

# NTEP NEWSLINE

*A publication of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program*

**July - September 2000**  
**Volume 3, Issue 1**

## **NTEP MOVES TO NEW OFFICE SPACE!**

In mid-November 1999, NTEP moved into newly renovated office space at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. The move allowed us to triple our square footage of office space while gaining improved telephone (digital) and computer facilities, better access to conference facilities and easier offices for visitors to locate. For those of you that visited us in our previous location (basement rooms in the back corner of Building 002), the new location will be refreshing! The improved facilities will certainly enable us to operate more efficiently and give us room for expansion. Our new address is as follows:

Beltsville Agricultural  
Research Center-West  
10300 Baltimore Ave.  
Building 001, Room 245  
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

Our phone, fax and email info remains the same:

Phone (301) 504-5125  
Fax (301) 504-5167  
Email [kmorris@ntep.org](mailto:kmorris@ntep.org)

If you are ever in the DC area, please come by and visit us!!

## **2000 KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS TEST**

### **UPDATE**

Plans have been finalized for the upcoming 2000 National Kentucky Bluegrass Test to be established in 30-35 locations across the US and Canada in fall 2000. Currently, agreements with test locations are being completed and seed companies are preparing seed for shipment to NTEP. An advisory committee (see following) discussed and suggested test locations, management regimes, standard entries, testing protocols and other testing needs. These individuals represented a broad cross-section of public and private concerns and gave NTEP a good basis for decision-making on this trial. The committee met via conference calls in January 2000 and made recommendations that the NTEP Policy Committee considered and passed at its February meeting in New Orleans.

Advisory Committee members:

Dr. Doug Brede,  
Simplot Turf & Hort./  
Jacklin Seed Company

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## **NTEP FUNDING UPDATE**

Again this year, the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) did not include funding for NTEP in its fiscal year 2001 appropriations request. This is the fifth year in a row and the turfgrass industry has been working hard to restore the funding. At press time, both the House and Senate have included and passed funding for NTEP in their Agriculture Appropriations *(continued on page six)*

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## NTEP SITE PROFILE: UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Kentucky is the “Bluegrass State” and the University of Kentucky, being in Lexington, lies in the heart of horse country. Kentucky bluegrass pastures traditionally abound here but bluegrass and other cool-season grasses do not have the easiest conditions for survival. The area lies in that region that turfgrass specialists refer to as the “Transition Zone”, too far north for many of the warm-season grasses to easily survive winter and too far south for many of the cool-season grasses to easily survive summer.

With severe summer and winter stresses, Lexington, Kentucky is an excellent area for NTEP to evaluate the survivability of many grass species. To that end, Dr. A. J. Powell and Dr. David Williams, turfgrass researchers at the University of Kentucky, share the responsibility of managing and evaluating NTEP trials of Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fineleaf fescue, tall fescue, bentgrass, bermudagrass and zoysiagrass.



Golfers practice on the on-site bentgrass trial at Lassing Pointe Golf Course, Florence, KY



Damage from various stresses over the last four years to entries in the 1995 National Kentucky Bluegrass Test (Low Input) at Lexington, KY. Note the improved performance of the plots on the right as compared to the plots on the left.

Drought conditions were severe in Kentucky during the summer of 1999 with water restrictions being instituted as a result. All non-irrigated cool-season grass areas were still dormant in the Lexington area going into October. Irrigating NTEP tests and other experiments during this period was a challenge for the staff but an NTEP site visit in mid-September confirmed the fruits of their efforts. Tests were in good condition, uniform and growing despite difficult circumstances. We appreciate the efforts of all involved!

Another research project evaluated by Drs. Powell and Williams is the on-site bentgrass trial (a cooperative effort between NTEP, USGA, and GCSAA) at Lassing Pointe Golf Course in Florence, KY. The public course, maintained by Jerry Coldirion, hosts this trial on its practice green, which receives significant golfer traffic. Excellent data has been collected thus far from this important location.

## COOPERATOR INFO NOW ON WEB SITE

University Cooperators can now visit our web site ([www.ntep.org](http://www.ntep.org)) to find information pertaining to their involvement in NTEP testing. Click on “Information” and navigate to the “University Cooperator” section to find the following listed:

- NTEP Data Collection format
- Data submission forms in MS Excel 2000
- Memos and information about upcoming tests
- Disease reporting information

Additional information will be added as it is developed. If you have any suggestions on information to post in this sections, please feel free to contact us!!

