

# WISCONSIN TURFGRASS NEWS

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FALL 1996

## Jeff Gregos Joins U.W. Turf Team

*By Tom Schwab*

The turf industry in Wisconsin will be in better hands with the recent hiring of Jeff Gregos. Jeff will be the manager of the Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab which just moved to the Noer Facility this last spring. The University of Wisconsin - Madison, Plant Pathology Department made him the offer after giving him an intense two day interview in front of numerous University, WTA, and industry representatives. The vote was unanimous that Jeff has great research experience, turf knowledge, and ability to communicate with the public and profession about turf management concerns.

Jeff graduated in August with a Bachelor of Science from Pennsylvania State University's Turfgrass Science Program. During his schooling Jeff picked up substantial experience working at the Penn State Turf Research Facility and at Oakmont Country Club. He worked as both a turfgrass research technician and turfgrass pathology technician at the research facility and did pest monitoring and management among other jobs at Oakmont.

His duties started immediately when he stepped foot through the O.J. Noer door. Dr. Maxwell and he had scheduled four different golf course snow mold trials to set up within ten days of starting the job. Jeff seems very organized. He had coordinated some of the trial materials to be delivered before he even arrived at the Noer Facility. On his first days on the job he was building his own custom designed sprayers to

be used for these trials.

The job that Jeff accepted is greatly needed in Wisconsin. The new Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab has been a very popular and necessary addition for the Wisconsin turf industry. It's been competently operated by plant pathology department technician, Gary Gaard, for the last year. Although Gary's training was not specifically with turfgrass management, he was a quick study. He will remain an assistant in the operation of the lab with Jeff.

Jeff will have many duties in addition to diagnosing turf disease problems and making recommendations. He will also be installing many turf investigations to include fungicide and biological controls. He'll be evaluating the results and reporting findings of those trials to end users. He'll be developing educational materials including advancing the computer outreach activities on the World Wide Web about turf plant health. He'll participate in other outreach activities to include turf school, field days, and winter conference. He'll also be writing articles for our turf newsletters. He is very personable and will be visiting with you at upcoming WTA, WGCSA and WLF meetings.

I'm sure you'll be meeting him soon since winter is the conference season and he'll be making those rounds. He also loves the game of golf so invite him out for one of those rounds next year. He's got lots of interesting stories about Oakmont since he was there during the year



Jeff Gregos, Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab Manager.

they hosted the U.S. Open. Another one of his favorite activities is cross country skiing, but he thinks it's too flat around here compared to Pennsylvania. Invite him over to the La Crosse coulees, the Baraboo bluffs, Wildcat Mountain, or up for one of the flat treks at the Birkebiener. No it's not the Appalachians but we've got some pretty interesting terrain to show him as he travels through Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has its own unique turf problems also. We were enthused this past spring when the Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab moved to the Noer Facility. Now we should really be enthused that we have a new full time manager of the lab. The hiring of Jeff will make a big impact for the turf industry in Wisconsin in the very important area of disease diagnosis and educational outreach. The U.W. turf team is one more person complete and the turf industry in Wisconsin will be better off for it.

# Get Ready, It's Coming

By Tom Schwab

We all know winter is on the way. It's a lovely season with great holidays, fun recreational activities, better work hours, and Packer football. It's also time to make plans to attend the 1997 Winter Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO. The roster of presenters is quite impressive this year. There will be renowned local speakers and ones from many parts of the country that will address interesting subjects for everyone in the turf and green industry. The annual trade show gets bigger and better every year also. So make plans to attend



Trade show at EXPO '96. It gets bigger and better every year.

the EXPO on January 8 and 9, with a pesticide applicator training session on the 10th if you need to update your certification. The Holiday Inn West in Madison will again be the host site for the big event.

A synopsis of some of the presentations follows:

- Professor Hank Wilkinson from the University of Illinois, who specializes in some of the more difficult to control diseases in both golf and homelawn situations, will involve the audience to hear their main concerns and suggest good turf management techniques for healthier grass.

- David Moller, superintendent of the Brewers stadium, will address sports turf management and have interesting stories about Miller Park.

- Professor Ed McCoy, from Ohio State University, will talk about aerating and topdressing to produce better turf.

- Adam Mock and Craig Reinders, of Reinders Irrigation, will address irrigation system design, installation and other watering issues.

- The University of Wisconsin - Madison will be represented by Professors Wayne Kussow, Jennifer Parke, Scott Craven and the always interesting Phil Pelliteri. They will talk about nutrient management, the future of biological disease control, wildlife ecology (both for enhancement of wildlife and management of wildlife problems) and bugs and things.

- Paul Huggett and George Brandt, two local sod business owner / operators, will address the uses, costs and benefits of using "big-roll" sod.

- Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, and Joe Bilskemper, owner / operator of Lawn Care Specialists in La Crosse, will talk about national programs in the lawn care industry and include developing a professional image for building your customer base and creating a better business.

- Mike Kelly, from Glenn Rehbein Company, will talk about constructing soccer and other athletic fields.

- Skip Lynch, of Olds Seed Company, will address uses and planting techniques of native grasses.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## President's Message

By Wayne Horman

As this season gradually comes to a close, it's an excellent time to reflect on the past and look to the future.

The Wisconsin turfgrass industry was slow to get started this past spring. Warmer temperatures didn't arrive until mid-June and in the northern portions of our state the snow-cover actually remained on the ground into May.

The Wisconsin turfgrass industry took a hit when Dr. Frank Rossi left this spring and went to New York. The turf program lost this horticulture Extension position at a time when the University of Wisconsin had a hiring freeze. In addition, Dr. Julie Meyer who was on maternity leave last year from the plant pathology department, decided not to return. Those departures, combined with Extension entomologist Dr. Chuck Koval's retirement, last year, left the turf industry with little University support.

A great deal of thanks goes to Dr. Wayne Kussow and Dr. Doug Maxwell who kept the program together. Their support combined with help of people like Steve Millett and Gary Gaard, who operated the Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab, still provided good assistance from the University. Thanks also goes to Amy Sausen, who is temporarily filling Dr. Rossi's shoes, and doing a good job of it. Tom Schwab and the staff at the Noer Facility deserve thanks for performing greater roles due to the departures. Their work is what helped make the field day possible again this summer.

The future for our industry is starting to look brighter. The addition of Jeff Gregos to the Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab will allow Gary Gaard to work with homeowner samples and Steve Millett to concentrate more on snowmold research.

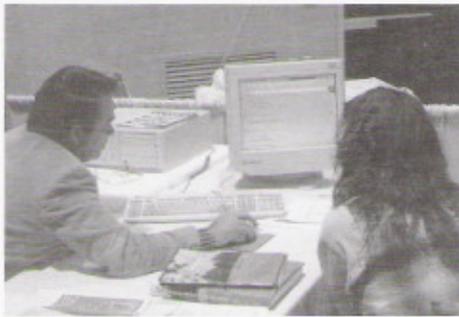
Jeff Gregos brings a great deal of

practical experience with him from Penn State. Gregos has worked on golf courses in Pennsylvania and has worked at the research facility in Happy Valley. I hope you all can meet him at the Winter Conference.

Finally, the status of the open positions in Horticulture (Rossi's) and Plant Pathology, are beginning to unfold. The interviewing process will begin soon for the turfgrass position, with someone hopefully on board early next year. The Plant Pathology position hasn't been approved, but with luck should get filled in 1997. It's hard to imagine a turfgrass program without a full-time plant pathologist, so hopefully the powers at Ag. Hall will approve this position soon.

As the sun begins to set on another growing season, we start to look forward to the beginning of the new season. Of course, every new season brings new challenges, but with new people in place from the University, we will not have to fight these challenges alone.

Have a great finish to 1996.



Professor Doug Maxwell shows how to access turfgrass information on the Internet.

• Dr. Don Taylor, who is a turfgrass management and soils professor from the University of Wisconsin - River Falls, will give some important agronomic principals for reliable turf care.

• Virgil Meier, Scotts Company, will address the science-fiction-like future of plant breeding using the gene gun. Imagine having a bentgrass that will be tolerant of round-up herbicide so when the *Poa annua* contaminates your green you can just spray it out. This future may not be so far away!

The individual talks and the impressive trade show are not all the EXPO brings to you. There are workshops from which you can pick and choose, a fun socializing period with hors d'oeuvres and drink, and if you want to stay over another night to update your pesticide applicator certification, a pesticide applicator training session will be held on Friday. The workshops this year will include a turf and weed identification lab, a computer and internet lab to teach you how to access turfgrass information electronically, a complete lab on green construction, and an additional lab for lawn care associates to learn to make your Professional Lawn Care Association of America work for you. There is just a ton of information you can gather by attending Winter EXPO.

Registration packets will be mailed out in mid-November. This show is always a great way to keep current on all the latest turfgrass information. You don't have any excuses. January 8 and 9 are not holidays that you'll be spending with your family, your work hours are flexible in winter, and the Packers won't be playing on that Wednesday or Thursday. Winter EXPO is simply the biggest and most educational show the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association puts on during the year. You won't want to miss it!

# Golf Outing

By Wayne Horman, WTA President

The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association held its annual golf / fund raising event at the beautiful Wausau Country Club on September 30, 1996. The annual golf outing is one of the largest fund raising events of the year for the WTA. That proved to be true again this year.

