sod farms or the lowest height cuts of turf. When purchasing coated seed, do your homework on what ingredients are included in the product, as some may not provide any added value at all.

Recommendations I tend to make these days are from my perspective of a former turfgrass manager, not that of a seedsman. If you're a manager who currently doesn't have seed in hand and are looking for grass seed for annual needs, or are attempting to perform larger renovation projects, have a backup plan ready. What will you do if you cannot find any seed whatsoever? Will you be able to adjust budgets to produce a stand of turf in the coming season that meets your needs? Find out how much that scenario may cost and compare to a "with seed" budget. Does your project call for specifically adapted or unique genetics? If those aren't available, will you be willing to settle for others that may require more inputs? In general, we see managers putting off larger projects until later seasons or shifting priorities to ensure enough high-quality fields are available to meet needs, even with the increased costs. Keeping ongoing, alternate-scenario budgets open and not pulling the trigger on large seed projects until the seed is in the warehouse can help answer questions from those to whom you report. Also, don't give up on pursuing seed. Barenbrug is a global company, and we can use this to our advantage by sourcing seeds from other countries. While global seed is limited, we hope this might lead to mid-late season availability for various species.

– Micah Gould, market development manager, professional divisions, Barenbrug

## RAS | Pure Seed

When the country shut down, millions of Americans found a new appreciation for their lawn. Retail sales of grass seed and sod began to soar. Retail stores needed more seed to stock their shelves, which led to the acquisition of three professional seed companies. Fewer companies in the professional market, plus a low carryover from the previous crop due to high demand, started the impact on the industry's supply.

2021 crop yields have been affected by environmen-



tal factors; wildfires, ice storms, flooding, mice, excessive heat, and drought have caused all-time lows in production. Prior to the pandemic, the price of grass seed to the grower stayed relatively the same while other crop prices went up, leading farmers to take out a percentage of their grass seed acres to grow the other crops.

There have been several logistical bottlenecks that have added to the challenge of supplying seed to customers. Needing to rely on new crop to fulfill current orders creates delays due to harvesting, cleaning, testing, certifying, servicing and packaging.

Regarding shipping, the freight industry is experiencing massive delays along with inflated prices domestically and internationally.

Our advice is to be flexible, communicate, order ahead, and forecast with your supplier. Purchasing the right coated seed will also help your ability to acquire seed sooner. Certain coatings around the seed provide key nutrients to ensure the success of germination and health of the grass. Be sure to purchase good genetics – the longevity of your project will be determined on the varieties you choose to plant. Even in a seed shortage, varieties make a difference!

– McKayla Fricker, communications director, RAS | Pure Seed

## DLF North America

It is impossible to turn on the news and not hear of the increasing supply chain issues facing the country. Everything from grocery stores and retail centers to manufacturers are all having issues getting things on their shelves and production lines. Ships continue to sit in ports waiting to be unloaded, and then finding a truck to pick it up and get it from point A to point B adds to the challenges.

The seed industry is no different in facing its own challenges. 2020 saw unprecedented demand as COVID





Photo provided by DLF North America

had people tending to their home lawns and buying seed in large numbers. As golf and other sports returned, it added to demand that left the industry with no carryover as we waited for the fall crop to arrive. In addition, the 2021 turfgrass crop was extremely impacted by weather. Rainfall totals were the lowest on record and some areas set record high temperatures exceeding 117 degrees Fahrenheit. The combination of drought and high heat limited yields in crops across the board.

The shortage of seed and strong demand is driving up prices to grass seed growers as they have a lot of options to choose from to take over acreage. The competition of other crops, as well as hazelnuts, are making it more expensive for growers to continue growing grass seed.

All of this, combined with shipping industry problems and labor issues, will likely continue to keep prices high as demand is still strong. It will take time to build up carryovers and supply.

The sports field manager is seeing these pressures, not only in their budgets, but also in their maintenance



Photo provided by DLF North America

programs. Seed coatings are becoming an increasingly important option to consider, not only to extend supply, but also to add some benefits to the seed to assist in germination and establishment. It may also be time to consider alternative options like annual or intermediate ryegrasses instead of perennial ryegrass, or more drought- and traffic-tolerant options like tall fescue in other parts of the country.

It is important to have these conversations with your seed suppliers, as one thing is for sure – there will be no shortage in games being played and pressure on the sports field managers to keep the fields in perfect conditions at all times.

– Matt Duncan, pro turf account manager, DLF North America

### SiteOne

There have been issues like severe drought in the Pacific Northwest during the last growing season and fertilizer shortages directly impacting sports turf. Seed is an elastic commodity, so we do see prices increase as supply diminishes. We anticipate the seed supply to remain very tight through the spring and then become more available after the summer 2022 crop is harvested, but we don't think it will look normal anytime soon. Sports field managers should remain close to their distributor and sales reps. Ask them about what they're seeing and what supplier partners are doing to stay ahead of this. SiteOne is working with customers to educate them on alternative products like enhanced efficiency fertilizers and soil stimulants to improve results with decreased seeding rates and make fertilizers work harder for them.

– Brian Rowan, VP of category management – agronomics, SiteOne. **SFM**



Photo provided by SiteOne

# Social Media, Blogs, and SEO

By Robert Kravitz

It's getting noisy out there when it comes to social media, specifically social media marketing. There are a lot of people and organizations all competing for the same eyes and ears. Making matters even more difficult, our friends at Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn are constantly tinkering with their algorithms. When this happens, the search engine optimization (SEO) techniques and strategies we used at one time may not work any longer.

However, there are some basics to SEO and posting on social media that have proven themselves over the years. If you stick to these basics — and post frequently — your voice will be heard, and your venue and its activities become better known to more people.

But before we go into that, let's look at what we are dealing with when it comes to all that “noise” mentioned earlier. Myspace, a site we don't even hear much about anymore, was the first biggie in social media.\* They reached a milestone of one million active users back in 2004. No other site, at that time, had ever reached that plateau.

Now a social media site with just one million users would be considered very “small potatoes.” For example, as of 2018, here are the estimated number of monthly logged-in users of the following social media platforms\*\*:

- Facebook: More than 2.5 billion.
- YouTube: 2 billion.
- WhatsApp: Approaching 1.5 billion.
- WeChat/Instagram: Approximately 1 billion.
- Twitter, Tumblr, Reddit, and Pinterest: In the 300- to 500-million range.

This tells us we have our work



cut out for us to make social media marketing effective. So, what can we do to get heard above the crowd?

Let's assume we are writing blogs on our website and then using links to those blogs on social media. Here are some basics in blog writing that should help on both types of platforms:

## Select a keyword first

Yes, it's true that what you have to say — the content — is the most important thing. But how is anyone going to find that content? They will find it if you know what your keywords or phrases will be before you even start writing.

## Select a keyword tracking program

Usually, people suggest using Google AdWords for this. I find that platform difficult to use unless you are a social media “techie.” Other platforms are available — some free, some at moderate cost — that base their results on Google AdWords, but are far easier to use.

## How to use a keyword tracking program

Let's say we are trying to promote a baseball game at our venue. Utilizing a keyword tracking program, we type in “baseball event” and find some of the keywords used on search engines at that time are the following:

- Baseball tournaments
- Spring training baseball
- Baseball live stream
- Baseball game day
- Baseball tickets

Try to work one or more of these keyword phrases into your blog if they are relevant.

## Use engaging titles

Engaging titles typically highlight the value of the post to the reader. “Five Ways to Do This” or “Ten Things You Should Know About That” are engaging. Another strategy, ask questions. “Do You Know the Super Fastest Way to Get to Our Stadium?” That title is engaging in two ways: first, it asks a question. Second, it uses the term



“Super Fastest.” That’s an eye-catcher.

Using keywords in the content. The keywords should be in the first sentence of your blog, and they should then be in the second and third paragraph of your content and placed a couple of more times in the post.

### Word count

Blogs should be 600 words. That is not a large number. But what if you have something much more important to discuss, such as a more permanent topic? Then we need the word count to jump to 1,200 or more. These are often called “evergreen” blogs. These blogs have helpful content that is relevant to readers for an extended period.

### Keywords in titles and headers

Not only should titles be engaging, but your keywords should be in the title as well. Further, break up the blog. Even if it is just six hundred words, have two or three subheads and include your keywords in these as well.

