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Volume 5 Issue 2

SPECIAL EDITION

February/March 2012

TPI Midwinter Conference a SUCCESS

The Montelucia Resort & Spa in sunny Scottsdale, Arizona served as the host hotel for TPI's 2012 Midwinter Conference. The four day event (January 31- February 3) drew nearly 300 attendees representing nearly 77 farm operations including turfgrass producers from Australia, Canada, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and the United States.

One of the most popular highlights of TPI's Midwinter Conference was an opportunity for attendees to tour the University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale, AZ, recognized as an engineering marvel and home of the NFL's Arizona Cardinals football team. (See story on page 6)

The Conference also offered educational sessions that featured several concurrent break-out presentations including:

A **Sports Turf Managers** panel represented by Chris Calcaterra Sports Facilities Manager for the City of Peoria Sports Complex and Past President of the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA); Andy Levy, turf specialist for the University of Phoenix Stadium, home to the Arizona Cardinals, and Ken Mrock, head groundskeeper for the Chicago Bears.

The **Professional Landscapers** panel included Shannon Scott who oversees the training programs at AAA Landscape an Underwood Brothers Company; Clay Mooney of Design Associates and Rob Spoor of Siteworks Landscape Development.

A **Golf Course Superintendents** panel included Mark Woodward (CGCS) and former CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), Michael Mumper, Golf Course Superintendent at Arrowhead Golf Club in Wheaton, Illinois, and Kirk Hardin, Course Superintendent at Camelback Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Sports Turf Managers Panel



Chris Calcaterra
Peoria Sports Complex



Andy Levy
Arizona Cardinals



Ken Mrock
Chicago Bears

Professional Landscapers Panel



Clay Mooney
Design Associates



Rob Spoor
SiteWorks Landscape Development



Shannon Scott
AAA Landscape, An Underwood Brothers Company

Golf Course Superintendents Panel



Michael Mumper
Arrowhead Golf Course



Mark Woodward, CGCS



Kirk Hardin
Camelback Golf Club

TPI Midwinter Conference a Success – Cont'd from page 1

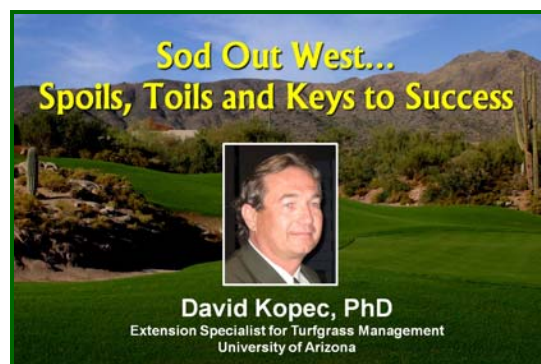
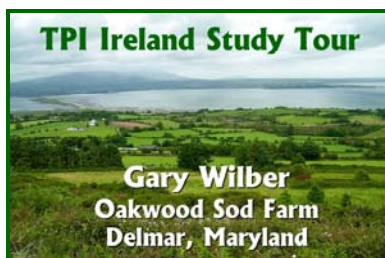
Mark Simmons, PhD, Ecosystem Design Group provided a presentation addressing the “Sustainability Sites Initiative—What You Should Know” and David Kopec, PhD School of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona addressed “Sod Out West...Spoils, Toils and Keys to Success”.

Additional education sessions included a **Sustainability Panel** comprised of Paul McDonough, Agrium Advanced Technologies; Mark Johnson, Senior Manager, Environmental Programs for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), and Kurt Vancief of Willowee Sod Farms, Ltd., Ameliasburg, Ontario, Canada.

There were “Show & Tell” presentations by **Gary Wilber** of Oakwood Sod Farm who offered an overview of the recent TPI Ireland Study Tour, and **Dave Johnson** of D. Johnson Farms in Deerfield, New Jersey and **Will Nugent** of Bethel Farms in Arcadia, Florida; both provided interesting insight into their company's farming operation and history.

Attendees also had an opportunity to learn how social media, such as “FACEBOOK”, could help promote their business, heighten customer awareness and showcase business operations. The session was presented by **James Graff** of Graff's Turf Farms and **Helen Albrightson** of NG Turf.

SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS



Cont'd on page 3

TPI Midwinter Conference a Success – Cont'd from page 2

This year's Midwinter Conference had it all!

A power packed line-up of guest speakers was only one part of what proved to be a great conference. Other highlights included the pre-conference seminar—*Mastering Customer Relations*, the optional Women's Forum Breakfast, a Next Generation Leaders Reception, and a scenic Red Rocks of Sedona Tour (see coverage on page 4).



Bullwhip World Champion Beau Schwade's "Lost Skills of the Wild West" opening presentation scored nearly a 90% (excellent/very good) rating in a post conference survey for his artistry, humor, entertaining skills and engaging performance. It was as one member put it, "An entertaining way to open the general session and get everyone excited."

TPI members and guests also had an opportunity to meet with over 35 exhibitors representing equipment manufacturers and suppliers serving the turfgrass industry.

