

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION

GREEN SECTION

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• Western Turfletter •

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O U T L O O K 1956

To a turf man, the color of the nations economic bloom is deep green. The leaves are healthy and the root system continues development in fertile soil. For the future, the Federal Government plans a balanced budget. Reports show that business men were still expansion minded. It is natural to consider the outlook for the golf world for 1956.

National Golf Foundation surveys show that, in the West, new course construction and planning reached new highs this year. In the eight Western States 48 new courses are under construction and 89 are planned. California leads the nation with 22 completions in 1955. Building and planning of golf courses throughout the West is as follows:

	<u>Under Construction</u> 1956	<u>Planned</u>
Arizona	4	3
California	30	45
Colorado	3	14
Idaho	2	5
Nevada	1	3
Oregon	3	11
Utah	2	1
Washington	4	7

Is this too much expansion? Again the figures from the National Golf Foundation are revealing. One golf course for every 31,000 people is the national average. However, in California for example, there is presently only one golf course for every 49,000 people. Furthermore, a recent Gallup Poll showed that 36% of the men, and 18% of the women questioned have played at least one round of golf in their lives.

W A N T E D: QUALIFIED SUPERINTENDENTS

"What of the skilled manpower required to operate these new courses?" asks Mr. Verne Wickham of the National Golf Foundation Field Service.

"Where will the competent Superintendents come from to fill this ever widening gap?" The question is difficult -- yet, as a member of this honorable Profession, you must seriously consider an answer.

For Golf Course Superintendents, the training of an Assistant is often a thankless task. Either the Club will not afford the (believed) luxury of an Assistant, or, no sooner is a man trained and developed than he is off to another job offering more money. But the training of good Assistants is essential if this gap is ever to be closed. You, as a qualified Superintendent with a crew of 4 or more, owe it to your Profession and to the Game of Golf to bring one of your crewmen along in 1956 to the point of a qualified Assistant. "Skill to do comes of doing" and more men are needed -- with your skill.

Outlook for 'Fifty-six': An even greater demand for (and an increased shortage of) capable Golf Course Superintendents -- especially in the West.

Labor Outlook

The United States Department of Labor says that a record 2,750,000 United States workers will receive automatic wage hikes in 1956. Long-term contracts were signed with substantial wage increases in the basic industries such as steel, rubber, construction, and transportation. 1,500,000 auto and farm machinery workers will get another 6¢ per hour; construction 8¢ to 11¢ more, and coal miners 80¢. Golf Course budgets for labor may also have to be adjusted accordingly.

Machinery

Increased labor costs will continue to be absorbed by the consumer. Steel prices have already caused slightly higher prices on tractors, mowers, spray equipment, etc. An overall boost of 5% to 10% is possible. Present prices are up about 2% to 4%. Sprinkler irrigation men have good supplies on hand but expect an increased demand. An increase in freight rates during 1956 is conceivable and may influence Western prices. Shortages are not anticipated now but may develop because of a tight steel situation. It still makes sense to anticipate your needs and order in advance.

Others

Fertilizer costs, per pound, are expected to remain at about 1955 levels, with some slight decline possible. Fertilizer costs have been dropping since 1952. Higher freight rates may offset lower fertilizer prices, however. If you have adequate storage space, order this year's supply of fertilizer now or as early as possible. Prices are generally lower since the supply house does not have to store it for you.

No general increase is expected in fungicides and insecticides. Some anticipate a slight drop. Mercury, the basic ingredient in many fungicides, is regulated by the Federal Government and will fluctuate. Other chemicals should remain stable in price.

The grass seed picture looks good. Bluegrass, fescue and bent supplies seem adequate and prices about as last year, slightly higher perhaps on Seaside bent. Due to the construction of 49 new golf courses, Seaside may become tight in some sections (example: California) later in the year. Therefore, order now if you will need any Seaside in 1956. Merion bluegrass production was predicted at 800,000 pounds; another low year for Merion producers.

A backward glance at 1955 shows many advances in the Turf Industry. To mention a few: the increased testing of improved bentgrass selections by Western Superintendents; the introduction of U-F (Urea Formaldehyde) fertilizer on the open market; introduction of Vapam as a promising soil sterilant, and the new herbicide, Di-Sodium methyl arsonate for crabgrass and chickweed control. Progress has also been made in learning to use the tools we now have, to better advantage. The progress in '55 was good -- it is up to us to make '56 better.

" W A T E R " -- NEW USDA YEARBOOK

The new United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook for 1955 is entitled "Water". This follows in the footsteps of such notable yearbooks as "Grass", "Trees", "Plant Diseases", and "Insects". It is designed for good reading by and for people in Agriculture. Headings listed in this Yearbook include:

- "Our Need for Water"
- "Where We Get Our Water"
- "Water and Our Soil"
- "Caring for Our Water Sheds"
- "Water and Our Crops"
- "Water and Our Forests"
- "Water for Irrigation"
- "Gardens, Turf and Orchards"

Dr. Robert M. Hagan, Chairman of the Department of Irrigation, University of California, Davis, California, has contributed one chapter on - "Watering Lawns and Turf and Otherwise Caring for Them".

You should have a copy for your reading and your reference. Free copies are sometimes available through your Congressman or Senator. The book may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C. at \$2.00 per copy. It should be on your shelf.

"The more a man looks at something, the less he can see it, and the more a man learns a thing, the less he knows it".

-- Chesterton

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