### Links in and out

It’s an excellent idea to have external hyperlinks in the body of your content pointing to, for example, more information, as well as internal links. Internal links point to more information located on your site. Both types can improve SEO.

### Quotes are good

Adding a quote from someone well known or respected gives the post more credibility, and more credibility translates into better SEO. Why is this? When search engines change their algorithms (and this applies to social media algorithms as well) typically it is because they are trying to improve search engine results for the user. Here is how they see it. The search engines are providing a service to the user. When you search on Bing, Google or YouTube, their goal is to deliver the most relevant information to you per your query. A quote

from a respected individual helps make this happen.

Include images. Images improve SEO if you take advantage of ALT text. The search and social media platforms can’t decipher one image from another. However, the ALT text tells them what the image is all about. Use your keywords in the ALT words.

### But wait...there’s more

Along with what we have discussed so far, here are five general principles to always follow:

1. Use active voice. Passive voice is not SEO-friendly. For example, “everyone was startled by that home run” is passive. “That home run startled everyone” is active.

2. Use lists and bullets, just not too many.

3. Keep paragraphs and sentences short. This improves engagement and SEO.

4. Keep things simple. But if you are having trouble explaining something simply, it often means you do not fully understand it yourself.

5. It’s okay to use pronouns such as “I,” “we,” and “you” in your blogs and social media posts. You want everyone to be part of your team, and using personal pronouns help make that happen. **SFM**

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\*Myspace is still active but has about seven million monthly visits.

\*\*These numbers do fluctuate and are probably higher today.

## SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

“As sports turf managers, rarely are we around a ballpark where people see what we do on a daily basis,” said Andy Ommen, CSFM, sports turf manager, Professional Outdoor Solutions, McLean County PONY Baseball. “They show up, they play, and when they come back the field is ready again. When you post pictures to a group of peers, and receive positive feedback and/or solutions, it’s tremendous motivation. For me, Twitter has been a tremendous vehicle for me to share things that I have learned as well as gather information from other sports turf managers on problems, techniques, and ideas. The camaraderie among sports turf managers is nothing short of amazing. Twitter has been a huge vehicle for me to establish connections with peers in the industry.”

According to Brandon Hardin, superintendent, sports turf, Mississippi State University, social media can be a huge tool for educating people about what it takes to keep fields and facilities performing at the highest level, but added that social media can be a very toxic place.

“The biggest takeaway from my history with social media is do not engage with the negative people; they will die on the hill they chose to stand on,” said Hardin. “I do though thoroughly enjoy interacting with fans who have legitimate questions, because if we don’t answer their genuine questions they’ll never know – and knowledge is power.”

# GIE+EXPO Post-show Recap

The 2021 GIE+EXPO was held October 20-22 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky. The event showcased the latest outdoor power equipment on the trade show floor and in the 20-plus-acre outdoor demonstration area. Some of the new product highlights and news from this year's event are as follows:

## Exmark

### 144-inch Lazer Z Diesel

Exmark unveiled its largest, most powerful commercial zero-turn mower – the 144-inch Lazer Z Diesel, which is capable of cutting up to 11.5 acres per hour.

The new Lazer Z Diesel features a 144-inch UltraCut rear-discharge flex wing cutting deck, which pairs a 48-inch center deck with two 48-inch wing decks. Capable of articulating 20 degrees up and 15 degrees down, the floating wing decks minimize scalping while enabling maximum productivity when mowing in uneven conditions. The deck uses six matching blades and a rear-discharge design to deliver maximum productivity and an unmatched finished cut quality.

To ease transport, both wing decks fold hydraulically to ease loading and unloading, and reduce required trailering space. This enables the 144-inch Lazer Z Diesel to fit on industry-standard trailers that are designed for 72-inch machines.

Powering the 144-inch Lazer Z Diesel is a 43.5-horsepower Yanmar three-cylinder diesel engine.

The Lazer Z Diesel is also available in 60-, 72- and 96-inch models. Each includes Exmark's industry-leading 5-year/1,500-hour warranty, with no hour limitations in the first two years.



## Vertex S-Series

Exmark also introduced its next generation of stand-on zero-turn mowers – the Vertex S-Series. An all-new model, the Vertex S-Series gives landscape maintenance professionals a highly productive, versatile, and easy to use mower they can rely on to perform every day.

Vertex S-Series models feature Exmark's UltraCut Series 4 cutting decks in a choice of 48-, 52-, or 60-inch cut widths. Constructed of formed and welded high-strength steel, the UltraCut Series 4 cutting decks feature flow control baffles to optimize air and clipping flow through the deck. A single-point deck lift enables easy, tools-free changes to cut height. The rod-style floating deck offers easy rake adjustment, with anti-scalp rollers for a consistently superior cut quality on any turf type. And the available Micro Mulch system further enhances the versatility of the UltraCut Series 4 cutting deck.

2022 Vertex S-Series models are available with a choice of carbureted Kawasaki FX730V, or fuel-saving EFI Kohler Command Pro ECV740 commercial engines. Exmark's proven hydro drive system delivers infinitely variable ground speeds of up to 8.5 mph.

### 2022 Radius X-Series zero-turn mower

Exmark also unveiled its updated 2022 Radius X-Series zero-turn riding mower, featuring a 31-hp. Kawasaki twin-cylinder engine.

This Radius is equipped with a 60-inch UltraCut Series 4 cutting deck, which features a high-capacity 5.5-inch deep, side-discharge design. The UltraCut Series 4 cutting deck features Exmark's exclusive Flow Control baffles. Patented Lazer Z-style deck strut isolation technology eliminates sway, eases deck height adjustment, and increases operator comfort by reducing vibration that reaches the operator.

The Kawasaki FX921V engine features an overhead V-valve design with three valves per cylinder, with pressurized lubrication and a high-efficiency oil cooler. The engine was designed for use on commercial zero-turn mowers, with a metal engine cover with integrated clean-out ports, heavy-duty shift-type starter and multi-stage canister style air filter.

## Dewalt

MTD debuted a new line of Dewalt professional gas outdoor power equipment at GIE+EXPO for the first time since launching the brand's partnership in December 2019. The line includes walk-behind and hydro-walk



mowers, stand-on mowers, and zero-turn riding mowers.

■ **Z260 professional zero-turn mower** – This 60-inch mower is built to tackle four to 10 acres, and the 24-hp. Kawasaki engine offers premium performance with optimal efficiency. The line's most powerful transmission delivers up to 500 ft./lb. of output torque. (The mower is also available in a 54-inch model, the Z254.)

■ **X554 professional stand-on mower** – Stand-on functionality with a large platform enables quick on-and-off action to remove mowing obstructions without much job interruption. The frame is matched with a premium pump and wheel motor transmission for heavy-duty use. (The mower is also available in a 48-inch model, the X548.)

■ **HW48 48-inch professional hydro-walk mower** – This mower is built with a 15-hp. Kawasaki FS engine, heavy-duty construction and thicker essential frame components. Single-lever, infinite-speed control delivers quick, on-the-fly speed adjustments, and contoured controls reduce fatigue and dampen vibration.

■ **X536 professional stand-on mower (available spring 2022)** – This mower offers stand-on functionality with a new 36-inch cutting deck for additional maneuverability. For all-day comfort, the large hip pad adjusts and matches the operator's height.

■ **Z160 professional zero-turn mower** – A durable 1.5- x 3-inch tubular steel frame provides maximum strength and rigidity with easy access points for routine maintenance. The state-of-the-art wheel and caster design provides a more professional cut, optimizes trim capabilities, and maintains a smooth ride at higher speeds. (The mower is also available in a 48-inch model, the Z148.)

## Echo

During GIE+EXPO, Echo Incorporated held a party to kick off a yearlong celebration that will honor the company's 50th anniversary. Established on November 16, 1972 in North America, Echo is a leading manufacturer of professional-grade, high performance outdoor power equipment for commercial and homeowner use.

During the celebration, Wayne Thomsen, VP of marketing and product management, Echo Inc., unveiled a Limited-Edition Echo PB-580T backpack blower, designed with an all-black engine shrouding and commemorative gold trim. The limited-edition units will not be available at retail level; instead, Echo will be awarding 250 units through October 2022 by means of social media contests and other sweepstakes.

