

Pesticides...A Pesty Situation

At one time in this world--so say the environmentalists--there was this so-called balance of nature in relationship to the green, green grass of home, forest and golf course.

This is how it was: The seed was planted, the germination followed, the roots took hold and the flowers peeked their little heads out of the earth. Survival was a succession of insect participation. One provided the breaks for invasion of another, the other came with deposits of nourishment to strengthen the plant and every blade of grass lived happily ever after. So they say.

And it is this balance of nature which is causing much concern with both sides of the eventual pesticide war--those who manufacture and use pesticides and those who think they are a scourge to the future.

There is a situation now where some panic is evident. Most of it comes from the chemical company people who are afraid the environmentalists just might be winning the war. They call it the overreaction syndrome--being played by federal and state governmental agencies who want to ban every pesticide in sight.

So far, there has been only a few outright banned chemicals but the association of them with others has caused much confusion in the ranks of turf managers...which is where the golf course superintendent enters the picture.

A pesticide task force has been assembled in Massachusetts. One of its members is Dr. Joseph Troll of the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Troll is busy trying to get legislatures together in an attempt to establish some clear-cut rules for pesticide use. So far, or at least on the date of publication, things were in a nebulous state.

A spokesman for Dr. Troll's office pointed out that there still appears to be some question over the strength of federal vs. local laws in the pesticide war. As yet, no one can figure out whether a national restrictive law applies when a state law differs from it. What is needed, was the comment, was a clarification of law application.

So while the feds and locals battle it out as to who has control of things, the chemical companies are pushing for participation in influencing restrictive decisions. And that participation is being sought from the golf course superintendent.

Interest groups have taken over in many areas of pesticides where data had been originated for such purpose. And so the warring goes, with a hopeful balance of concession on both sides.

One interesting aside to the argument and extreme causes of the two parties is the revelation that a golf course (which shall go unnamed) recently became "evidence" in the environmentalists' arguments.

This course went along with a natural maintenance program for 10 years. The program consisted only of cutting grasses and occasional mowing and watering of them. The fairways were a bright fescue and the greens bent. During the 10 years the condition-rating by those playing the course was a sound "good"---not Augusta Manor by any means but not your basic cow pasture, either.

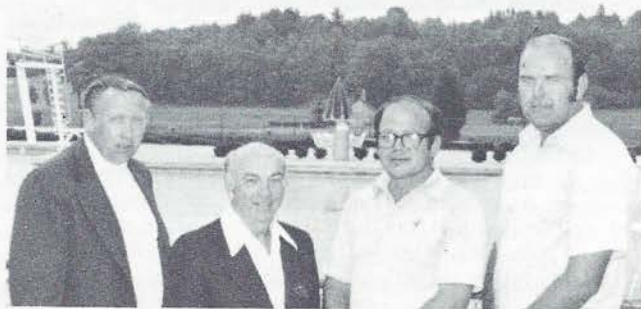
Such results have tended to swing certain superintendents over to a leaning on the side of more stringent controls of pesticides. One unnamed super stated flatly that over-pampered (pesticide dependent) courses were inclined to create more problems than were encountered before the introduction of pesticides.

There also was emphasized the dangers found in the application of certain chemicals by workers below the skilled level. Phrases, such as "morally wrong" and "irresponsible guidance", were thrown into the "other look" at the pesticide vs. nature problem.

And here is where the war stands---at loggerheads. At the most vital stage of it lies the gray area of legislation. It would seem that government---some government---should get down to earth and get things settled. A pesty situation? Definitely.

Gerry Finn

Results of Superintendent & Chairman Tournament



First Net - Schofield & Ryan, Wellesley CC 63
 Second Net - Luccini & Goldstein, Franklin CC 64
 Connally & Keating, Woburn CC 64
 Frist Gross - Cowan & Thayer, Eastward Ho CC 72
 Second Gross - Carter & Grimsley, Foxboro CC 73
 First Individual Net - Butler - Larchmont Engineering, 71
 Second Individual Net - Petrelli, Milton Hoosic GC, 72

NEXT MEETING

Agawam Hunt, East Providence, R.I.
 July 12, 1976
 Directors Meeting 9:30
 Regular Membership Meeting 10:30
 Golf and lunch following
 Evening - Clambake at Francis Farm in Rehoboth, Mass.
 Joint Meeting with Rhode Island and you may bring a guest.