TPI's Roundtable Forum also provided turfgrass producers with an opportunity to discuss a wide variety of timely issues while networking with fellow producers from around the world.

The Lawn Institute Memorial golf tournament, along with other fundraising events, raised over \$5,000 for The Lawn Institute which supports turfgrass research and education.

TPI member Dave Johnson echoed the thoughts of many in attendance when he stated, "I've attended TPI summer and winter conference's for 24 years and I consider myself one of the veteran's. I have to say, this conference was absolutely one of the best I've ever attended."

Here's what other members had to say:

"Generally, the best education program in a very long time."

"Fantastic line-up of speakers."

"One of the best conferences."

"Sales & customer service seminar was very, very good."

"Show and Tell is always a hit!"

"Sessions were all excellent!"

EXHIBITS & DINNER



PHOTOS: Jim Novak

Cont'd on page 4

TPI Midwinter Conference a Success – Cont'd from page 3

Red Rocks of Sedona Tour



PHOTO: Randy Moyer

Members who took the Red Rocks of Sedona Tour saw firsthand why this scenic location is known worldwide for its brilliant red rock mountains, breathtaking scenery and quaint artisan shops and galleries.

In addition to taking in the scenery, everyone had time to explore the galleries and shops on Main Street and visit Sedona's famous Arizona's Arts & Crafts Village of Tlaquepaque which is recognized as one of the most distinctive shopping experiences to be found in the Southwest.



PHOTO: Mike Blair



(Left to right) **Johnny Trandem** of Ostfold Gress AS and **Jakob Aarsvoll** of Grasrota AS, Sandnes (Norway), **Fanus Cloete** of Evergreen Turf South Africa (South Africa) and **Rob Davey** of Evergreen Turf (Australia) take the opportunity to discuss business.

PHOTO: Claus Zander



Don Heslop of Biograss Sod Farm, Sandy, Utah with Three Amigos.

PHOTO: Mike Blair



Maria Aarsvoll of Grasrota AS, Sandnes, Norway enjoys a treat.

PHOTO: Mike Blair



Lunch break among the Red Rocks.

PHOTO: Randy Moyer



Norwegian members **Tore** and **Torunn Jacobsen**, and **Johnny** and **Aud Toril Trandem** enjoy the sights.

PHOTO: Randy Moyer



Canadian members **Scott** and **Michelle Boynton** of Nobleton, Ontario and **Dave Boyd** of Kleinburg, Ontario see things from a different perspective.

PHOTO: Mike Blair



American members, **Diane Dymond** (Kenansville, Florida) and **Betsy Graff** (Fort Morgan, Colorado) enjoy shopping in Tlaquepaque.

PHOTO: Randy Moyer

Cont'd on page 5

TPI Midwinter Conference a SUCCESS – Cont'd from page 4

Deserving Recognition

Mike Blair receives TPI's Distinguished Service Award



Mike Blair receives TPI's Distinguished Service Award from TPI President **Dave Dymond**. Photo: Lynn Grooms TURF NEWS

No one was more surprised than Mike Blair when it was announced by TPI President Dave Dymond that he was the recipient of TPI's 2012 Distinguished Service Award.

There have only been four previous recipients of this prestigious award which recognizes an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding devotion of time, talent and energy to TPI, its programs and objectives for five or more years. Recipients of this award receive complimentary membership for five years.

In presenting the award, Dymond noted that Blair has been involved in the TPI Logistics Committee for over ten consecutive years. Part of this committee's responsibilities is to develop and execute a plan for TPI's Summer Convention and Field Days. No easy task.

During that period of time Blair served as the liaison between the host farm and the exhibitors, dealing with the unexpected, anticipating the needs of everyone involved, and doing his very best to make TPI's Field Days the successful events they now are. Blair has served as the tractor coordinator, the logistics coordinator and at times he has served in both capacities.

Dymond noted that those in the audience who had ever hosted a TPI Field Day were very much aware of the magnitude of responsibilities that come with it.

During his presentation Dymond shared comments from those who have worked with Blair:

"Mike genuinely cares about the success of each TPI event. He confidently and professionally carries out his responsibilities and adds a great sense of humor to make set-up of every show an enjoyable and entertaining experience. We hope he shares his experience with us for many years to come."

Ian True – Trebro Manufacturing

"Whenever you need anything Mike's there to offer his insight and support in any way he can. He's an incredibly hard worker. He's dedicated. And no matter what the task, he manages to be flexible and responsive in providing his knowledge and experience so we can get the job done. I don't think many people realize how much he gives and how much he does so unselfishly."

Sandy Reynolds – TPI Meetings Manager

"Mike takes a lot of personal pride in what he does for TPI. He is so very deserving of this honor. It pleases me to know that TPI is acknowledging his voluntary contribution and his dedication to make every TPI Field Day the best it can be."