"For fifty years, Echo has provided a tremendous



## Inter Miami CF

Fort Lauderdale, FL

A top priority for the soccer field of Inter Miami is the ability to hold events 12 months out of the year. They chose Latitude 36® Bermudagrass to avoid overseeding in the wintertime. The grass growth is much shorter, the grass leaf blade is much finer and everything on it stays more compact. The soccer players love this due to a nice, quick surface so the ball can move fast. In a tough climate Latitude 36 maintains its color and grows all winter long.



**"I would recommend the Latitude to other sports turf managers because of the recovery, the wear tolerance and the extended growth into colder climates"**

– Matt Bruderek, Director of Turf & Grounds at Inter Miami

Read the Inter Miami CF Case Study:  
[SodSolutionsPro.com/Inter-Miami](https://SodSolutionsPro.com/Inter-Miami)

amount of innovation to the outdoor power equipment industry. We're very proud of the legacy we've created, and we have every intention to carry that forward for another 50 years and beyond," said Tim Dorsey, president and CEO, Echo Incorporated.



## Stihl

Stihl Inc. introduced a range of battery-powered solutions during GIE+EXPO.

### AP 500 S

"This new battery impresses not only with its high-energy density and comparatively low weight, but also expected longevity," said Murray Bishop, Stihl director of sales. "When properly cared for, the AP 500 S can accept up to twice as many charging cycles as compared to conventional lithium-ion batteries."

### AL 301-4 multi charger

"This charger can sequentially charge up to four Stihl AP or AR batteries. It can quickly charge four AP 300 S batteries in just under 5 hours," said Bishop. "Because we know that landscapers need recharging options to fit their operations, we're showcasing an entire multi-tier charging infrastructure around the AL 301-4."

### Charging cabinet

"Our new charging cabinet houses three AL 301-4 chargers allows landscapers to charge up to 12 batteries on a single 110-volt outlet," said Bishop. "Additionally, the charging cabinet is built with modularity in mind. Depending on the application, it can be configured to fit in the bed of a truck, mounted to a flatbed truck, or open in a trailer. It's weatherproof, and features cooling fans to keep batteries in the specified temperature ranges."

### AP 300 battery system

"The Stihl AP 300 battery system delivers professional

gas-comparable performance with all the benefit of batteries, and we're expanding it with a new trimmer, sprayer, and chain saw," said Bishop.

- **FSA 86 R** – Lightweight, battery-powered, mid-range trimmer designed for professionals. Its variable-speed trigger optimizes performance and run time, and supports multiple mowing heads. With a virtually maintenance-free brushless motor, 13.8" cutting swath and variable-speed 7,200 rpm delivers a smooth, clean cut. Low noise, as a battery tool, extends your working hours.

- **SGA 85** – For pros using sprayers for pest control, cleaning and restoration, cleaning, lawn and garden applications, construction, and greenhouses, this is the first battery-powered sprayer in the Stihl lineup. It features strong Viton seals for durability and reliability, an easy-to-use diaphragm-style pump, and a leak-resistant design. It also has a variable-speed trigger, provides high working pressures from 14.5 to 87 psi.

- **MSA 300 C-O** – "This is the most powerful battery-powered chain saw in the market," said Bishop. The MSA300 is ideal for noise-sensitive environments. It features ergonomics, an anti-vibration system, excellent balance, durability, and a weather-resistant design.

## Hustler Turf

Hustler Turf showcased the Surfer Pro and the Super SF stand-on.

### Surfer Pro

With its compact footprint and 34- or 48-inch deck options, The Surfer Pro is a great trim and tight-area mower with the ability to easily fit through fence gates. The 18-inch rear drive tires offer a smooth mowing experience for any operator. The Surfer Pro is backed by a two-year, 300-hour warranty for contractors.

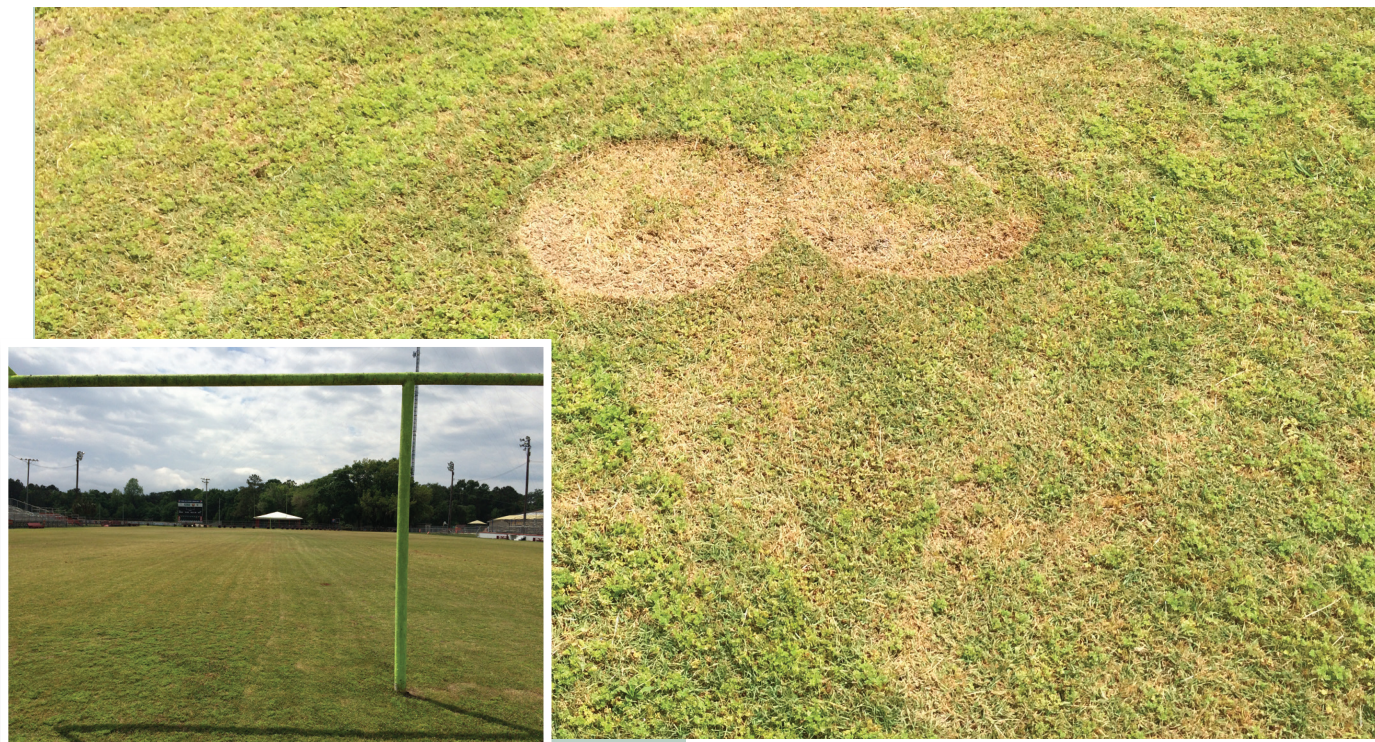
### Super SF

The Super SF stand-on mower is an all-day machine. It is the biggest, fastest and strongest model in the family of stand-up units offered by Hustler. The Super SF is equipped with Hustler's newest deck – the VX – in 60 or





# JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



## ANSWER

*From page 17*

This photo is from a small-town high school where the boosters raise money to purchase equipment. In this case, the funds were used to renovate the field. An irrigation system was installed and bermudagrass was planted. As with many projects like this, there was no equipment purchased or labor budgeted for maintenance after the renovation was completed, so the maintenance duty fell to the high school coach. The coach lived close to the school and volunteered to bring his rotary riding mower over once a week to mow the grass – whether it needed it or not. On this particular occasion, he decided to allow one of the players a chance at the mowing process as this player said he was very familiar with riding mowers. At the beginning of his first pass, the youngster depressed the button to lower the deck and dropped it all the way to the ground, bogging it down a little. As you can see, he decided to raise it up “a little,” and after a pass or two, the coach came out and intervened. Deciding it was still too low, he instructed they raise the deck up “a bit” more and mowed the remainder of the field. One can only hope that they used a permanent marker to write the “good” height of cut number on the mower frame or deck for future reference.

**Photo from John Mascaro's collection. Think you have a better photo, email me one!**

*John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International*

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz, please send it to John Mascaro, 1471 Capital Circle NW, Ste. #13, Tallahassee, FL 32303 call 850-580-4026 or email to [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com). If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted will become property of SportsField Management and the Sports Turf Managers Association.