Fifty six golfers were treated to wonderful fall golfing weather and a truly enjoyable golf course. The weather was overcast and warm for late September. This outing has had some pretty bad weather in the past but not this year. About the golf course, Terry Kurth from Barefoot Grass Lawn Service said, "The course was challenging and made you use many different kinds of shots and strategies, but it wasn't so tricky that it was gimmicky. It was truly enjoyable."

The day was full of activities. In addition to the golf, there was a great lunch and dinner and an evening program that included a raffle where everyone in attendance received a

prize. The day was a nice get together for a bunch of friends with a common interest to have fun and raise money for a common cause. That cause was turfgrass research at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. The outing raised over \$7,000 for this occasion.

This money came partly from the golf registration fee. The rest came from generous individuals and organizations. The organizations include golf courses, sod growers, lawn care companies and suppliers to the turf industry.

Individual support was also great this year. Turf research in Wisconsin would not be what it is without this support.

The turf industry would especially like to thank Randy Slavik, superintendent at Wausau Country Club for generously offering his course for the outing. The event was a great success on a great golf course.

*Thanks go to these hole sponsors for their generous support.*

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Man of leisure, Pat Zurawski & Reedsburg assistant Todd Cramblit.



Tom Wentz, Scotts Co., & Alan Cumps, Tillman Nursery, enjoying the golf.

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His boss must be with him, he's actually raking the trap.

### *The Wisconsin Turfgrass News*

is the official publication of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, edited by Tom Schwab.

## First Ever Homeowner Summer Field Day

By Amy J. Sausen, Outreach Specialist - Department of Horticulture

For those of you that receive the turfgrass hotline, either via e-mail or over the telephone wires, you probably heard me mention the "First Ever Homeowner Summer Field Day", held on August 24, 1996. This was a completely new venture for the University's turf program, tailoring our research tour towards the needs of homeowners.

Both the ABC-TV and CBS-TV affiliates in Madison picked up the event, along with the Wisconsin State Journal, WTDY 1480 AM, and the Isthmus. You know you've made it to the "big time" when the Isthmus covers your event.

Our goal of the Field Day was to reach homeowners. With all of the "Tom, Dick, and Harry's" starting lawn care companies these days, we felt it was our duty to make educated consumers out of the "do-it-yourselfers" and the general public.

The tour was very inclusive. We had lectures about prairies, ornamental grasses, lawn fertility, renovation, variety trials, and turf diseases. Participants could wander the plots, listen to selective lectures, or follow a guided tour.

The "Backyard Prairie Demonstration" compared the results of spring seeding versus fall seeding of short grasses and forbs. In the future, the plot will be divided in half, to demonstrate the two most common methods of prairie management: mowing, and burning.

We also had a walking tour of the ornamental grasses that have been planted at the Noer Facility, learning which grasses are winter hardy. With so much publicity surrounding the "native" and other ornamental grasses, it was nice to answer some of the questions people have about them.

In the "Reclaiming a Freedom Lawn" tour, we implemented several different renovation techniques, in the hopes of reclaiming a weed infested, thin, yellow lawn. For many participants, the control plot reminded them of home.

The "Homeowner Variety Demonstration" was valuable for two reasons. It gave homeowners a chance to see the different textures and types of grasses that are available to homeowners, and it demonstrated why we never recommend seeding in the summer.

Next door, was an "Establishment Demonstration" which compared the quality of establishment with several different types of mulches and fertilizers. Most notably, homeowners were able to see how much more quickly grass established with mulches than without.

One of the fertility tour stops demonstrated the differences in quality of nitrogen applications. The rates and frequency of nitrogen applications were varied, with the goal of demonstrating the differences in quality, over the course of a season.

The plots received between 2 and 8 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet per year.

Since one of the most common lawn diseases is necrotic ring spot, we felt it necessary to include it in a tour stop. We explained some of the management strategies important for control. Again, for many, the diseased area reminded them of home.

Inside the Noer Facility, we held two classes. The Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab gave a tour so homeowners could see what happens to their turf samples once they arrive at our facility. For most, it was their first opportunity to see what pathogens look like through a microscope.

The other class was about turfgrass fertility. It gave us a chance to clear up some of the confusion surrounding the fertilizer industry, and answer some good questions homeowners have struggled with in the past.

A nice tour book, packed with home lawn turf tips, was made available for participants. Attendees appreciated having something to reinforce what they had learned.

During the course of the day, we had over 500 people visit the Noer Facility. With the success of Homeowner Summer Field Day 1996, I am sure we will be hosting another in the near future. Tell your friends and neighbors, heck, even bring your clients.

# Fourteenth Annual Field Day Ranks A Success

By Tom Schwab

How would you judge whether a gathering of professionals is a success? Do you judge it by the amount of new knowledge the attendees acquire? By how much money you raise? By the size of attendance? However you judge it, the 1996 Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day ranks "good to great." That was the opinion of 90% of the attendees on the follow-up questionnaires.

