

Turf Programs Positioned for Greatness

Dr. C. Wayne Smith, Interim Department Head

The ninth annual Texas A&M Invitational Golf Tournament will be held at the Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas on 11 September 2006



(L-R) Slocum, Murano and Stallings at Tournament.



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with a dinner and silent auction on Sunday, 10 September. Details and entry form are available at <http://soilcrop.tamu.edu>. Proceeds support the turfgrass sciences research, extension, and educational programs

in Soil and Crop Sciences as well as other departments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The past eight tournaments have raised over \$280,000, which has been used to support turfgrass science programs through the Texas Turfgrass Research Education Extension Endowment. Funds generated by the Invitational are placed in the TREEE corpus and the interest generated is used to support turfgrass science activities in TAES, TCE, and COALS.

The Turfgrass program in Soil and Crop Sciences are positioned and destined for continued and greater accomplishments in the future. It has been an integral part of this Department, College, Experiment Station, and Extension Service under the leadership of some outstanding scientists, educators, and scholars. Ethan Holt conducted early turfgrass activities although his primary research activities were in forage grasses. The first official turfgrass faculty member was George McBee in the 1960s. Wallace Menn was hired to assist George and pursue a graduate degree in 1966. Richard Duble transferred to College Station from the Overton Research and Extension Center to conduct research in

Turfgrass Physiology in 1970 and later became the first State Extension Turf Specialist. Jim Beard and later Richard White continued research and teaching activities at College Station while Milton Engelke was hired to conduct turfgrass breeding activities at the Dallas Research and Extension Center. Richard Duble was followed by Gene Taylor in Turfgrass Extension at College Station, with the position being held by Dave Chalmers since 2002. Bill Knoop was the first Extension Turf Specialist at the Dallas Center, a position currently held by Dr. Jim McAfee. Our most recent hire was Dr. Kurt Steinke, Turfgrass Ecologist, in 2006. We are still expanding our turfgrass group and are negotiating currently to hire a person in the area of Urban Nutrient and Water Management. The Department and College have a number of other faculty with activities in turfgrass science such as soil fertility, water management, weed management, soil microbiology, entomology and pathology.

"Today, 73 of our 115 undergraduates are Turf Option majors. "

The number of undergraduate students enrolled under the Turf Option in Agronomy has grown during the past few years. Today, 73 of our 115 undergraduates are Turf Option majors. Six of our 104 graduate students are directed by Drs. White and Steinke in the area of turfgrass science.

The future is indeed bright for The Department of Soil and Crop Sciences and Turfgrass Science. We have new faculty, new research endeavors, and expanding student interest. We have been tentatively assigned 42 acres for turfgrass activities at the planned Research and Teaching Center to be located on F&B Road, essentially a 100% expansion of our present turf area on Agronomy Road.

Expanded faculty, increased student interest, and expanded facilities means future success for our Turfgrass programs and the Department of Soil

Turf Programs Positioned for Greatness *Continued*

and Crop Sciences.

On a more personal note, this will be my last Newsletter as Interim Department Head. I want to thank all of the faculty and staff who have made this an enjoyable experience as we transition from Dr. Hussey's leadership to Dr. Baltensperger's tenure. I especially want to thank the staff, too numerous to name, who have been understanding and patient during the past few months as I have attempted to help position the Department for the future. My hat's off to each and everyone.



2006 Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course

Dr. David Chalmers, State Extension Turfgrass Specialist

Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course, January 23-27, 2006.

The Turfgrass Ecology and Management Short Course, a fee-based course (\$595), was held January 23-27, 2006 in College Station on the campus of Texas A&M University. The 34 participants represented various segments of the Texas turf industry: sod production; lawn care companies; golf courses; municipalities; regulatory agencies; irrigation; and extension agents. Classes ran from 9 AM to 5 PM on Monday; 8 AM to 5 PM Tuesday through Thursday and from 8 AM till noon Friday. The five-day program is unique as it goes beyond the typical abbreviated conference and CEU driven programs to deliver in-depth training for turfgrass professionals who require competency in all aspects of turfgrass management. TAMU instructors work to make the training as real world as possible with examples of how the science behind fine turf management is part of any turf/soil management system.