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72 inches, and holds nearly 14 gallons of fuel, allowing the operator to spend more time mowing and less time fueling.

"This is the top of the category for us in terms of a stand-on mower," said Brad Unruh, director of new product development at Hustler Turf. "We have two engine options – a Kawasaki EFI 38.5 hp. and we are also going to offer the new 40-hp. Vanguard with the OilGuard system. This is a heavy-duty stand-on built for all-day mowing."

## Ferris

The Ferris 500S zero-turn mower is designed to deliver efficiency and performance at a great value.

"The patented Ferris suspension, the Briggs & Stratton Commercial Series engine, and even the extras like the LED headlight and premium mid-back seat all contribute to productivity," said Kody Van Sistine, Ferris brand manager.

The 500S comes equipped with the Ferris exclusive pivoting front axle and coil-over shocks on each wheel so that uneven terrain is no problem for the operator or the unit, which can reach ground speeds of up to eight miles per hour without sacrificing the cut quality. The unit will be available in 48-, 52-, and 61-inch mowing deck configurations with Briggs & Stratton Commercial Series or Kawasaki engines.

Other features of the 500S include a fabricated 10-gauge steel mowing deck, dual commercial transaxles with 7-inch cooling fans, 22-inch rear-drive tires and large front casters, and a foot-operated deck lift that quickly changes cut height in 1/4-inch increments with an adjustable pedal.

## OTR Wheel Engineering, Inc.

OTR Wheel Engineering, Inc. (OTR) launched the NDX airless tire and wheel system for turf equipment and utility vehicles. NDX is designed to minimize loss of productivity and revenue for fleets and owner-operators, while increasing ride quality.

"Our history of tire and wheel innovations, advanced construction and relationships with end users have been fully leveraged in this product development," said Fred Taylor, founder and chairman of the OTR Board. "The result is a system that looks and behaves like a pneumatic tire, except it never goes flat, thus eliminating costly downtime and repairs. NDX is tough and durable, as well as competitively priced, to deliver exceptional value and a safe, comfortable ride."

Featuring a patent-pending design, NDX combines multi-layered construction, engineered structural supports and a tread belt that maintains desired curvature and safe ground clearance at all times.

Additionally, NDX uses premium rubber compounds and a deflection management system that optimizes



energy absorption and load distribution. Other benefits of this system include less jarring and bouncing as well as reduced operator fatigue.

"With our tire, you have the ability to put air pressure into it. If you want 20 pounds of pressure...30, 40," said Taylor. "With the way we have designed it, this tire flexes in the center. That is where your ride activity takes place."

Sold as an assembly (tire plus wheel), the NDX system is available for more than 50 turf equipment products and 10 utility vehicle fitments supporting popular OEM models. OTR is also introducing NDX-style smooth type front tires with turf-friendly patterns.

## Greenworks Commercial

Greenworks Commercial announced plans for a new manufacturing, research and development, product testing, and customer experience center in Morristown, Tenn. The \$20 million initial investment will create hundreds of new jobs for the area beginning next year.

The Greenworks Commercial Center of Excellence will include a 181,000-square-foot manufacturing facility producing commercial ride-on vehicles and mowers and technologically advanced commercial-grade batteries. The campus will also include a 20,000-square-foot customer experience center located on 30 acres of green space, which will be utilized for dealer training and events, as well as product development and testing.

The Greenworks Commercial factory is expected to open in early spring of 2022 and is set to welcome more than 200 new employees.

Greenworks also showcased a wide range of products at GIE+EXPO:

- New 82-volt string trimmers utilize a direct drive, commercial-grade brushless motor that produces up to 2.0 kW of maximum power. They also have high and low speed settings for more power or longer runtime, lightweight rear housings, responsive variable-speed triggers and over-molded front handles with large gripping areas for maximum comfort during use and when edging. This



new line of string trimmers includes models 82ST15, 82ST20 and 82TB20.

■ Greenworks' new commercial stick edger, 82ES15 features a high-strength magnesium guard and housing for maximum durability and a runtime of up to 120 minutes.

■ Greenworks' new hedge trimmers come in a variety of short-pole fixed (82PH30F), mid-pole fixed (82PH40F), mid-pole articulating (82PH53A) and long-pole articulating (82PH62T) options. All come with a 50-50 tip-to-motor weight balance, a reduced-effort two-step trigger system and 24-inch dual-action laser cut steel blades.

■ The commercial brushless pressure washer offers 2500 PSI performance with a brushless motor that automatically adjusts RPM to maximize flow, no matter the nozzle selected. This PW-2500C model pressure washer includes a seven-piece brass quick connect kit, 25-foot steel braided rubber hose and 10-inch never flat semi-pneumatic tires for easy transport.

■ The new 24-inch dual-stage snow blower (82SN24D) can discharge snow up to 50 feet with 200 degrees of rotation, clearing the space of a 36-car driveway. Easy to operate with three forward drive speeds and reverse, the snow blower features a zero-turn system. Included with the snow blower are bright LED lights for morning or eve-

ning work, 3-in-1 cleanout tool and drift cutters.

■ The model 82EA8 earth auger —boating a 35-inch height and 8-inch width — features a 7/8-inch shaft diameter and LED lights to illuminate digging area.

■ Three new 82-volt zero-turn mowers include two ride-on sizes — 60 inch (model CZ60R) and 52 inch (model CZ52R) and a 48-inch stand-on zero-turn mower (CZ48S). All three mowers come with 16 kWh battery power that can cut up 14 acres in one charge.

■ Greenworks Commercial also introduced a commercial-grade robotic mower, optimow. The optimow mower is equipped with 4G cellular connectivity and fully integrated GPS tracking, allowing operators to view its real-time location and operate from anywhere. Optimow robotic mowers can be customized for everything from scheduling to cut height and can operate on lawns with up to a 35% grade slope. The commercial-grade optimow mowers include four models: optimow 33, optimow 33H, optimow 66 and optimow 66H.

■ Three new UTVs offer a range of versatility and power. The CU800 model features a 13.8 kWh battery — an 800cc equivalent vehicle that can go up to 75 miles on a single charge and boasts a 550-pound cargo hauling capacity and 1,500-pound towing capacity. The CU500,

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a 500cc equivalent vehicle with an 8 kWh battery, has a cargo capacity of 330 pounds, a towing capacity of 1,250 pounds and can go up to 40 miles on one charge. Top speed is 27 mph, and ground clearance is 9.7 inches. The CU400W commercial work vehicle features a 5kW power motor that can travel up to 65 miles on one charge. This vehicle has a 550-pound cargo capacity and 500-pound towing capacity.

- The model 82BA26 backpack blower features a toggle turbo button that allows users to lock in turbo mode without having to hold the button down. With a runtime of up to 65 minutes and an air speed of 194 mph, this commercial blower can tackle any job. The model 82BH22 handheld blower pushes air at 140 mph and has a maximum runtime of 65 minutes.

- A 21-inch push mower (82LM21), a 21-inch self-propelled mower (82SLM21S) and a 25-inch self-propelled mower (82LM25S) all feature commercial-grade motors, wheels and bearings.

- New 82-volt chain saw options offer three levels of powerful performance — 18-inch versions in both 2.4 kW and 2.7 kW and a 20-inch model offering 3.4 kW of power.

- The 82PS10 10-inch pole saw and the 82PS10T 10-inch telescoping pole saw utilize a direct drive, commercial-grade brushless motor.

- Greenworks' new commercial 12-inch power cutter, 82PC12, can handle heavy-duty cutting of materials like concrete, masonry or pipes up to 110 mm thick.

- A six-port portable rapid charger offers the utmost in charging convenience. Rapidly charge six batteries at once to keep your team powered throughout the day.

- For smaller needs, the new dual port super charger quickly charges two batteries at once in only 30-60 minutes, depending on battery size.

## AriensCo

AriensCo introduced a wide range of lawnmowers and snowblowers that feature the latest enhancements in power, durability, comfort and personality.

### Ariens

On the Ariens side, the Mammoth 850 is a ride-on multi-attachment vehicle that is designed for applications that require substantial snow and ice removal operations, including for city use, municipalities, universities and commercial landscaping.

