

The Grass is Never Greener on the Other Side

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by Linda McCandless

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GENEVA, NY: Turfgrass entomologists may live above ground, but a lot of their grubby friends don't. Over 70 industry representatives, faculty, graduate students and extension specialists from around the country attended the "Turfgrass-Entomology-2000" conference at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY, April 2-4, to talk about the grubs and other issues facing turf specialists and consumers. The meeting was hosted by Michael G. Villani, professor of entomology at Cornell, and Patricia J. Vittum, associate professor of entomology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

"It was especially gratifying for us to meet at the Experiment Station because the turfgrass entomology community here has been considered one of the focal points of turf entomology since the 1940's through the research efforts of Dr. Gambrell, Dr. Tashiro, and myself," said Villani. The Station continues to be one of a small handful of institutions working on both fundamental and applied aspects of turf entomology.

"This is a national meeting and one of the most useful ones I go to," said Robert L. Crocker, associate professor at Texas A&M. Crocker's current project taping the sounds made underground by white grubs is a potential means of monitoring their numbers. "This meeting is a chance for us all to talk about environmental concerns, pesticides and alternatives to pesticides, to exchange new information on the ecology and biology of pest species, discuss new pests of turf, and talk about the effect of government regulations," he said.

During the meeting, the group also took the opportunity to celebrate the release of the second edition of *Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada*. Retired Cornell professor, Haruo Tashiro, who is considered the dean of American turfgrass entomologists, is the sole author of the first edition. Vittum, Villani and Tashiro are the authors of the second edition. A dinner was held in Dr. Tashiro's honor during the conference.

Seven topics were addressed during informative panel discussions over three days.

In the discussion on biocontrol, moderators Jennifer Grant (NYIPM/Cornell), Albrecht Koppenhofer (Rutgers University), and Parwinder Grewal (Ohio State University) took a look at the practical use of biological control agents for controlling turfgrass pests. The use of biological insecticides, predators, and parasitoids for insect control in turf was also discussed.

In a panel discussion on the transition of IPM from research to implementation, moderator Fred Baxendale (Univ. of Nebraska), Rich Cowles (Conn. Agric. Exp. Sta.), and Gary Couch (NYIPM/Cornell) discussed moving IPM from the classroom to the field to the end user, integrating biocontrol and traditional approaches in a realistic IPM program, and the status of action thresholds and sampling in IPM programs.

In University/Industry/Government/Professional Relationships, moderator Rick Brandenburg (North Carolina State Univ.), Dan Potter (Univ. of Kentucky), and Chris Becker (American Cyanamid) talked about how funding shapes the message, whether roles, goals and responsibilities were clear, and how these relationships affect graduate education now and in the future.

Moderators Chris Williamson (Univ. of Wisconsin), and Wendy Gelerntner (Pace Consulting, San Diego CA) talked about advances in black cutworm management, from traditional and emerging control tactics to action thresholds and laboratory bioassays.

Pheromones and their use as attractants, arrestants and repellants was the focus of the session moderated by Paul Robbins (NYSAES/Cornell), Mike Klein (USDA/ARS.), and Robert Crocker (Texas A&M).

Emerging Environmental Issues, such as the impact of FQPA on turf insect pest management, selective vs. broad spectrum insecticides, homeowner use of products and local laws were addressed in a session moderated by Amy Suggars (TruGreen Chemlawn), David Cox (Novartis), and Gwen Stahnke (Washington State Univ.).

Conference organizers left one of the most interesting topics for last, as David Shetlar (Ohio State Univ.) talked about the emerging insect pests that have been reported in turf over the past year.

Ted Horton, superintendent of the much acclaimed Pebble Beach Golf Course, in Monterey, California, spoke at Tashiro's dinner, and outlined ways in which a golf course/planned community can behave like responsible neighbors. "These include environmental stewardship, community outreach, and a long-range vision to the sustained improvement of the region," he said.

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Note to Editors:

A related story and photos regarding the publication of the second edition of *Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada* is available at

<http://www.nvsaes.cornell.edu/pubs/press/2000/turfgrass.html>

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