Enrollment in 2006 grew by 41% over the first course offering in 2005. Comments and reviews by attendees seem to indicate all were pleased with course content and course delivery. Course participant surveys of learner benefits consistently produced answers of "agree" or "strongly agree" for the following statements: 1) gained new insights relevant to my work; 2) the course challenged my thinking; 3) I am likely to apply what I have learned; and 4) I am more likely to adopt better management practices. Attendees were also complimentary of the quality of the training facility, The Donald Houston Center, which offers a comfortable classroom-style seating at tables in a very modern training facility. Plans are to hold the 3rd annual Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course in January 22-26, 2007.

I was pleased with the increased participation in the second year that this training has been offered by Texas A&M. It is my experience that this type of in-depth training provides industry professionals with the following benefits:

- 1) In-depth training to develop expertise and understanding of what they do in their jobs, irrespective of continuing education units (CEUs) for pesticide recertification. This is especially important now as most area and regional turfgrass conferences offer educational programs that are CEU driven by pesticide license recertification requirements with the Texas Department of Agriculture or Structural Pest Control Board. While such programs benefit those needing CEU credits to maintain their license they typically miss the more in-depth and focused training opportunities that are available in the short course format. Even though it was not our main focus, the 2006 Turf Short Course qualified for 13.5 Texas Department of Agriculture CEUs (1.0 for laws & regs; 5.75 for IPM; and 6.75 general) in the 36 hours of instruction. Quality programs, like the Turfgrass Ecology and Management Short Course, that effectively train individuals and advance comprehension and learning, will always be valued and in demand.
- 2) Individuals sometimes come to positions in the turfgrass industry with little formal training. The Turf Short Course format can supply these individuals with the background they need to develop their own personal management strategies that are science-based.
- 3) It can provide employees with a "large dose" of continuing education to:

Turfgrass Ecology & Management *Continued*

- ♦ Stay up to date on developing and changing technologies.
- ♦ Provide employees with incentives and benefits that can affect job performance, appreciation, pay and recognition.
- ♦ Have employees can better represent management's philosophy
- ♦ Positively impact job performance, employee retention, reduced need to supervise, and increase employee feed back.
- ♦ Enable employees can become "more professional" in actions and ability with clientele, employees and peers
- ♦ Effectively interpret agronomic situations in a timely manner

The Texas A&M University System has tremendous expertise to draw from to teach this program. The 13 faculty instructors in the short course were teaching subjects that they commonly address in their teaching, research or extension activities.

Complete information about the 3rd annual, 2007 Turfgrass Ecology & Management Short Course can be found on the dedicated website (<http://caps0.tamu.edu/all-programs/turfgrass/index.html>). If you would like to be placed on a mailing list to receive a hard copy of the brochure please fax (979-845-0604) or e-mail (dwallace@ag.tamu.edu) your contact information to Daralyn Wallace, stating your desire to receive short course announcements.



(L-R) Retirees, Ronnie Leps and Wallace Menn

REGISTER for Golf Tournament and Maroon & White Gala

Date: 09/11/2006

Shotgun Start: 12:30 pm

Join us Sunday evening for our first annual Maroon & White Event supporting the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

All sponsors will receive tickets to the event—see sponsorship levels for amount.

Players receive a discounted price of \$50 per person to attend the event.

Registration Form for Golf Tournament and Maroon & White Gala

9th Annual Texas A&M Invitational

Team Name	Shirt Size And Belt Size	Handicap
1	/	
2	/	
3	/	
4	/	

The Celebrity Scramble is a 5-player step-over scramble featuring a team of 4 players joined by an Aggie or a surprise celebrity from outside the Aggie world.

Registration begins at 10:30 am. Pick up your goody bag and box lunch prior to the shotgun start at 12:30 pm. Be sure to take your team photo with Coach Gene Stallings '57 on hole 17 of the Master's Course.

After you've completed play, join us for a light dinner and a short program hosted by Coach Stallings and a special guest host, during which the winners will be announced.

Located at:
Brookhaven Country Club
3333 Golfing Green Dr
Dallas, TX

# of Players @ \$250 or Level of Sponsorship	
# of Tickets for Sunday Event @ \$50	
Grand Total	

9th Annual Texas A&M Invitational Golf Tournament & Gala

9th Annual Texas A&M Invitational Golf Tournament
Texas A&M Research and Extension Center
17380 Cell Road
Dallas, TX 75252

Phone: 972-682-6640
Fax: 972-682-4288
Email: TexasInvitational@tamu.edu

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT: CASH CHECK MONEY ORDER

Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Texas A&M Invitational Golf Tournament was founded in 1998 and has been supported since its inception by the Texas A&M University System Research and Extension Center in Dallas. Coach Gene Stallings '57 invites you to participate in the 9th Annual Texas A&M Golf Tournament, September 11, 2006. The Invitational supports research, education and scholarships within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, at Texas A&M University with the goal of developing grasses and environmentally friendly management systems that have less demand for water and pesticides. The results of Texas A&M's Turfgrass program benefit homeowners, golfers, soccer and football enthusiasts alike by enhancing the quality of life and sustaining the environment through reduced water and pesticide use. Over the past eight years the Invitational has raised more than \$250,000.