"With a powerful engine and four-wheel drive steering, operators are able to cover sizeable surface areas much more easily and efficiently than pushing a vehicle. And with several attachments available that utilize our electric quick-connect system, the Mammoth 850 is an incredibly versatile vehicle that can handle a wide array of tasks," said Stephen Ariens, director of product management, snow, at

AriensCo. "Snowfall can vary, so that is where you can put on the snowplow, the blower or the brush."

New Ariens special edition snow blowers also made their debut at the tradeshow, and will only be available at Ariens dealerships. These four new snow blowers to target a niche in the high-end residential market. Based on the popular Ariens Professional snow blower range, the Kraken Edition, Professional Mountaineering Edition, Professional Alpine Edition and Platinum Great Lakes Edition include several special features that provide an exclusive "custom shop" feel.

"These are special, aspirational models, for the owner who wants a tricked-out, custom machine with all the features and accessories. Think of them as being like our version of a platinum truck edition," Stephen Ariens said.

Ariens also debuted new updates to its Ikon zero-turn mower range. The standout Ikon Limited special edition model is sure to turn heads, recalling classic 1960s Ariens designs and integrating them with cutting-edge residential mower features.

### Gravely

Gravely introduced a new stand-on mower, the Z-Stance, which retains all the quality and durability of a professional mower, including a professional 4-year or 500-hour warranty.

"Stand-on mowers are the fastest growing category in the lawn equipment market. They offer great comfort and visibility on the jobsite for operators," said Grant Wilson, product director, Gravely commercial. "The new Z-Stance is a professional mower with simplified operations for a more inclusive set of users."

At GIE+EXPO, Gravely also showcased new enhancements for the Pro-Turn EV that increase its grass cutting power and diagnostic abilities.

### John Deere

At GIE+EXPO, John Deere celebrated 25 years of manufacturing its ZTrak commercial zero-turn mower lineup, commemorating a history of innovation that started in 1997 with the launch of the F620 and F680 zero-turn mowers. The brand continues to build on its commitment to effective and efficient commercial landscaping offerings with the recent launch of the Fastback PRO rear-discharge mower deck, offering time-saving solutions for professional landscapers. To commemorate the anniversary of the ZTrak, John Deere featured a 25th anniversary unit front and center at this year's GIE+EXPO, with a special decal included on all MY2022 ZTrak Z900 Series units to highlight this tremendous milestone.

### Long Bed Special Application Vehicles

John Deere also introduced its Long Bed Special Applica-





tion Vehicles. Designed and manufactured in collaboration with IAS, the Long Bed Special Application Vehicles provide solutions for customers needing additional bed space to haul larger, bulkier items.

The Long Bed Special Application Vehicles are available in gas or diesel and feature expanded 56-inch-by-82-inch heavy-duty powder-coated aluminum beds, 45-mph top speed, heavy-duty automotive-style tailgate, and optional fully enclosed IAS/Tektite Cab with HVAC and hard surface tires. Custom configurations are available upon request.

### SiteOne/LESCO

SiteOne Landscape Supply launched its new LESCO ride-on spreaders and sprayers, including the LESCO 100, 200, 300 and 600 Applicator Models. Featuring 100% stainless-steel frames and coated Peerless transaxle to resist corrosive granular chemicals for added life, these new rugged LESCO ride-on spreaders are ideal for a variety of application needs.

Featuring a low center of gravity for excellent performance, even on sloped terrain, the LESCO Model 100 is ideal for projects that do not require liquid application.

The LESCO Model 200 releases both dry and liquid material, and features a dual setting spray system with 3-foot and 10-foot settings for multiple applications. It also has a narrow width of 35.5 inches to allow easy access through gates in residential areas and condominium complexes.

With zero-turn drive and a variable spray system, the LESCO Model 300 delivers coverage widths of 2-, 4-, 6- or 8-feet for use in several applications. Dual liquid spray tanks also provide a total capacity of 24 gallons for up to 2.2 acres of coverage.

As the largest model in the lineup, the LESCO Model 600 provides 20 percent more productivity than current industry units, featuring more liquid and granular capacity. It offers 12-foot spray coverage, plus a pivoting front axle with a low center of gravity for excellent performance on sloping terrain.

### Toro

Toro introduced three new products designed to meet the evolving demands of landscape professionals: the new Revolution Series of battery-powered commercial lawn-care equipment – the Z Master Revolution and the Grandstand Revolution – and a new Z Master 7500-D with a 144” cutting deck.

“The new Z Master Revolution and Grandstand Revolution takes two of Toro’s beloved mower platforms and revolutionizes them with battery power that will outlast the sun,” said Chris Vogtman, director of marketing at Toro. “We’re also excited to introduce the new Z Master 7500-D 144”, which helps landscapers make easy work of large amounts of acreage. Plus, all the new equipment comes Horizon360 capable, which is a real advantage for creating business efficiencies.”

Every Revolution machine is equipped with patent-pending software in the controls that enables smooth operation. It also gives operators a chance to customize the machine with adjustable deck rake, drive speed control options and blade tip speed settings.

The Revolution Series mowers are powered by Toro’s HyperCell Power System. The Battery Management System (BMS) allows for longer run times and quick charging to maximize productivity. HyperCell is built to run cooler than other power systems, so it can last as long as the sunlight.

#### Z Master Revolution

Built on Toro’s commercial-grade Z Master 4000 series frame and Turbo Force deck, the new Toro Z Master Revolution offers robust battery-powered go-all-day comfort with Toro’s patented MyRIDE suspension system. The suspended operator platform and easy to adjust, personalized ride settings maximize comfort.

#### Grandstand Revolution

The Toro GrandStand Revolution stand-on mower is a powerful machine designed for professionals focused on optimizing their businesses with the next generation of landscaping equipment. Featuring a Turbo Force Deck with adjustable baffle, operators can adjust the deck baffle to get the most pristine cut in any conditions. The Turbo Force deck is a 50 KSI 7-gauge high-strength steel deck, complemented with an extra-strength tubular chassis and durably rugged I-beam front-end. It also features dual capture anti-scalp rollers to ensure the highest quality of cut in the harshest terrain.

#### Z Master 7500-D 144”

Toro’s Z Master 7500-D is known to keep crew numbers to a minimum and productivity up — and now Toro is taking its capacity to a whole other level with a new 144” cutting deck. The new Z Master 7500-D 144” adapts to changing

terrain on the fly automatically by choosing the right operating mode for the conditions with Toro's Horizon technology. The Horizon onboard intelligence platform enhances the performance of the machine in various mowing conditions, and protects the mower by monitoring engine oil temperature and pressure. The massive mowing deck can fold its wings up to 83 inches, allowing it to fit on most standard trailers. The wings flex up to 20 degrees and down to 15 degrees, which hug the ground as you mow, giving you a pro-quality cut on uneven terrain.

## Cub Cadet

Cub Cadet introduced its first semi-autonomous commercial mowers – the Cub Cadet PRO Series PRO Z 960 S and 972 S SurePath units, which are outfitted with GPS technology and an exclusive four-wheel steering system.

The operator simply sets the preliminary cut line, and the PRO Z SurePath units will perform straight cutting paths with an auto-zero-turn at the end of each pass with the touch of a button. By utilizing high-precision GPS technology, SurePath Auto Steer reduces overlap and cuts perfect stripes, allowing the operator to complete a property in less time while producing superior cut quality.

“SurePath Auto Steer technology is the ultimate efficiency tool. Our field research shows it significantly reduces overlap and increases productivity by more than 0.5 acres per hour compared to traditional lap-bar steering controls,” said Josh Sooy, director, Professional Business Segment, Cub Cadet.

Post-pandemic labor shortages have been particularly challenging for industry professionals. The lack of skilled labor has equated to more time and resources being diverted to training new hires who lack experience operating larger commercial mowers, resulting in reduced productivity and poor cut quality. Because of the semi-autonomous nature of the Auto Steer technology, every single operator — from new hires to skilled operators — can be expected to deliver consistent quality cuts and efficient operation when using a PRO Z SurePath unit. Plus, the simple and intuitive user experience helps lower the learning curve and reduces the time necessary to train new hires.

Built on the PRO Z 960 S and PRO Z 972 S platforms, the SurePath units are outfitted with 16cc transmissions, 26-inch rear tires and a high-performance FX1000v Kawasaki engine, and are backed by a 3-year, no-hour-limit warranty or a 5-year 1,750-hour limited deck warranty.