## CORRECTIONS

The following errors were found in NTEP reports published this year:

In the 1998 National Bentgrass Test (Fairway/Tee), Progress Report 1999, NTEP No. 00-2, Entry #10, “**Tiger**” is a **colonial** bentgrass, not a creeping bentgrass as listed.

Also, in the 1998 National Fineleaf Fescue Test Progress, Report 1999, NTEP No. 00-3, Entry #11, “**Minotaur**”, is a **hard** fescue, not a hard x blue cross, as listed.

We apologize for the errors and any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused our members or sponsor companies.

## NTEP WELCOMES NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Recently, two industry researchers, **Dr. Gwen Stahnke** and **Dr. Tom Voigt**, were named to the NTEP Policy Committee. Dr. Stahnke, a turfgrass extension specialist at Washington State University, was chosen by the Western Regional Coordinating Committee (WRCC-11) to represent their members on the NTEP committee. Dr. Stahnke, who will serve a four-year term, replaces outgoing representative Dr. Tony Koski, Colorado State University. WRCC-11 members are turfgrass researchers from the western U.S.

Dr. Voigt was recently selected to represent the North Central Region (NCR-192) on the NTEP committee. NCR-192 members are university turfgrass specialists from the northern midwestern states. Dr. Voigt, also serving a four-year term, is an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at the University of Illinois. He replaces Dr. Tom Fermanian, also from the University of Illinois.

Special thanks to **Dr. Koski** and **Dr. Fermanian** for their service to NTEP over the last *eight* years. Both have served on the Policy Committee in leadership roles with Dr. Koski serving as Chair and Dr. Fermanian serving as Vice-Chair. We appreciate the excellent guidance and direction they have given NTEP. Thanks again, Drs. Koski and Fermanian, for your dedication to NTEP!

## CURRENT NTEP POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Association Representatives:

*American Seed Trade Association  
(Lawn Seed Division)*  
Mr. Craig Edminster  
Cebeco International Seeds

*Golf Course Superintendents  
Association of America*  
Dr. Jeffrey Nus

*Turfgrass Breeders Association*  
Dr. Donald Floyd  
Pickseed West, Inc.

*Turfgrass Producers International*  
Mr. Ike Thomas, Chair  
Turfgrass America, Inc.

*United States Golf Association  
Green Section*  
Dr. Michael Kenna

### Regional Representatives:

*Northeast*  
Dr. Peter Landschoot, Vice-Chair  
Penn State University

*Southern*  
Dr. Dennis Martin, Secretary  
Oklahoma State University

*North Central*  
Dr. Tom Voigt  
University of Illinois

*Western*  
Dr. Gwen Stahnke  
Washington State University

### Ex-Officio Member:

*NTEP Executive Director*  
Mr. Kevin Morris

## NTEP CONDUCTS WORKSHOPS

In June, NTEP conducted turfgrass evaluation workshops in two locations, Lexington, KY and Corvallis, OR. These workshops, run in conjunction with regional scientific meetings, train NTEP evaluators and others interested in turfgrass evaluations on the intricacies of rating turfgrass. Different philosophies on subjective ratings are discussed as well as strategies to handle problem trials.



Participants in the NTEP Turfgrass Evaluation Workshop at Corvallis, OR rate Kentucky bluegrass plots for quality, color and density

Participants are first asked to rate a set of turfgrass plots, typically for quality, color and density, without training. Training then is conducted using actual plots showing different levels of quality, color, disease, etc. Discussion among participants is encouraged as this leads to greater ratings consistency among those involved. After training, plots are rated again, the data is statistically analyzed and returned to each participant for discussion. These training workshops help gain a better understanding of what constitutes turfgrass quality. Please watch *Newsline* for details on future workshops.

## 2000 KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS TEST

(continued from page one)

Dr. Ken Diesburg,  
Southern Illinois Univ.

Kentucky bluegrass high and low input trials.

Dr. Kenneth Hignight  
Advanta Seeds Pacific

Management levels were determined and placed into three regimes (see box below). The thirty-one trial locations have each been assigned a management schedule to follow for the duration of the trial. In a break from past tests, this trial will not have separate high and low input entries. All entries will be tested under the three management regimes.

Dr. Tony Koski,  
Colorado State Univ.