Randy Tischer – Green Velvet Sod Farms

A Recap of Mike Blair's Distinguished Service to TPI

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>FIELD DAY HOST FARM</u>
2000	Spokane, WA	Ray Turf Farms
2001	Toronto, ON, Canada	Green Horizons Group Hamilton Farm
2002	Ft. Collins, CO	Turfmaster Sod Farm
2003	Dayton, OH	Green Velvet Sod Farms
2004	Harrisburg, PA	Sporting Valley Turf Farms
2005	Park City, UT	Biograss Sod Farm
2006	Memphis TN	Winstead Turf Farms
2007	Madison, WI	OJ Noer Turfgrass Research (UW)
2008	Calgary, AB, Canada	Eagle Lake Turf Farms
2009	East Lansing, MI	Hancock Turfgrass Research Ctr. (MSU)
2010	New York, NY	Pine Island Turf Nursery
2011	Reno, NV	Western Turf

University of Phoenix Stadium Tour scores a TOUCHDOWN at TPI's Midwinter Conference

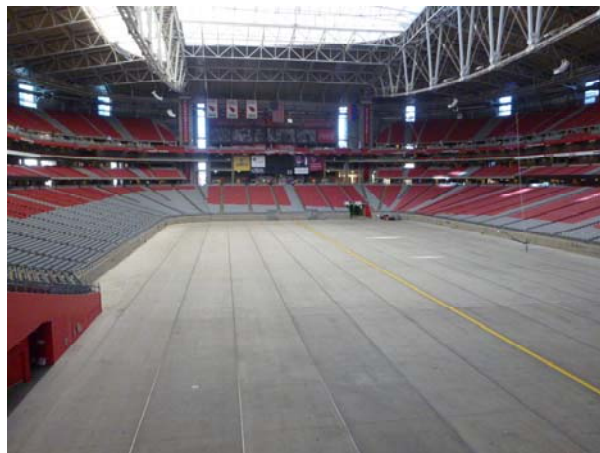


TPI Members inspect the roll-out playing field located outside of the stadium.

One of the highlights of TPI's Midwinter Conference was the opportunity for people to have an up-close and personal tour the University of Phoenix Stadium, home of the NFL's Arizona Cardinals. This multi-purpose facility is located in Glendale, Arizona.

With its retractable roof and field, it is an engineering marvel of design and technology. It was the first fully retractable natural grass playing field in North America and uses Tifway 419 that's nestled in an 18.9-million-pound tray kept outside the stadium when not in use.

The field features Stabilizer Solutions StaLok Fiber, which is a synthetic fiber that mimics grass roots and helps reinforce the root zone of the natural turf. Tifway 419 Bermudagrass sod is overseeded with both perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass at a rate of 100 pounds of seed per acre (varieties are Paragon GLR and Midnight, respectively).



Interior of stadium without the "roll-out" turfgrass playing field is ready to host other events.

PHOTOS: Kirk Hunter

Two days before a game, the field is moved inside where the interior building temperature is 62°F (16.6 °C). It goes back outside a couple of days after each game. The Stabilizer Solutions fiber is tilled into the soil at TPI member farm, **Evergreen Turf** in Chandler, Arizona (the exclusive turfgrass sod supplier to the University of Phoenix Stadium) at a rate of 2,000 lbs/ac; it is tilled in to a depth of four inches.

The 63,400-seat stadium (expandable to 72,200) opened on August 1, 2006 after three years of construction.

Of those members who participated on the tour, nearly 90% scored this as one of the outstanding highlights of the Midwinter Conference.

Field Fun Facts (Source: University of Phoenix Stadium website)

- The roll out playing field travels at a speed of 11.5 feet/minute (1/8 mph); it takes approximately 75 minutes to travel approximately 741 ft.
- The turfgrass resides outside of the stadium except for football and soccer events.
- Excavation took the field down to 26 feet below the present grade. When it was completed, the field lied 39 feet below the main concourse level because 13 feet of berming was added around the stadium.
- The site has the stadium situated along a slight northwest to southeast axis for maximum sun exposure for field in the outboard position.
- The field is 234 ft. wide x 403 ft. long and 39 inches tall.
- Field tray rests on 13 rail tracks and moves in and out of the stadium on 546 steel wheel assemblies (42 rows).
- 76 - of the wheel sets are powered by a 1- horsepower motor (total = 76 hp).
- The field will support approximately 94,000 square feet (over 2 acres) of natural grass.
- The tray has a fairly sophisticated irrigation system that works on timers and can be customized. The water drains through a one-inch deep mat and several pipes that lead to a main drainpipe underneath the field tray. A few inches of water remain in the tray while the field is in play to keep the grass moist.

POST-CONFERENCE TECHNICAL TOUR — An Insider's Perspective

The focus of TPI's Post-Conference Technical Tour was to provide those who participated with an opportunity to visit three very different high-profile sports facilities that require a special emphasis on the playability and appearance of their natural turfgrass surfaces.

The host at each location was the individual responsible for ensuring required conditions are consistently met, when and how the turfgrass sod will be used, and who will provide the turfgrass sod that's required to meet or exceed their desired expectations. Nearly thirty TPI members participated in the two-day tour.