Cub Cadet PRO Series PRO Z 960 S and 972 S SurePath units will be available at dealers in select markets starting in Spring 2022.

## CASE

CASE Construction Equipment introduced the TV620B compact track loader (CTL). The 114-horsepower, 6,200-pound rated operating capacity CTL delivers best-in-class breakout forces — as well as more standardized features than previously available on any CASE CTL. This includes standard adjustable electro-hydraulic controls, high-flow hydraulics, auto ride control, one-way self-leveling, a hydraulic coupler, an auto-reversing fan, LED lights and a one-year subscription to CASE SiteWatch telematics. It also comes with a new 1.25 cubic yard heavy duty bucket designed specifically for the TV620B.

The new CASE TV620B also features the new CASE SiteConnect Module, remote connectivity and software updates through the SiteManager App (iOS and Android), as well as connectivity to the CASE Uptime Center for collaborative fleet management between CASE, the local CASE dealer, and the equipment owner.

The TV620B also features the advances introduced with the launch of the CASE B Series CTLs, including a completely redesigned operator interface, industry leading 360-degree visibility, and an eight-inch LCD multi-function display that serves as the command center for the machine. It also includes the industry's only rearview camera visible in a split screen display with machine data.

## Kubota

Kubota unveiled its new line of hydro walk-behind mowers and new product enhancements within two of its powerful zero-turn lines — all designed to reduce costs and maximize uptime — fresh from the showroom floor at GIE+ EXPO.

First up, Kubota unveiled an all-new Power Grass Catcher for the Z400 Series 54- and 60-inch steel-welded mower deck zero-turn models. With its all-steel blower construction and 10-bushel carrying capacity, the new Power Grass Catcher leaves no debris behind as it easily takes on top-level mowing performance even with the most challenging mowing tasks.

Early in 2021, Kubota announced the introduction of





two new models to the Z400 Series: the Z412KW-48, Z422KW-54 and Z422KWT-60. The newest models come standard with 6.5-inch-wide front caster tires and a deluxe adjustable suspension seat with 3 inches of travel designed to maximize operator comfort.

Next, Kubota introduced Tweel tires to its Z781 zero-turn mower, powered by Kawasaki FX EFI engines, for both the 54- and 60-inch model decks. The Michelin X Tweel Turf airless radial tire is designed to eliminate service time caused by flat tires and unseated beads. The spokes offer excellent lateral stability on hillsides, sloped surfaces, and even when traveling over curbs and bumps.

*\* The Tweel tires are not compatible with the grass catcher due to weight.*

With new ergonomic controls, new floating deck design and larger tires, the new W Series hydro walk-behind mowers offer three new models – the WHF14NC-36-2, WHF15NC-48-2, and WHF19NC-52-2 – and each are built to out-perform when cutting, mulching, and bagging. The new W Series models are perfectly tuned to optimize power and cutting width so that mower speed and horsepower increase with each deck size option, across the 36-, 48- or 56-inch decks. Take on properties up to three acres with a resilient five-hour run time and increase your performance with these newly improved, great durability mowers.

## Steiner

Steiner released its new Flail Mower attachment at GIE+EXPO. This mower attachment provides high performance and durable cutting of grass and brush up to 3/4-inch diameter.

The Steiner Flail Mower attachment comes with two different knife options. The standard “Y” knife is used to cut tall, heavy grass and brush whereas the “Scoop” knife is used to give turf a more finished look.

The features on the rear of the attachment assist in making mowing more efficient. The rear roller on the Flail Mower attachment gives an eye-catching stripe finish on the turf while also providing stability. The rear discharge mower deck is effective when mowing along roadways and sidewalks to get rid of any debris in unwanted areas.

Attached to the powerful Steiner 450 tractor, the new Flail Mower attachment can get jobs done on uneven terrain thanks to the tractor’s unique articulating and oscillating frame. And with the QuickHitch attachment system, operators can switch between more than a dozen attachments in a matter of minutes with no tools required.

The Steiner Flail Mower attachment will be available in the beginning of 2022. **SFM**



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## In The Field!



# NC State Turfgrass Releases Lobo Zoysiagrass



North Carolina State University's Turfgrass Breeding and Genetics program, under the direction of Dr. Susana Milla-Lewis, released Lobo Zoysiagrass (experimental name XZ 14069). Researchers selected Lobo from hundreds of nurserymates for its unusual combination of aggressive establishment and stress tolerance. These traits were later confirmed by six years of multi-location trials under low input conditions.

Lobo Zoysia will be exclusively licensed through Sod Solutions for commercial production and marketing. This release is NC State's first warm-season turfgrass cultivar from Milla-Lewis's breeding program that started in 2009.

Zoysiagrasses are warm-season, perennial turfgrasses known for their low maintenance requirements but



*A group examines a newly planted sample plot of Lobo Zoysia at NC State's 2021 Turfgrass Field Day.*

slow establishment. Lobo is fast to establish, drought-tolerant, and maintains good color and quality under very low inputs.

"This medium-fine zoysiagrass cultivar is simultaneously well adapted for infrequently managed areas like golf course roughs, roadsides, and





*The Lobo cultivar was tested with many others in low input conditions on N.C. roadsides where it exhibited quick establishment.*

airport in-fields but also for higher-end uses like home lawns, commercial landscapes and golf course fairways where aesthetics are equally important as maintenance. It's truly a unicorn," said Milla-Lewis.

Lobo Zoysia has been a consistent top performer in roadside trials by the NC Department of Transportation and a National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) specialty trial. These Professional Golf Association (PGA) funded NTEP trials are currently conducted at eight sites from Florida to New Mexico. Lobo repeatedly received top performance marks at these climatically diverse locations.

"Zoysiagrass is frequently grown in the southeastern U.S., but minimally in the west. This line shows the broader possibility of zoysiagrass use, especially in areas with significant drought stress or water restrictions," said Milla-Lewis.

Select NC sod producers, Sod Solutions, and the North Carolina Sod Producers Association (NCSA) helped support the development of Lobo by teaming up to form Turf Research North Carolina (TRNC) in 2016. Growers made financial contributions over a six-year period to fund research and

development of Lobo and other materials yet to come out of the program. All NCSA participating growers contributing to the program will have exclusive access to the grasses when they are released.

Lobo Zoysia production will be certified by NC Crop Improvement to ensure the purity of this genetically unique turfgrass. Participating sod farms are steadily increasing the production of Lobo and limited amounts of this zoysiagrass will be available for

purchase in the summer of 2022.

"Dr. Milla-Lewis is one of the top breeders internationally," said Tobey Wagner, president of Sod Solutions. "There was no hesitation to help support her program. We think Lobo will be one of the most versatile grasses on the market because of its many improved qualities but also because it will be one of the easiest cultivars out there to maintain with minimal upkeep."

Milla-Lewis's turfgrass breeding program focuses on drought-tolerant warm-season species and tall fescue. She expects to release a new St. Augustinegrass cultivar in 2022.

"CALS takes great pride in our plant breeding program, which has a rich history of plant improvements that benefit stakeholders around our state, nation and world," said Steve Lommel, NC State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences associate dean of research. "The release of 'Lobo' provides a zoysiagrass cultivar with new and improved traits for home, commercial and recreational applications in a green industry intent on sustainability." **SFM**

— Jennifer Howard, NC State University Crop and Soil Science News.



*Lobo Zoysia (experimental name XZ14069) will be exclusively licensed through Sod Solutions for commercial production and marketing.*



# TOPDRESSERS



## GKB TOPDROP

The GKB Topdrop is the ideal machine for the application of topdressing. The brush dresser can distribute all kinds of loose material such as sand, compost and rubber on open fields. The brush is hydraulically driven and is easily adjustable in speed. This speed control and adjustment of the mechanical metering valve ensure that the layer thickness can be determined precisely. The machine can be used anywhere thanks to the four oversized turf tires and pendeling axels. The oversized tires ensure minimum ground pressure, keeping compaction to a minimum. Call STEC at 888-325-2532 to find out how this machine can become your new "Best Hire!"



## TORO TOPDRESSER 2500

For maximum performance and power, the Toro Topdresser 2500 is a self-contained, all-wheel drive unit towed by a Toro Workman or other utility vehicle. The 25-cubic-foot (.7 cu. m.) capacity, 60-inch (152 cm) application width, and 8 mph (12.9 km/h) topdressing speed will tackle the toughest topdressing jobs. Plus, the galvanized steel hopper offers long-term durability for years to come.