NEWSLETTER NOTES

For those of you who missed the last meeting held at Ferncroft Country Club, you've missed another enjoyable meeting. The only thing you're ahead on is your diet!!! There were almost 100 for dinner and everyone left the table quite prepared to go without food for the next three days! The food was really great and Paul Johnson, our host superintendent, gave us a super golf course to play. Paul has done a great job conditioning the course and the landscaping with flowers really added the final touches. We give our thanks to Paul and the people of Ferncroft Country Club for making an enjoyable day for everyone.

We are saddened by the death of a former member of our association. Daniel Richard (Dick) Silvar died of a heart attack at his home last month. He was a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He was superintendent at Bellow Falls CC (Vt.), and Oak Hill CC, Fitchburg, Mass. He is a past member of the board of directors and also served as educational chairman. Mr. Silvar was superintendent of the famed Pinehurst CC at the time of his death. The members of our association send their respects to his family.

There was a lot of talk at the last meeting about the lack of growth we've had this spring. Seems no matter what you do the grass just isn't growing and color is lacking. The weather has really varied this spring and hasn't been ideal for growing grass. There was also a lot of talk of members comparing their golf course with other courses. Seems members of country club A feel their course is not in very good shape and will play country club B finding that course in great shape. But the members of country club B feel their course is in not very good shape and they will play country club A and find that course in great shape. One superintendent who has been in the business over 25 years, says he just can't understand some of his members. It always seems the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Not only do they compare the condition of the course, they compare the number of workers at each course, the budgets, the number of times they mow greens and fairways. There are so many things to consider when comparing courses and budgets. A new course was probably built to be maintained with the equipment that is available today. An old course would have a lot of areas that are maintained by hand equipment. This would reflect in the number of workers needed on a course. The type of irrigation system, the type of maintenance programs on a course, the number of rounds on a course during a season, the number of golf carts, drainage, and the amount and condition of maintenance equipment all reflect on the budget and the number of workers needed to maintain a golf course. You have to consider the type of soil structure, types of grass on a course, and even the location of a course. There are many more factors that have to be considered when comparing courses and budgets. I don't want to bore the members of the golfing public with "shop talk", but when you want to compare you have to look beyond what you see on the surface.

Here are some interesting figures on the poll done by Harris, Kerr, Forster & Company concerning golf course maintenance costs for 1975. New England states are in a group with New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the two Virginia states. On a per-hole basis, the current year's maintenance costs averaged \$7,962. across the nation. The average for the East was \$6,985. These figures were derived from 5 categories.

Average Cost per Hole 1975	National Average	East Average
Payroll	\$4,653	\$4,065
Payroll Taxes & Employee Benefits	665	655
Course Supplies & Contracts	1,228	1,147
Repairs to Equipment, Course Buildings, Water & Drainage Systems, Etc.	810	658
All Other Expenses	606	460
Total Golf Course Maintenance	<u>\$7,962</u>	<u>\$6,985</u>
Percentage Variation -		
1975 Based on 1974		
Payroll	+ 7.4%	+ 6.0%
Payroll Taxes & Employee Benefits	+10.3%	+ 9.9%
Course Supplies & Contracts	+13.2%	+12.1%
Repairs to Equipment, Course Buildings, Water & Drainage Systems, Etc.	+10.1%	+ 8.2%
All Other Expenses	+14.3%	+21.4%
Total Golf Course Maintenance	<u>+ 9.3%</u>	<u>+ 8.4%</u>

So you can see that payroll increases for the East are lower than the average of the nation and our percentage of operating expenses increased more than the average of the nation.

The GCSAA Executive Committee confirmed the appointment of Clifford A. Wagoner, CGCS, as nominating committee chairman for 1977 at its spring meeting. This notice marks the first call to Chapters requesting nominations for offices of President, Vice-President, and Director of GCSAA. All nominations must be received by the Nominating Committee Chairman no later than September 1, 1976.

"50 Years of Progress" is the theme for the Golden Anniversary Celebration. The site of the celebration will be Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, Ohio on September 13, 1976. This is where our association was founded and a plaque will be presented to the club and will be permanently mounted on a large stone to commemorate GCSAA's founding at Sylvania Country Club. The activities for the day will be equipment demonstrations, golf tournament, and an evening banquet featuring a keynote address by Arnold Palmer. The golf tournament will be 2 days, September 14 and 15.

Last month I reported that the joint meeting with Rhode Island superintendents was something new. Actually, this started back on August 4, 1930 at Agawam Hunt. Somehow the event was dropped along the way. So here we are 46 years later, reviving the event and everyone should try and make this meeting. Wayne Zoppo has planned a super day for us with golf during the day followed by a clambake in the evening. Don't forget you are allowed to bring a guest to this meeting. But the day really has a special event, in that we are honoring three retired members. James McCormack and Howard Farrant were charter members when the association was formed in 1924. It was the first organization of its kind. Elmer Fuller joined in 1926 and is now a 50 year member. To honor these gentlemen and say hello to them will be a special treat for everyone. I'm sure a lot of old timers are looking forward to visiting and for the younger people it should be very interesting meeting these gentlemen who helped our association back in its beginning. The presentation of plaques will be made at the regular membership meeting at 10:30 in the morning. Hope to see everyone there.