Paradise Valley Country Club



Rob Collins, Golf Course Superintendent of the exclusive Paradise Valley Country Club shared information about this beautiful and very prestigious club located less than thirty minutes from Scottsdale, AZ.



TPI's Executive Director, Kirk Hunter (on the right) presents a plaque to Rob Collins as a way of expressing TPI's appreciation to Rob and the staff of Paradise Valley Country Club for extending their time and warm hospitality.



First time attendee, Matthew Holmes of Turf Australia takes a moment to talk to Rob Collins about the scope of his responsibilities.

Our thanks to Kirk Hunter, Tobey Wagner and Doug Fender for providing the photos of the Post-Conference Technical Tour that appear on pages 7 thru 10 unless otherwise noted.

Cont'd on page 8

Post Conference Technical Tour—Cont'd from page 7

Peoria Sports Complex



Chris Calcaterra, Sports Facilities Manager for the City of Peoria, AZ provided an insightful look at the Peoria Sports Complex, the major league baseball spring training facility for the Seattle Mariners and the San Diego Padres.



Chase Field Ballpark



Grant Trenbeath, Head Groundskeeper for Chase Field (home of Major League Baseball's Arizona Diamondbacks) offered members an overview of on-the-field and behind-the scenes responsibilities.



Cont'd on page 9

Post Conference Technical Tour—Cont'd from page 8

Southwest Sod, Inc.



Jim & Matt Smith of Southwest Sod, Inc. welcomed tour members to their farm which has been producing premium turf since 1985. Southwest's hybrid bermuda turf is ideally suited for Arizona's dry, western climate and is perfect for professional and home applications. Southwest Sod is a full service producer of premium Midiron, Tifway, Tifgreen, and Santa Ana. In addition to Jim and Matt, Jim's wife Diana was on hand as were Smith's sons Wyatt Smith and Josh Perrault who talked to the group about the farm's operations.



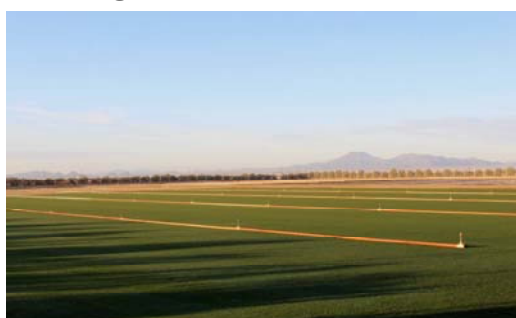
Evergreen Turf



Jimmy Fox and Jeff Nettleton.
PHOTO: Lynn Grooms

Jimmy Fox and **Jeff Nettleton**, owners of Evergreen Turf met with the tour group twice. First at their Stanfield, AZ location which produces turfgrass (on a secured site) exclusively for the University of Phoenix Stadium, and later at their Eloy, AZ location where the group had an opportunity to see equipment and farm irrigation.

Evergreen Turf, Stanfield, AZ



Evergreen Turf's Stanfield, AZ location is a secured site that produces exclusive turf for the University of Phoenix Stadium.



Evergreen Turf, Eloy, AZ



Cont'd on page 10

Post Conference Technical Tour—Cont'd from page 8

The University of Arizona Karsten Turfgrass Research Facility



PHOTO: University of Arizona

David Kopec, University of Arizona Extension turfgrass specialist welcomed tour visitors at the University of Arizona's Karsten Turfgrass Research Facility. In addition to over 7.5 acres of turfgrass research plots the facility also houses two 4-meter deep lysimeters and a weather station based computer controlled irrigation system. Kopec pointed out, that among other things, the facility evaluates irrigation requirements, the use of effluent water for irrigation, soil properties and salt-tolerance of turfgrass varieties. The group also heard turf, water and soil related presentations from research staff personnel.

To read more about the TPI's Post-Conference Turfgrass Technical Tour and the Midwinter Conference be sure to see the extensive coverage in the March/April issue of **TURF NEWS** magazine.



THANK YOU

TPI would like to thank the following sponsors for making the
2012 TPI Midwinter Conference a success.

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When TPI received a phone call from garden writer TC Conner in Pennsylvania we were a bit apprehensive because, for the most part, garden writers aren't really big fans of lawns. Their focus is primarily on the more colorful

aspects of landscaping. Given that background, the following article that resulted from our conversation with Mr. Conner was all the more surprising.

- Jim Novak

From One Garden Writer to Another

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken. ~James Dent

After some playful exchange of information about turfgrass on her Facebook Fan Page, garden writer Jan Bills asked a fellow garden writer, TC Conner, if he would enlighten her on the benefits of turfgrass and he graciously complied.

“Little did I know, I had a lot to learn about turf!” - Jan Bills

To paraphrase Jan, although she has nothing against lawns or turfgrass, she just doesn't want to maintain it, not now anyway! In fact, when she is designing landscapes and gardens for clients, she admits to removing sod to add gardens. She also states, without apology, that she cannot ever recall incorporating lawn or turfgrass into a design.