## JOHN DEERE TD100

Designed for the John Deere ProGator heavy-duty utility vehicles, the TD100 topdresser is ideal for use on athletic fields and other areas where an efficient means of topdressing is needed. The hopper on the TD100 topdresser has a capacity of 12 cubic feet level-full or 19 cubic feet heaped, a rated capacity of 1,500 pounds, and is made of galvanized steel to reduce corrosion and supported by steel-members to increase strength. The fixed-speed, nylon/polyester cord, endless conveyor belt on the TD100 efficiently moves material under the metering gate and through a rotating brush for even distribution. The full-width metering gate opening can be adjusted from 0 to 3 inches, with a two-lever system allowing the operator to adjust the gate height and lock the gate into position.



## EARTH & TURF MULTISPREAD MODEL 320

The Earth & Turf product line includes its MultiSpread Model 320, a 1-cubic-yard topdresser spreader with exclusive, wide-spread beater for lawn maintenance professionals, schools, universities, golf courses and athletic fields. This versatile machine spreads topdressing materi-



als, infield mix, calcined clay, and grass clippings. With a convenient light-material sides option, available for dealer or customer installation, this topdresser virtually doubles its capacity – especially great for spreading light compost to improve turf quality. Overall height with light-material sides, plus narrow overall width, allows operators to reach in easily from either side when loading. Maximum load capacity using the light material sides is 3,600 pounds. Two-wheel ground traction drive is standard. Hydraulic drive is available as an option, offering benefits for owners of tow vehicles with remote hydraulic valve and minimum of 6-gpm flow. With hydraulic drive, apron and beater speeds are independent of ground speed – each infinitely and independently adjustable.



### REDEXIM TOPDRESSERS

Redexim North America, INC., offers a wide range of topdressers in both brush and spinning disc styles. The Rink DS800 disc spreader is a popular choice because it can distribute a wide range of materials at up to a 40-foot spreading width. The integrated transport belt moves wet or dry material to the rear of the machine to be spread by the twin discs. The spreading width and thickness can easily be adjusted, and the hydraulically operated rear door closes to prevent material spillage in transport. For more information, visit [www.Redexim.com](http://www.Redexim.com).

### TURFCO METE-R-MATIC IV

Turfco's battle-tested topdressers make life easier and more productive. Handle all of your topdressing jobs, from routine turf maintenance to renovating an entire playing field, with the Turfco Mete-R-Matic IV topdresser. It provides the proven spread of all Turfco topdressers, with the added efficiency of a one-cubic-meter galvanized steel hopper. The patented Chevron belt assures uniform application of all types of wet or dry materials including sand, compost, peat and humus, grass seed, crumb rubber, gypsum, lime and clays. The hopper can be filled with a front-end loader. Spread application is always uniform and consistent due to the patented ground-driven oper-



ating system. The spreader rides on six tires, so it easily adjusts to changing turf conditions. The spread rate is easily adjusted. Top speed is 8 mph at load, 16 mph unloaded. Just hook the Mete-R-Matic IV up to a truck utility tractor and go – no engine, no hydraulics.



### TURFTIME EQUIPMENT TOPDRESSERS

TurfTime Equipment has six topdresser models to choose from ranging from .75-cubic-yard to 7.5-cubic-yard capacity. Material handler and utility vehicle mount options available. Choose the size that is the best fit for your business or complex. The long hopper of the Advantage topdresser allows faster loading without spilling. Select the right topdressing spreader for speed and maneuverability to spread compost, apply soil amendments and topdress with sand. The TurfTime Equipment topdresser is an Advantage; use it anywhere – golf course, sports field, clay court or arena, horse track, polo field, open spaces and naturalized areas. TurfTime Equipment offers topdressers/material handlers to fill bunkers, sand-dress greens, apply compost and bio fertilizers, repair washouts, apply mulch to control erosion, level low spots, maintain paths and even grass runways and airstrips. **SFM**



The following are some industry Tweets from the past month:



**@STPGroundsCrew**

The grass clippings are flying today for the final mow job of the season!

**NOVEMBER 8**



**@Zona\_TURFlete**

Beautiful view of the mountains to the north along with a beautiful day in the old pueblo. @Francisdevildog getting the stadium ready for @uarizona #HomeComing2021 #Beardown

**NOVEMBER 3**



**@kelren31**

Goodnight

**NOVEMBER 5**



**@TurfPhD**

We created a custom overseed blend for Miss State football and baseball based on their conditions and of course @msudawg2004 and his crew are making it look amazing!

**NOVEMBER 2**





@BPolimer

That's a wrap! #sportsturf

**NOVEMBER 2**



@VT\_groundscrew

Our @Turf\_Tank robot, Big Poppy, has been outfitted with custom Hokie stone wraps to get ready for more painting in the spring.

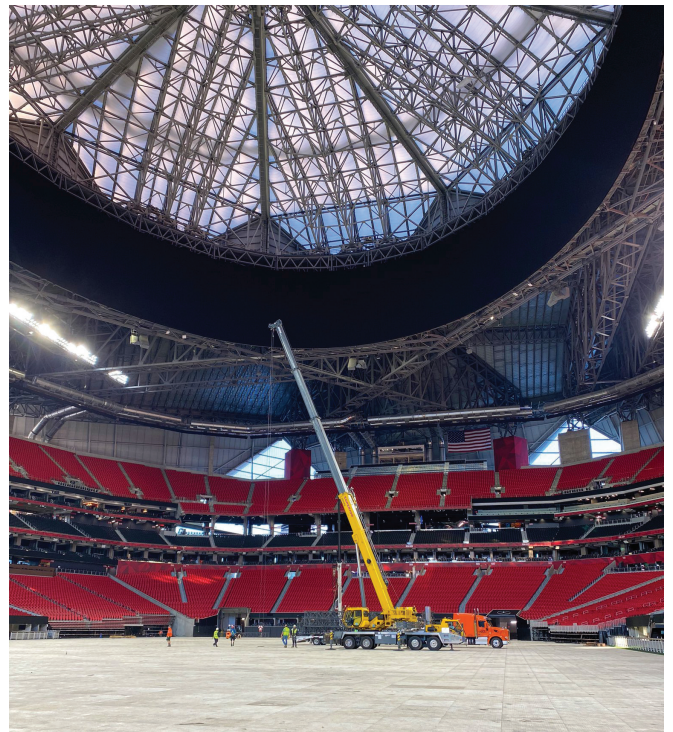
**NOVEMBER 2**



@TCUFIELDCREW

@rodmartinez1502 about to take the @ToroGrounds multi pro 5800 on her maiden voyage.

**NOVEMBER 2**



@NPappas23

1PM @AtlantaFalcons game yesterday followed by youth football on field. Crew got busy dropping FG posts, clearing side-line & start dropping flooring. Cranes & steel rolled in at 7AM. Busy weekend. Successful weekend. Thankful for an amazing crew here @MBStadium

Next up: #ATLive

**NOVEMBER 1**





@JasonFaires

All tucked in for this weeks cold weather.

**NOVEMBER 1**



@SportsTurfSun

Finished regular season strong - 4 games in two days, capped off with what my announcer called the "hometown showdown" rivalry game. Now on to playoffs, 4 of my 6 teams will host! #NaturalGrass #BestOffice #Playoff

**OCTOBER 30**



@CWebb757

We broke out a few extra buckets of blue paint for homecoming for @cnu\_football. Now let's see how much rain Mother Nature throws at us in the next 24 hours. #CNU #GoCaptains

**OCTOBER 28**



@SteeleTurf

Final game for one of the good ones..... @UMBCAthletics @UMBC\_WSoccer @NATA1950

**OCTOBER 24 SFM**



## Sports turf industry partners with Z+C ahead of 2022 legislative session

The Mid-Atlantic Sports Turf Managers Association (MASTMA) announced that it will engage Annapolis government relations firm Z+C, LLC to serve as its lobbyist ahead of the Maryland General Assembly's 2022 session. The partnership will advance MASTMA's mission to educate legislators about its work and protect the sports field management industry from unnecessary legislative barriers.

In recent years, misinformation about the sports field management industry has resulted in restrictions and bans preventing the implementation of known best practices without accomplishing their intended outcome of environmental protection.