Dr. Bill Meyer,  
Rutgers University

Dr. Tom Voigt, Univ. of Illinois

The advisory committee recommendations approved by the Policy Committee include:

### Standard entries

(included at no charge)

### Baron, Kenblue, Midnight, Eagleton

Baron and Kenblue were selected because they are well-known and popular varieties. Midnight and Eagleton were chosen because of their top performance in the past NTEP

The advisory committee also divided the trial locations into six regions, Northeast, Transition, Midwest, Plains, Mountain and Pacific. In addition to being grouped together, data will be analyzed regionally, as well as by each management regime.

Six ancillary trials will be established to gather data on the following characteristics: shade (two locations), fairway traffic, necrotic ring spot, sod strength and tolerance of saline irrigation. Please watch future issues of *Newsline* for more details on test locations and entries in this trial.

MANAGEMENT SCHEDULES - 2000 NATIONAL KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS TEST

	Schedule A	Schedule B	Schedule C
Mowing Height	3/4" or less	1 - 2"	2.0 - 3.0"
Nitrogen (lbs./1000 ft <sup>2</sup> /year)	3 - 4 lbs.	3 - 4 lbs.	0 - 2 lbs.
Irrigation	to prevent stress	to prevent dormancy	no irrigation after establishment or to prevent significant stand loss (arid western states only)
Pest management	weed control as needed to prevent significant loss of stand, fungicides and insecticides only to prevent significant stand loss		weed control only to prevent significant stand loss, no fungicides or insecticides

## WEB SITE UPDATE

Additions and improvements continue to be made to the NTEP web site. Please check the site for the latest data reports. New data from bentgrass (putting green and fairway/tee), fineleaf fescue, on-site bentgrass and bermudagrass putting green, bermudagrass, tall fescue, buffalograss, st. augustinegrass, zoysiagrass and Kentucky bluegrass (high and low input) tests are now available. In addition, first-year data will be soon be available from

### **NEW** NTEP Web Site Address

<http://www.ntep.org>

the on-site overseeding bermudagrass test.

We have also changed our menus to make the data pages easier to find and have added a "Search" function to the web site. If you are looking for data on a particular trait or another item on our site, the Search function can be very useful.

We have changed our opening screens to make them more user-friendly and are working on updating the variety and company listing on the site. Many more enhancements are planned so go to the site often to see what is new. Also, we welcome your comments and suggestions for improving the site. Please contact us!!



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NTEP: PART FOUR "TEST SITES AND LOCATIONS"

NTEP "official" tests are evaluated in forty states and five Canadian provinces. In addition, some states have more than one location or two or more tests at the same location. Multiple locations within a state are usually necessary because of considerable climatic differences. Two or more tests at the same location are sometimes planted to evaluate the grasses' response to different management regimes or stresses (i.e., traffic tolerance, drought tolerance, shade tolerance).

Not all states have NTEP test sites although the number of sites is increasing each year. Almost all test sites are located on land owned or leased by a state university. Proximity of the cooperator to the test site affects test management and data collection. Therefore, it is NTEP's preference that its test sites are easily accessible to cooperators. Occasionally, it is advantageous to have test sites on actual use areas (i.e., golf courses, parks, etc.). These sites can contribute much needed information on variety performance under actual use conditions. However, NTEP does not allow its *official* tests to be planted on privately-owned sites. *Official* NTEP tests must be planted on land owned or controlled by federal, state or local governments.

*Commercial* tests are for private cooperators; they may be established and evaluated under the di-

rection of private institutions that have at least one entry in the *commercial* test. Companies that have at least one entry in the official test may request a set of the *commercial* test for evaluation as long as they are (1) members of the Turfgrass Breeders Association (TBA) and (2) allow all their entries in the official test to be included in the *commercial* test. If a company does not want to evaluate the *commercial* test, they can elect not to have their entry(s) included in the *commercial* test.

*Consumer* tests are for university personnel and others that are interested in the performance of commercially available varieties. Data from *commercial* or *consumer* tests is not collected, summarized or reported by NTEP.

Recently, NTEP has entered into a cooperative program with the United States Golf Association (USGA) and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) to evaluate grasses under actual golf course conditions. Funding for the data collection, analysis and summary is split among the three organizations. Bentgrass was established in fall 1997 and bermudagrass was planted in spring 1998 at the locations in Table 2. An overseeding trial of bermudagrass fairways was initiated in fall 1999 at ten locations (see *Newsline*, Vol. 2, Issue 3 on the NTEP web site).