But on one particular day, she became overtly curious to learn about the environmental benefits of lawn and turfgrass, so she contacted fellow garden writer, TC Conner and he agreed to contribute a guest post on her blog. She later wrote, “I am glad he did! Little did I know, I had a lot to learn about turf!”

The following is TC's write-up.

By: TC Conner

Why is it that some folks just seem to be so set against lawns these days? I can understand some aspects of the anti-lawn rhetoric, for example, urging folks with small yards to get rid of grass in exchange for edible flowers and a veggie garden.

But it's not really all that bad to have a front or back yard with a carpet of turfgrass to play on. After all, grass has been around since, well, ever since God made dirt! Writing in “Second Nature: A Gardener's Education” (Grove Press, 1991), Michael Pollan gives us reason to ponder why we're in love with our lawns: “Perhaps the allure of the lawn is in the genes. The sociobiologists think so: they've gone so far as to propose a ‘Savanna Syndrome’ to explain our fondness for grass.” I'm thinking of the African savannas, Pollan continues: “Encoded in our DNA is a preference for an open grassy landscape resembling the short grass savannas of Africa on which we evolved and spent our first few thousand years.” And for those who don't believe in evolution, think of the grass in the Garden of Eden.

Hold on a minute you might say, Pollan's book is a bit outdated, in 1991 the urbanites were just beginning to rethink their role in the natural world, edible landscapes weren't as popular then as now. Farmers too played a much larger role in growing a lot of what we ate back then. With the demise of small family farms, growing produce in the yard instead of grasses seems like a natural progression, which is all well and good. But some of us still enjoy keeping a lawn and I'm not giving it up for a wildflower meadow or an oversized veggie garden. (And before you even accuse me, I DO NOT have anything against wildflower meadows, I just don't want one in my back yard, not now anyway.)

Cont'd on page 12

From One Garden Writer to Another—Cont'd from page 11



PHOTO: TC Conner

Let's think for a minute about the following statement from Dr. Ranajit Sahu: "With proper education and awareness, it is now possible to retain the benefits of lawns and turfgrass areas while minimizing or eliminating the negatives associated with water overuse and other harmful practices — leading to an experience that affords community, lifestyle and environmental benefits." (Dr. Sahu teaches classes in air pollution and environmental health risk assessment at Loyola Marymount University's Frank R. Seaver College of Science and Engineering.)

Dr. Sahu mentions lawns having benefits, there was a time that most gardeners thought the same thing, and some still do. I believe the anti-lawn crowd (which includes many gardeners) needs to be reminded about the good things grass provides. And I'll mention just a few; this little testament is already getting longer than I thought it'd be.

- The "sea of green" we call our lawns is one of the best and easiest to maintain groundcovers you'll ever grow.
- Grass filters water and recharges watershed.

- Lawns, often called "green space" when referred to in research reports, reduce storm water runoff. An average suburban green space lot of about 10,000 square feet absorbs 6,000 gallons of rainwater (Environmental Health Research Foundation's "Benefits of Green Space — Recent Research, April 25, 2011).

I could go on and on naming numerous other benefits of lawns, but I won't. Suffice to say that I think lawns are very beneficial, and those of us who keep them do so for good reasons.

Barefooting through a yard full of grass, dandelions, and white clover, dodging honeybees (God help them!) on a hot summer day is stingingly invigorating. But if you prefer to swap that out for a yard full of more zucchini and beans, have at it! I'll keep on barefooting around my lush lawn, "Savannah Syndrome" or not!

Special thanks to Jim Novak, Public Relations Manager, Turfgrass Producers International, for a couple of PDF documents stating facts and figures (available by request).

TC Conner is a freelance writer, master gardener, amateur photographer, musician, and author. For reprints of the above article, copy and paste!

Here's what I learned: It's a wonderful world to have the freedom to surround ourselves with the things we love, without judgment. Thank you, TC, from the bottom of my heart!

***May all your TURFGRASS grow,
Jan Bills***

TPI would like to thank TC Conner and Jan Bills for giving us permission to reprint this article.

You can visit Jan Bills' website "Two Women and a Hoe" at <http://twowomenandahoe.com/>

You can visit TC Conner's website "The Write Gardener" at <http://www.thewritegardener.com/>

JOIN US in Asheville, North Carolina this Summer

TPI Summer Convention & Field Days Asheville, North Carolina July 31—August 2, 2012

Turfgrass Producers International will hold their 2012 Summer Convention and Field Days, Monday, July 31st thru Thursday, August 2nd in Asheville, NC and there's already a great deal of excitement surrounding the event.

The scenic wonder of the Blue Ridge Mountains that surround the host hotel, The Grove Park Inn, are sure to be a welcoming site for turfgrass producers from around the world including the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, Asia and Africa.

A nice balance of business and social functions are planned throughout the week to provide all in attendance with a variety of informative, educational and fun activities.

In addition, Turf Mountain Sod will serve as the host farm for what's sure to be a great TPI Field Day.