Once again, the field day occurred on one of the most beautiful days of the summer. The lack of rain in August was broken the night before Field Day with almost an inch of rain, making the Noer Facility lush and green. The nice day had all the attendees in good moods and eager to share common turf stories.

The educational tours were full of good talks. Despite being short on professors at this year's field day, with the retirements of Drs. Koval and Meyer and transfer of Dr. Rossi, the educational tours were very informative. Drs. Maxwell and Parke and student Andi Guerin presented some pessimistic yet need-to-be-explored information about using biologicals for disease control. Professor Kussow presented interesting information on putting green construction and about nutrient runoff from sloped landscapes. Some students



Chris Wendorf & Ed Schuette working hard to take care of a customer's concerns.

presentations. Doctoral student Steve Millett presented new ideas for controlling patch diseases, dollar spot and the number-one home lawn scourge - necrotic ring spot. Emily Beulow has been investigating plant growth regulation for two years and presented some of her findings. Derrick Van Damme talked about how to manage golf greens under different management regimes. Outreach specialist Amy Sausen had lawn renovation tips and information on cultivar selection for putting greens. An industry representative Steve Lesch, who is a collaborator on an ornamental grass study at the Noer Facility, presented information about that group of plants. I talked about using mulches for turfgrass establishment. Throughout the day there was tons of information for attendees to gather.

In addition to the research tour, the annual trade show was superb. The trade show was huge this year with 58 exhibitors. That beat last year's record-number by one. The exhibitors were eager to tell all about the latest technologies and products to maintain lawn and landscape areas better. Then when they were done telling you about their equipment they let you test-drive it during the traditional demonstration period. Mowers, aerators, topdressers, string trimmers, sod cutters, utility vehicles and more were given a workout during the demos.

One area that was not as successful this year was that the attendance was slightly down. The number of attendees, excluding vendors, staff and researchers, was only 375. That

was 50 less than last year's record 425. The planning committee would like to see that number go to 700 in future years and will be working vigorously to make next year's field day the best and most informative ever.



George Magnin, one of the field day coordinators, gets some answers from Dr. Doug Maxwell.

The planning committee that deserves thanks for organizing the field day are Audra Anderson - Noer Facility, Wayne Horman - Scotts Company, George Magnin - Cherokee Country Club, Carl Dowse - Bruce Company, Amy Sausen - U.W. Horticulture Department, Wayne Kussow - U.W. Soils Department, and myself. The job of parking was efficiently organized by Gary Richards from Maple Bluff Country Club. This group not only deserves thanks but would be receptive to any constructive criticism if you have ideas for improving Field Day. They are very dedicated to making field day a great experience for you.

Another big success from the field day was raising money for turf research. \$2,450 came from the silent auction. Thanks go to the vendors for supplying most of the items in the auction. Another \$7,500 was raised through registration fees although most of the registration profit comes from vendors. The attendees' registration fees barely cover their lunch, but if we could get attendance up to 700 that could add up to significant funds raised from attendees. Our vendors give extensively to turf research at the University of Wisconsin. Please take note of the field day exhibitors listed below and give them some of your business throughout the year. This will say thanks to them for helping to bring you the field day and for helping fund important turf research that may help you in your businesses some year.

The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day by most counts was successful in 1996. The effort to make it better every year will continue. We hope that you gathered some information that will help you with your lawn and landscapes. We'd also like to thank you for attending and would like to see more of you next year. Your attendance, sharing of ideas and camaraderie are what really make field day a success.



Photo of Field Day taken from an ultra-light airplane that flew over during lunch.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov 17-21	1996 PLCAA Annual Conference with 1996 Exterior Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Conference	Cincinnati
Dec 11-13	Minn. Turf Foundation Conference	Minneapolis
Dec 16-17	GCSAA/ WGCSA Seminar (Putting Greens)	Brookfield
Jan 8-10	WI Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO	Madison
Jan 16-18	Mid-Am Trade Show	Chicago
Jan 22-23	Garden Center Symposium	Waukesha
Feb 2-8	GCSAA International Conference	Las Vegas
Feb 20-22	WLF 1997 Convention	Green Bay
March 3	WGCSA Spring Business/Education	Fond du Lac
March 12-13	Reinders 13th Turf Conference	Waukesha
April 21	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	Ives Grove Golf Links

*WTA Members - If you have an important date you'd like to share with other members  
call 608-845-6536 or Fax 608-845-8162 and let us include it in the next calendar.*

***Wisconsin Turfgrass Association presents  
WINTER TURFGRASS & GREENSCAPE EXPO  
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***Registration packets will be mailed in mid-November. For information call 608-845-6536.***