

United States Golf Association's PESP Strategy

Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction

Water use and pesticide use will face greater restrictions within our industry, and golf courses will have to adapt. More golf courses will have to use poor quality water for irrigation needs and learn how to deal with complex methods to maintain turf quality. The use of least toxic pesticides will be required, and golf courses will have to use biological control methods as they become available, even if they are less efficacious than current pesticides. In addition, wildlife advocates will expect golf courses to provide habitat for wildlife and consider the welfare of wildlife when applying pesticides and modifying plant ecosystems on their properties.

Since the inception of the USGA Green Section in 1920, we have maintained a strong commitment to research to develop better grasses and maintenance techniques for the game of golf. The USGA has spent \$27 million in grants since 1983 on turfgrass environmental research, involving more than 370 projects at 40 universities nationwide. We want science to be used as the foundation to benefit golf, especially in the areas of turfgrass and resource management, sustainable development, and environmental protection. Two primary goals are established for the research program, 1) develop turfgrasses and cultural systems with enhanced stress tolerance and reduced supplemental water requirements, pesticide use and costs, and 2) investigate environmental issues and sustainable resource management of golf courses.

What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?

Our goal is to continue to maintain a robust, viable research funding stream to land grant universities. Our belief is that you must have good science on which to base management recommendations. Not only do the funding grants provide monies for turfgrass improvement, but we also fund the Wildlife Links Program to sponsor scientific research pertaining to wildlife and habitat on golf courses. In addition, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses receives annual grants to promote ecologically sound land management, the conservation of resources on golf courses, and environmental education.

In conjunction with the research results, it is critical that the information get into the hands of practitioners to advance the day-to-day management of golf courses. Through the USGA Turf Advisory Service our agronomists work directly with golf course superintendents and course officials. They are able to take the latest research results and updates and get it into the hands of superintendents to incorporate into their management regimes. These consultations occur one-on-one, through group education meetings, and written communications.

The USGA will continue to support and promote these programs as our contribution to sustainable golf.

Goal 1 and Tactics

Maintain a strong national turfgrass and environmental research program designed to

1. improve turf quality,
2. reduce costs associated with water use, pesticide use, and construction/renovation practices,
3. stimulate other organizations and agencies to match the USGA's funding to build a greater mass of research monies, and
4. enhance golf courses for the benefit of wildlife.

Site visits will be made annually to institutions receiving research grants, ensuring that money will be used to the best advantage of the game of golf. A summary of current research shall be produced and distributed at the Golf Industry Show each year.

We anticipate that the USGA will hold an annual call for proposals to solicit new research projects to investigate the research goals. One portion of the research program will be to work in conjunction with the EPA on the Pesticide Risk Assessment project co-funded with the GCSAA. When completed, golf course superintendents will be able to make better decisions about pesticide use. In addition to these projects, the USGA staff will continue to be active on other environmental committees and projects will allied associations.

Goal 2 and Tactics

Conduct outreach on environmental issues to key stakeholders in all facets of the golf community.

This goal will be achieved by

1. speaking at meetings, conferences, etc.
2. presenting information to college students and other groups via Live Meeting,
3. writing articles for the Green Section Record, the USGA Web site, and other industry publications, and
4. participating on boards or committees of industry organizations, and
5. collaborating with GCSAA, CMAA, PGA, NCGOA, GCBA, golf associations, other industry companies and organizations, and governmental agencies related to the golf/turf industry.

We will produce an annual summary detailing research progress of projects funded through the USGA Turfgrass Environmental Research Program. This summary includes projects funded through the Wildlife Links research program. Another resource is the expansion of the database Turfgrass Environmental Research Online (TERO) published on-line at: <http://usgatero.msu.edu>

The USGA produces six issues of the Green Section Record magazine each year that provide educational content related to golf course maintenance and management issues. Much of the content is written by the Green Section staff in addition to guest articles. Several of the articles focus on research findings and applying the information in the field.

The focus of our 17 regional agronomists is to provide assistance with day-to-day golf course management. Some of this work is done one-on-one with course officials, but a great deal of education is provided through regional seminars, written publications, and presentations at state, regional, and local meetings.