PHOTO: Linda Bradley, Turf Mountain Sod



The beautiful Grove Park Inn will serve as the host hotel for TPI's 2012 Summer Convention & Field Days.

PHOTO: Courtesy of Grove Park Inn

And why is Turf Mountain Sod honored to be hosting TPI'S Field Day this summer? To quote **Linda Bradley**, *"First and foremost, we consider it a privilege to host the organization who has taught us so much! Other thoughts include the chance to have friends at our farm, showcasing beautiful Western North Carolina, and the opportunity for our guests to learn even more about the turfgrass sod industry."*

More information will be forthcoming via the mail, in TURF NEWS magazine, in future issues of the TPI E-Newsletter and via e-mail. You can also visit the TPI website at TurfGrassSod.org and click on TPI Summer Convention & Field Days.

TurfSide-UP



HORSEPOWER...Watt exactly is it?

The term "Horsepower" is credited to the Scottish engineer James Watt (1736-1819) who is also credited with inventing the steam engine. To convince potential buyers of the value of his steam engine, Watt devised a way to rate its power by comparing it to the work done by horses, which was a comparison people in the 18th century could relate to.

Watt watched horses at work, but no one is sure what he observed. He may have observed ponies lifting coal in a coal mine or horses working in a mill. He concluded that a horse could lift 550 pounds at the rate of one foot per second. In other words, it could lift 33,000 pounds one foot per minute. And that's the figure we use today: one unit of horsepower equals 33,000 foot-pounds per minute.

A GOOD NEWS BAD NEWS SCENARIO

THE GOOD NEWS—We have an artificial sports field that's less than four years old.

THE BAD NEWS—We have an artificial sports field that's less than four years old



The artificial turf in Indian Stadium at Port Neches-Groves High School is showing premature wear.

“...of about 4,000 FieldTurf fields there are about 50 of them showing premature wear. All of these are in the southern portion of the U.S. where it is very hot with extreme sunlight/ultraviolet rays.”

Rodney D. Cavness, Ed.D. (Reportedly quoting a Field Turf representative)
CEO & Superintendent, Port Neches-Groves ISD

The Port Arthur News reported back in January that the Port Neches-Groves school board (in Port-Neches, Texas) was considering filing a lawsuit against FieldTurf, the company responsible for installing the turf at Port Neches-Groves High School's Indian Stadium.

Reporter Brandon Janes wrote that for the past two years the Port Neches-Groves School District (PN-GISD) has been evaluating the turf, which cost almost **\$2 million** to install in 2008, for premature deterioration: The breaking apart of the nylon fibers used in the artificial grass.

“It's coming apart in some places and we're having trouble getting [FieldTurf] to hold up their end of the deal,” Superintendent Rodney Cavness told The Port Arthur News. “The board is going to discuss if we want to enter into litigation with the company,” Cavness said.

On Monday, February 6th during a public forum on the issue, Cavness said he had talked with administrators at four different school districts, Aledo ISD, Midlothian ISD, Navasota ISD and Humble ISD, and they all reported they had problems with their turf fields installed by FieldTurf.

Reporter Mary Meaux of the The Port Arthur News did a follow-up on February 8. She reported that, “two years of Southeast Texas summer heat and sun has taken their toll on the faux grass at Port Neches-Groves High School's Indian Stadium.

The lush green field with purple and white markings has seen numerous football and soccer games since it was installed in 2008.

But last fall the field began to show some wear and tear. Scotty Lewis, program manager for LANWalton [engineering consultants], alerted school board trustees to a problem with the turf during a recent meeting and of plans to rectify the problem.”

Cavness said he spoke with officials at FieldTurf, the company that installed the artificial turf, and was told a representative would visit the site to evaluate the field sometime in late January or early February.

“It's premature failure on the part of the turf itself,” he said. “After speaking with a representative, he said of about 4,000 FieldTurf fields there are about 50 of them showing premature wear. All of these are in the southern portion of the U.S. where it is very hot with extreme sunlight/ultraviolet rays. They indicated they will fix this and it won't be a problem. We'll see.”

The Port Arthur News reported that Darren Gill, vice president, global marketing for FieldTurf, said he spoke with the company's customer service department and confirmed a representative will be visiting the PN-G field. He could not provide more information about the specific issues with the field until a complete review is available, he said.

We will keep you posted on how this plays out.—J.N.

Where in the world is
TPI represented?
EVERYWHERE!

An on-going series featuring photos and copy
from TPI member websites.

Lochgelly, Fife, SCOTLAND

TURFFIT

FIT SCOTTISH TURF

<http://www.turffit.co.uk/>



Turf Supplies from Fife, UK

At Turffit we grow 120 hectares (300 acres) of the finest quality turf. Much of the turf grass we produce is used as garden turf throughout the UK and Ireland - from as far north as Shetland to the southern coast of England. We are also one of the UK's leading turf suppliers to golf courses, sports fields, parks & amenities. Formed in 1995, Turffit has developed a range of grass seed varieties that suit the mild, but varied, temperate climate of the United Kingdom. As members of the Turf Growers Association (TGA) our fields are managed to very high standards. This means our turf is allowed to mature properly - ensuring you receive the highest quality product that will achieve the best results with your lawn.