"There are numerous bills introduced each legislative session to prevent the use of pesticides and artificial turf because of often inaccurate allegations about environmental safety," said Z+C President Barbara Zektick. "The industry experts at MASTMA have always operated in a clean and transparent manner, backed by science and industry expertise. We look forward to working on their behalf this session to advance and protect their broad membership in Maryland."

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***"Public and governmental perception is critical to our ability to continue to operate in the most efficient and effective manner possible."***

***- Melissa Dornan.***

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MASTMA completed a Mid-Atlantic "Best Practices Manual" (BMP) highlighting industry-specific practices that prioritize safe playability and the environment. It also reinforces the professionalism of its educated and highly trained membership whose practices are grounded in science and experience. The BMP will serve as a roadmap for conduct in accordance with state and local regulations and environmental stewardship.

"Public and governmental perception is critical to our ability to continue to operate in the most efficient and effective manner possible," said MASTMA Executive Director, Melissa Dornan. "We remain committed to transparency in our work and are thrilled to partner with Z+C on our journey toward greater protections for the Mid-Atlantic region's sports turf industry."

## NESTMA Fall Turf Day

New England Sports Turf Managers Association (NESTMA) members got back together at the association's Fall Turf

Day held October 13, 2021, at DeFazio Sports Complex in Needham, Mass. More than 100 sports turf professionals took advantage of a beautiful day to demo trend-setting equipment, check out new service offerings, and learn more about the latest turf technology.

The program focused on the design, installation and maintenance of synthetic turf fields with expert presentations from Ed Olsen, Town of Needham, Mass.; Adam Yanulis, Tighe & Bond; and Rob Delmonico, R.A.D. Sports.

Well-attended information stations featured hands-on demonstrations led by premier sponsors Scott Vose of Tom Irwin, Joe Kacevich and Crystal Grim of Shaw Sports Turf, and Scott Lagana of Turf Products Corporation.

NESTMA also announced that its Biergarten-styled annual meeting will be held at the German Club (Route 109 in Walpole, Mass.) on December 7. The annual meeting will be a casual evening featuring delicious food and great company, along with a wide variety of imported German brews.

At the meeting, Tom Barry, CSFM, will present "Fraise Mowing for Weed Control in Pesticide Free Fields" including insight on what worked and what didn't at Greens Farms Academy in Westport, Conn. **SFM**

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## STMA Affiliated Chapters Contact Information

**Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona:** [www.azstma.org](http://www.azstma.org)

**Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.cstma.org](http://www.cstma.org)

**Florida #1 Chapter (South):**  
305-235-5101 (Bruce Bates) or  
Tom Curran, [CTomSell@aol.com](mailto:CTomSell@aol.com)

**Florida #2 Chapter (North):**  
850-580-4026,  
John Mascaro, [john@turf-tec.com](mailto:john@turf-tec.com)

**Florida #3 Chapter (Central):**  
407-518-2347, Dale Croft,  
[dale.croft@ocps.net](mailto:dale.croft@ocps.net)

**Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.gatewaystma.org](http://www.gatewaystma.org)

**Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.gstma.org](http://www.gstma.org)

**Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.stmalabasin.com](http://www.stmalabasin.com)

**Illinois Chapter STMA:** [www.ILSTMA.org](http://www.ILSTMA.org)

**Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
<http://imstma.blogspot.com>

**Indiana:** Contact Clayton Dame,  
[Claytondame@hotmail.com](mailto:Claytondame@hotmail.com) or  
Brian Bornino, [bornino@purdue.edu](mailto:bornino@purdue.edu)  
or Contact Joey Stevenson,  
[jstevenson@indyindians.com](mailto:jstevenson@indyindians.com)

**Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)

**Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA):** [www.kafmo.org](http://www.kafmo.org)

**Mid-Atlantic STMA:** [www.mastma.org](http://www.mastma.org)

**Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA):** [www.mistma.org](http://www.mistma.org)

**Minnesota Park and Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mpstma.org](http://www.mpstma.org)

**MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.mokanstma.com](http://www.mokanstma.com)

**New England STMA (NESTMA):**  
[www.nestma.org](http://www.nestma.org)

**Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey:** [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

**North Carolina Chapter of STMA:**  
[www.ncsportsturf.org](http://www.ncsportsturf.org)

**Northern California STMA:**  
[www.norcalstma.org](http://www.norcalstma.org)

**Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA):** [www.ostma.org](http://www.ostma.org)

**Oklahoma Chapter STMA:**  
405-744-5729; Contact:  
Dr. Justin Moss [okstma@gmail.com](mailto:okstma@gmail.com)

**Oregon STMA Chapter:**  
[www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org](http://www.oregonsportsturfmanagers.org)  
[oregonstma@gmail.com](mailto:oregonstma@gmail.com)

**Ozarks STMA:** [www.ozarksstma.org](http://www.ozarksstma.org)

**Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.pnwstma.org](http://www.pnwstma.org)

**Southern California Chapter:**  
[www.socalstma.com](http://www.socalstma.com)

**South Carolina Chapter of STMA:**  
[www.scstma.org](http://www.scstma.org)

**Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA):** [www.tvstma.com](http://www.tvstma.com)

**Texas Sports Turf Managers Association:**  
[www.txstma.org](http://www.txstma.org)

**Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.vstma.org](http://www.vstma.org)

**Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association:** [www.wstma.org](http://www.wstma.org)

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**JOHN DEERE**

# Rolling Native Soil Fields

**Q:** What are your thoughts on rolling native soil fields to get them ready for play in the spring? Do the benefits outweigh the risk?

**A:** All athletes deserve a consistent, even playing surface, and, in some situations, rolling can help achieve that. First, consider the type of roller – walk-behind, ride-on, or pull-behind. Turf rollers should always have rounded edges to prevent damage to the turf. Rollers come in all sizes and weights, but are typically 300 to 2,000 pounds in weight or greater. This equates to approximately 3 to 15 pounds per square inch (psi) load applied to the soil surface and is similar in weight to vehicular traffic such as ride-on mowers. Although there is no set weight for athletic field rollers, on native soil fields the maximum recommended weight is one ton (2,000 pounds). The weight of a roller can be increased by filling the roller with water, sand, or cement. The stress at the soil surface is proportional to tire pressure, or psi. Therefore, a roller or mower with tires inflated to 15 psi will apply 12 to 15 psi pressure to the soil surface. What's also interesting to note is that the force applied dissipates as a function of depth. For higher loads, the stress penetrates more deeply into the soil. How much stress a certain soil can withstand depends upon many factors. In particular, a soil's ability to resist compaction depends upon soil texture (sand or native soil) and moisture content.

Rolling in the spring can smooth out uneven surfaces after winter heave or heavy traffic. Rolling cannot rectify poor grades, but is used to address minor undulations and can produce a firm surface that would be considered "faster," which is why rolling is a common practice in golf green and soccer field management to increase speed short-term. Rolling is also utilized in sports that require ball bounce, such as tennis, cricket, and baseball. Rolling newly seeded or sodded turf areas can aid turf:soil contact and speed up establishment. Also, mowing patterns, typically created by the rear roller on a cylinder mower, can also be achieved by using a roller.

Keep in mind that rolling does not improve turf quality. In fact, overuse results in turf thinning, and quality is

significantly reduced. Soils that are wet and/or frozen are susceptible to surface compaction. Using them excessively will also result in surface compaction, so it's critical that rolled fields are regularly aerated/vertidrain. Fields that are rolled too often are more likely to become infested with shallow rooted weeds such as *Poa annua* and prostrate knotweed, because these weeds can survive in soils with surface compaction, whereas turfgrasses cannot. Soils that are too dry will not benefit from the impact of rolling. Furthermore, if the turf is wilted or dormant it will be severely stressed and may die, so only roll when grass is actively growing. Fields with 100% grass cover and a moderate thatch layer are less likely to be affected by rolling as a method to increase field "speed." Also, never roll fields that have disease problems, particularly infectious diseases such as gray leaf spot, pythium, or brown patch.

Whether you roll or not is a decision made on a field-by-field basis. Factors such as athlete safety and playability, soil moisture, recovery time and turf quality all come into play. In general, rolling should only be carried out "as-needed," not routinely. This may be once per year in the spring (after winter soil heave) or several times during the playing season to keep the field safe and playable if grass cover is lost. **SFM**



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## Questions?

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