Soil & Crop Sciences is an international body of people helping to create a better place to live, exploring ways to feed more people, and searching for better ways to sustain our planet.

Sixty-Day Drought Survival Evaluation

David R. Chalmers, Ph.D. State Turfgrass Extension Specialist, Kurt Steinke, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Turfgrass Ecology and Guy Fipps, Ph.D. Professor and Extension

Agricultural Engineer - Texas A&M University System

Faculty in Soil and Crop Sciences and Agricultural Engineering entered into agreements with the San Antonio Water

Grasses were planted in September 2006 on four inches of native soil over an impermeable plastic barrier to simulate the 4-inch topsoil requirement that is part of the San Antonio Water System 2007 grassing ordinance for new home construction. Grasses were also planted on the native soil without restriction to rooting to represent drought survival on unrestricted soil depth. The establishment period prior to beginning the imposed 60-day drought, which began on July 23rd, was just over ten months.

The research plots were well established at the beginning of the study. Data is being collected weekly for turfgrass quality, density, leaf firing due to moisture stress, and percent green turf cover. Digital images are being taken for each plot for computer analysis to quantify the parameters associated with drought tolerance and recovery. The photograph shows an overview of the plots on August 11th, after 20 days without water. The four-inch soil depth blocks browned off in the second week of the study while it took 20 days for grasses on the native soil depth to start to exhibit differences due to moisture stress. We continue to visit the research site weekly and the second year plot construction (to repeat the study in 2007) is being readied for a September planting at the opposite end of the research site.

As of July 25, the 5,000 square foot rainout shelter was properly operating and able to cover the turf test plots in less than two minutes. Two Campbell Scientific rain gauges are mounted six feet off the ground on both sides of the storage shed. When either rain gauge detects 0.01 inches of rain, the rainout shelter will deploy. ■

For more information on the 60-day drought study and pictures of the rainout shelter construction, please visit the following link. <http://itc.tamu.edu/rainout.php>

In addition to the rainout shelter, the San Antonio South weather station is located nearby to record site-specific atmospheric conditions and the potential evapotranspiration (PET) for the project. This site is also useful for home consumers and turf professionals alike, who are in nearby proximity, to calculate their water requirements. The link to this website is <http://texaset.tamu.edu/>. In the "Select Station" drop box, scroll down to San Antonio South. ■



The 5,000 square foot rainout shelter is able to cover turf test plots in less than two minutes.

System (SAWS) Conservation Program and the Turfgrass Producers of Texas (TPT) for a two-year research project. The project evaluates the sixty-day drought survival of turfgrass species and cultivars in San Antonio. This two-year research project will provide data for a SAWS ordinance that will go into effect January 2007. The ordinance will require new home construction to 1) have at least 4 inches of topsoil in place prior to lawn establishment, and 2) plant grasses that are most likely to survive a 60-day drought. The Turfgrass Producers of Texas (TPT) perceived this as potentially having great impact on the Texas sod industry and made every effort to represent the sod industry's interests to SAWS. Both SAWS and TPT agreed that if the ordinance would recommend drought tolerant grasses, then any list of grasses being able to survive a 60-day drought should be based upon good science

The research is located in San Antonio. Grasses were sodded in replicated 4 by 4 foot plots and include bermudagrass (Celebration; Common; GN-1; Grimes EXP; Premier; TexTurf; TifSport and Tifway (419); St. Augustine grass (Amerishade, Common, Delmar, Floratam, Palmetto, Raleigh, and Sapphire); and Zoysiagrass (Cavalier, El Toro, Emerald, Empire, Jamur, Palisades, Y-2, Zeon and Zorro). Although the SAWS list will accept all buffalograss cultivars without testing, one buffalograss was planted for comparison purposes. TPT members supplied the sod for the study. Texas A&M researchers constructed the test area and oversee test plot management, data collection/analysis and interpretation of results.