Turf Laying from Skilled Installers throughout Scotland

We have a very skilled team of turf installers who will lay your lawn turf for you. Our Turf Installation Manager is available for a free visit to discuss your requirements and provide you with a quote. The team are also experts in installing lay & play repairs on sports fields and making high quality repairs to worn areas of golf courses and pitches. Contact us for more information.

Turffit is a proud member of
Turfgrass Producers International



Filed Under:

We're not KID-ing!



In an effort to save money on the cost of landscaping it has been reported that the city of Newark, Texas is using goats to get rid of grass and weeds.

Late last year a family donated its five pigmy goats to the city; they are now being used to maintain the landscape around city buildings, by eating the weeds and tall grass.

Shawn Bartlett, Newark public works director reportedly stated, "We try to find any way we can to cut some corners and this money-saving measure has proven successful."

"Having the goats at our well sites and our waste water plant will cut down on our man hours where we have to mow and weed. It just seemed like an easy fix for the situation that we were in. In fact, Newark may buy more goats,"

It seems Newark, Texas isn't alone in such an ingenious effort. CNN reported that Maryland officials had dispatched forty bearded goats through the State Highway Administration to control plant growth in the area. The goats stayed until September, but will be put back to work this spring.

Highlights 2011 TPI Membership Turfgrass Sod Farm Equipment Survey

In depth survey results featured in the March/April issue of TURF NEWS.



The March/April issue of TURF NEWS magazine features a summary of the 2011 TPI Membership Turfgrass Sod Farm Equipment Survey.

The survey, conducted in December 2011 provides an overview of participating member farms and draws comparisons with what was reported in TPI's 2006 survey. How much have things changed over the last five years? You might be surprised with the findings.

The following are just a few of the highlights from the 2011 survey:

FARM SIZE

There has been a slight increase in the size of member farms. In 2006 the average size was 655 acres (265 hectares) compared to 662 acres (268) hectares in 2011.

LAND DEVOTED TO EXCLUSIVELY TO TURFGRASS PRODUCTION

Members report that although farm size increased slightly the land devoted to farming turfgrass has decreased 24% because of crop diversification due to the economy and local market trends. In 2006 the land devoted to turfgrass production was 575 acres (232 hectares). In 2011 the figure dropped to 434 acres (175 hectares).

CROP DIVERSIFICATION

More than half of the survey respondents indicated they had diversified a portion of their turfgrass acreage/hectares over the past 2 years to other crops. Of those farms reporting diversification 26% planted soybeans, 18% corn, 14.5% other grains, 10% forage crops and 6.5% fruits/vegetables.

EQUIPMENT INVESTMENT

The 2011 survey focused on turfgrass farm equipment and suggests that the average farm's current value of (owned) equipment is \$885,526. This is down considerably (26 percent) when compared to the \$1.2 million reported in 2006*. It should be noted however that 30 percent of the respondents also reported (in a separate section of the survey) that they lease equipment. The reported leased equipment had an estimated value (mean average) of \$588,235 and a median of \$350,000.

* Leased equipment was not addressed in the 2006 survey and some respondents may have included the estimated value of leased equipment in the 2006 survey. This may account for a portion of the 26 percent variable between the 2006 and 2011 survey.

Units of Equipment Owned and Operated (per farm)

Type of Equipment	Average
Aerifiers	1
Fertilizers Applicators	2
Forklifts (field)	2
Forklifts (portable)	4
Forklifts (skid steers)	2
Land Levelers/Graders	2
Light Equip. All Terrain Vehicles	2
Light Equip. Utility Terrain Vehicles	1
Mowers (gang reel)	1
Mowers (gang rotary)	3
Mowers (self-propelled)	0.6
Net Installers	0.5
Planters (Sprig/Plug)	1
Rock Removal	0.3
Rollers	2
Roto-Tillers	1
Seeders (broadcast/drill)	2
Spray Rigs/Sprayers	2
Tractors (under 40 hp)	2
Tractors (40-100 hp)	5
Tractors (over 100 hp)	2
Trucks (pick-ups/light trucks)	4
Trucks (straight over 1 ton)	2
Trucks (truck/trailer combo)	3
Turfgrass Harvesters (roll/slab)	3
Turfgrass Harvesters (big roll)	1
Harvesters (sprigs)	0.5
Turf Installers	1
Vacuum/Sweepers	1

Average Age of Reported Equipment

EQUIPMENT	2006	2011
Average Age		
Forklifts	7.9 years	8.4 years
Harvesters	6.9 years	8.5 years
Mowers	6.8 years	7 years
Tractors	8.9 years	8.9 years
Trucks - Pick-Ups	4.9 years	5.7 years
Trucks - Delivery	7.2 years	7.4 years

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Highlights 2011 TPI Membership Turfgrass Sod Farm Equipment Survey—Cont'd from page 16