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## ON-SITE OVERSEEDING TRIAL UPDATE

The first year of the On-Site Overseeding of Bermudagrass Fairways Trial, sponsored by USGA, GCSAA and NTEP, is almost complete! Forty-two entries were established at ten golf courses across the southern U.S. in fall 1999 (see article in *Newsline*, Volume 2, Issue 3, Oct. - Dec. 1999) and much data has been collected on establishment, genetic color, quality and percent cover during the fall and spring transition periods.

Nine of the ten trial locations were visited by NTEP personnel and overall, trials were rated from good to excellent. Many trials were sown



Dr. Al Dudeck collects data on percent cover and quality on the entries in the on-site overseeding trial at Grand Cypress Resort, Orlando, FL

in locations on the course where cart traffic and/or divoting were evident. Also, many differences in establishment, color, density, overall quality and transition rate were noted. Trials will be established again in fall 2000 (in the same locations).

The first year's data is now being received by NTEP and should be summarized and published in August, 2000. Check the NTEP web site regularly for the first presentation of this data.

## NTEP FUNDING UPDATE *(continued from page one)*

bills. These bills will be consolidated into one bill before being sent to the President for his signature.

In a related issue, the turfgrass industry has also asked Congress to restore funding for a full-time turfgrass research project within USDA, ARS. As a bit of history, USDA, in cooperation with the United States Golf Association (USGA), initiated some of the first turfgrass research in the U.S. back in the early 1920's. This work was started at the Arlington Turf Gardens, adjacent to the Potomac River in Arlington, VA and continued there until the 1940's, when the Defense Department obtained that land to build the infamous Pentagon. All turfgrass research was then moved to the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center where it continued for almost fifty years. In 1988, turfgrass scientist Jack Murray retired and the only full-time turfgrass research program within USDA was eliminated.

A very important and successful effort remains at the USDA research facility in Tifton, GA. Past efforts of Dr. Glenn Burton led to the development and release of the landmark varieties Tifgreen, Tifdwarf and Tifway bermudagrass. Many other varieties have been released and important discoveries have been made at Tifton by Dr. Burton and the current project leader, Dr. Wayne Hanna. Recently, Dr.

Hanna released new bermudagrasses, Tifsport and TifEagle, along with the improved centipedegrass variety, TifBlair. Unfortunately, however, Drs. Burton and Hanna have only been able to spend a small percentage (about 10%) of their time and resources on turfgrass research as their main emphasis is forage research.

This situation leaves the turfgrass industry with no full-time representation in the federal government, even though many states are increasing their turfgrass research and teaching programs. We feel the time is now for USDA to reestablish a full-time turfgrass program. As an aside, the ornamentals industry is well represented within USDA with approximately thirty employees involved in research at the Beltsville center alone.

If a full-time turfgrass program is initiated within USDA, an individual will be hired to first collect commonly used and new species in native environments and then enhance those grasses for improved drought, cold, disease, insect and traffic tolerance. This individual would improve genetic stocks and conduct genetic experiments with turfgrasses. He or she would also provide scientific support to NTEP. Therefore, the position would deliver enhanced grasses, supporting the public and private plant breeding efforts already in place. If NTEP funding and a new turfgrass scientist within USDA is important to you, please ask your senators/representatives to support funding for these programs in the Agriculture Appropriations bill that is in the hands of a Conference Committee at this time.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NTEP *(continued from page five)*

Advisory committees consisting of members from university researchers, plant breeders, seed company personnel and end-users are established in advance of each scheduled test. One important function of the advisory committee is to recommend *official* test locations. They do this by assessing each geographical area, adaptability of the species in each area and the resources available at each location.

Advisory committees also recommend *ancillary* tests and their locations. *Ancillary* tests evaluate specific characteristics, such as shade or traffic tolerance, sod strength or disease susceptibility. All recommendations made by advisory committees must receive final approval of the NTEP Policy Committee.

*(This is part four of a series of articles that was originally published as a chapter in Turfgrass Cultivars: Breeding and Utilization, by SoftScience, Inc. (Japanese only). The next issue of Newsline will focus on NTEP application procedures and costs).*

*NTEP NEWSLINE* is issued on a quarterly basis. If you have concerns or suggestions, please contact:

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**Natl. Turfgrass**  
**Evaluation Program**  
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**Lincoln, NE 68583**