Larry Bunn
Newsletter Editor

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Mark, Measure and Rate

Heavens knows, the golfer can't do it all...that is, get himself around the golf course in one scoring piece without a little help.

And why bring this up here? Simple. The golf course superintendent is very much part of a marking, measuring and rating system which is useful to the member, guest or walk-on golfer in his daily trials and tribulations with par. It should be added, too, that the three playing aids add some order to the overall course and country club picture.

Unfortunately, marking of the course to define hazards, out of bounds, ground under repair and other consequential aspects of playing the game have been neglected by a good many green committees. This is why a brush-up operation is suggested.

Since a number of markers pull a disappearing act at one time or another and conditions are always on the change, it is a good idea for all of us to initiate a check system for markers. And while at it, some uniformity should be installed in the marking procedure.

For example, how many courses have you encountered where there is debate raised as to water being a plain water hazard or a parallel water hazard? Most of the occasions of such frustration are triggered by the fact the hazard is designated by the same color marker or not designated at all. Different colored markers should stand for different rulings...i.e. white stakes for OB, orange for hazards, red for GUP and so on.

However, the most important phase of the marking responsibility should be periodic checkups of those places designed by stakes. And this should be more than an annual operation.

Measurement also is essential to the well-being of the golfer's score and the reputation of the club. Because the USGA has ruled that it now tolerates fairway measurement markers, all clubs will benefit by initiating such a system or improving on the present one.

What should the measurement markers consist of? Good question and one that doesn't seem to have a conclusive answer.

Some courses have relied on a traditional source of information to guide golfers in the selection of clubs. There's the rose bush 82 yards from the green at one, the weeping willow adjacent to the fairway at five that's 220 yards from the center of the putting surface...and so on. Very nice, if you've played golf there 50 years.

This is far from adequate. The ideal situation would be a blending of terrain and natural makeup of trees or bushes exactly 150 yards from a point in the fairway to the middle of the targeted green. The USGA has used 150 yards as a arbitrary figure but does not insist on it.

One suggestion is to keep with the natural markers (a tree that has been on the scene for more than a few years). Signs could be made with the appropriate yardage (even identifying the tree to add to the aesthetic properties of the sport) and attached thereto to give the golfer a fighting knowledge of the flight task ahead.

Whatever the method, there should be one. The extreme would be the insertion of stakes with numbers on them. This should be avoided, if possible.

On to the rating and here again some inconsistencies are evident.

Rating of a course should be provided by the state golf association in which the particular layout resides. However, ratings should be undertaken by a neutral committee and not those familiar with the course to be tested.

There have been instances of members contributing to the rating process of their own course which makes for an unrealistic

situation, one that could work both for and against the true difficulty potential of the course. It's like being judged at a beauty contest in which your wife is one of the contestants.

So, the tasks of marking, measuring and rating are seemingly in need of review by those powers to be of the course whose responsibilities include the preservation of the golfer's senses. It will make for a better game all around.

Gerry Finn



Our host superintendent this month is Wayne Zoppo.



Wayne is our President of the New England Golf Course Superintendents' Association. He graduated from Stockbridge in 1964. After graduating Wayne worked for Richard Blake for 2 years at Mt. Pleasant CC. In 1966, Wayne started at Agawam Hunt GC. He not only maintains 18 holes but is responsible for 12 grass tennis courts, 2 clay tennis courts, 2 paddle tennis courts, and 2 indoor tennis courts. In addition to being President of our association he has served as Secretary, and served as President and Secretary of the Rhode Island Golf Course Superintendent Association. Wayne has a great golf course and has the reputation of having the fastest greens in New England. This should be a good challenge for all you great putters!

Directions to Agawam Hunt:

From Boston — Take 95 South to Providence, then take 195 East and go across Washington Bridge into E. Providence. Take Broadway exit, at bottom of exit take right. At first light turn right (N. Broadway) continue through 3 full traffic lights. After the third light, the club is on the left.

From Cape Cod — Take 195 West to E. Providence exit. At bottom of exit take right, go through 3 full traffic lights. After third light, the club is on the left.

From Worcester — Take 146 to 95 in Providence. Then follow direction from Boston.

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NEWSLETTER

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