IRRIGATION SYSTEMS



SHIPPING



IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

(Respondents indicated multiple systems used on their farm)

TYPE OF IRRIGATION

Center Pivot System	52%
Hard Hose Traveler	37%
Solid Set Surface Pipe (above ground).	26%
Lateral Move/Linear System	22%
Soft Hose Traveler	13%
Solid Set Buried Pipe (below ground)	11%
Swing Arm Corner System	4%
Ditch Supplied System (flooding or seepage)	2%

IRRIGATION WATER SOURCE

(Respondents indicated multiple sources used on their farm)

SOURCE OF IRRIGATION

Running Stream/River/Canal	50%
On-Farm Ponds	43%
Private Well Underground	35%
Controlled Lakes/Lake	11%
Reclaimed Stream/River/Canal	7%
Public Water Source	2%

SHIPPING DISTANCE MILES

	2011	2006	2001	1997	1993
Over 300	0%	1%	1.2%	.07%	1.2%
201 to 300	0%	0%	2.4%	4.6%	2.4%
101 to 200	10%	10%	17.6%	14.5%	10.8%
76 to 100	8%	16%	19.4%	20.4%	13.3%
51 to 75	29%	23%	18.8%	15.8%	25.3%
31 to 50	24%	31%	22.9%	22.4%	32.5%
21 to 30	16%	17%	11.8%	11.8%	9.6%
11 to 20	8%	2%	8.6%	8.6%	3.6%
Under 10	2%	1%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%

See the March/April issue of **TURF NEWS** for a complete recap of the 2011 survey.

FOR THE RECORD

One has to admire a university faculty member who stands by her convictions.

Proponents claim the proposed Aggie Recreation Center and Legacy Fields at Utah State University would provide students with facilities comparable to those found at other universities of similar size and character throughout the country. On Feb. 29 and March 1, USU students will have voted on two projects that might, as some suggest, make USU one of the premier student life oriented institutions in the country.

The key features of the Aggie Legacy Fields that will replace the existing natural turfgrass of the existing HPER fields with what has been called durable, latest-generation, artificial turf — one collegiate soccer field, two regulation flag football fields, two regulation softball fields, multi-lined fields for lacrosse and ultimate Frisbee, a one-third mile jogging

path with water-efficient landscaping, and lights for night-time use that utilize dark-sky compliant light fixtures.

The proposed renovation is being well received by many, but there are a few who have questioned the decision that will cost the university an estimated \$1.985 million which reportedly will include the design, permitting, direct construction, equipment, and contract administration.

For faculty member Kelly Kopp, PhD, the issue isn't necessarily the overall project as much as it is the use of artificial turf. Her letter to The Utah Statesman (featured below) sums up her thoughts very clearly.



Dr. Kelly Kopp

Associate Professor
Extension Water Conservation
and Turfgrass Specialist
Utah State University

The Utah Statesman

LETTER: Artificial Turf vs. Natural Grass Questioned
By Kelly Kopp

Published: Wednesday, February 29, 2012

As a faculty member and specialist in turfgrass science, I felt compelled to write regarding the proposed Aggie Legacy Fields and issues that you might consider as you prepare to vote on their installation. The fact is that synthetic turf fields have not been in regular use for very long. As a result, there is the need for objective, peer-reviewed research information regarding these fields — pros and cons. The information that I am presenting to you here is objective and peer-reviewed, but additional research is certainly needed.

The complete life-cycle costs of synthetic turf fields, including installation, maintenance and disposal — they need replacing every 8-10 years — are higher than natural grass fields. In addition, the removal and disposal costs of synthetic turf fields are incurred at the same time as installation costs for their replacement. It is my understanding that the Aggie Legacy Fields have the potential to be recycled and I commend the planners for that, but this does not negate the cost of their future removal and replacement.

Across the country, human health concerns have also been raised about the presence of heavy metals in the crumb

rubber infill used in synthetic turfs: Al, Cd, Cr, Cu, Fe, Mg, Mn, Mb, Sn, Su and Zn. Other health concerns include the inhalation of fine particles generated as the infill wears over time, the presence of Staph bacteria and other skin and lung concerns.

Regarding Staph bacteria, the proposed Aggie Legacy Fields would benefit from full sun exposure and its disinfectant properties. However, that very sun exposure leads to another health concern-- the surface temperature of the fields. Reliable studies have measured temperatures ranging from 140-173 degrees F at the surface of synthetic turf fields, necessitating very sophisticated irrigation and drainage systems to render them cool enough for use.

Environmental considerations of synthetic turf fields include the leaching of metals such as Zn, Al, Mg and Fe, with Zn leaching in the highest quantities. These metals are toxic to aquatic organisms and invertebrates, and have also been found in the run-off from synthetic turf fields.

I do not dispute that synthetic turf fields have a place in locations that are truly adverse to natural grass. However, the presence of natural grass on the HPER fields over the past many years indicates that conditions on the fields are not truly adverse to natural grass.