

HIGHLIGHTS

NTEP Policy Committee Meeting February 7-8, 2009 New Orleans, LA

NTEP Policy Committee Members Present:

Mr. Duane Klundt, representing OSTA and PSA
Mr. Warren Bell, representing TPI
Dr. Brian Horgan, representing NCERA-192, north central universities
Dr. Jeff Nus, representing USGA
Dr. Bernd Leinauer, representing WERA-11, western universities
Mr. Steve Johnson, representing TBA
Mr. Steve Tubbs, representing ASTA, Lawn Seed division
Dr. Scott Ebdon, representing NE-1025, northeast universities
Dr. Mike Richardson, representing SERA-IEG-25, southern universities
Dr. Clark Throssell, representing GCSAA
Mr. Kevin Morris, NTEP staff

2008 Bentgrass and Fineleaf Fescue trials

NTEP has a policy that each trial must pay for itself, including administrative costs. Entry numbers in the 2008 Bentgrass Putting Green, Bentgrass Fairway/Tee and Fineleaf Fescue were less than anticipated. Therefore, the Policy Committee voted to reduce payments to cooperators (17 locations for each trial) to ensure that each trial will be in compliance with the policy.

Automated Data Collection

A draft document was presented by Mike Richardson, which will be reviewed and discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Visual Field Assessment Document

There was much discussion on the Visual Assessment document. A listening session in Houston identified two schools of thought on the utility of the NTEP rating system. Plant breeders voiced their opinions on key aspects of the document, while many state university researchers and others chimed in with their opinions. As a result, the Committee voted to change the minimally acceptable turfgrass quality value to '5'. Discussion ensued on the OEM vs. CEM evaluation methods. A decision on which method to recommend was tabled until the next meeting.

Drought Tolerance Trial

The Committee discussed this trial, scheduled to be established in fall 2009 at six locations. The proposal needs to be strengthened by the advisory committee, trial locations need to be selected,

and the seed industry needs to be surveyed to gauge their interest in the trial. Also, the advisory committee has discussed the trial parameters with the Alliance for Water Efficiency, a non-profit group working with EPA on their Water Sense™ program.

Traffic Tolerance Trial

An advisory committee of researchers, seed company personnel and sports turf managers have been involved in developing the details of this trial. To be established at 6-8 locations in fall 2009, this trial is receiving support from STMA and their members. Six trial locations: Puyallup, WA, State College, PA, East Lansing, MI, Ames, IA, Riverside, CA and Lexington, KY were chosen for the trial. Two more locations may be added if sufficient entries are projected. NTEP will survey the seed industry in May to gauge their interest in entering cultivars, blends or mixtures of cool-season grasses.

Potential Value Added Trials/Approaches

The Committee brainstormed concerning the declining number of entries in recent NTEP trials. One thought that was discussed included adding more value to NTEP trials and the NTEP program in general. The following ideas were developed to be discussed in the future:

- *Herbicide/Chemical screening on NTEP trials* – this would on be considered for trials during the year after they are completed but before they are removed from field areas. Chemical companies may be interested in paying for this opportunity. Details on how this program might work will be developed for the next meeting.
- *Testing of Blends/Mixtures sold in large retail outlets* – there may be interest in evaluating the performance of the various blends and mixtures that are sold in the ‘Big Box’ and other outlets. More information on this idea will also be presented at the next meeting.
- *Promoting NTEP Brand Value* – Would an ‘NTEP Tested’ label on a bag of seed add value to NTEP testing? Would this be useful to companies that sponsor entries in NTEP? This will be discussed further in June.
- *Low Input Trials* – Possibly regional tests of common turf species or native species would be established. This will be written up and submitted to the Policy Committee for the June meeting.

AMMI Statistical Analysis

Scott Ebdon reported that he visited NTEP offices in November to help them implement the AMMI statistical procedure, which has been tested by NTEP for the last several years. This new procedure improves the accuracy of NTEP data analysis when considering data compiled over several locations. NTEP will be using this procedure on new trials in 2009 (warm-season grasses established in 2007).

Next Policy Committee Meeting

The next meeting will be June 11-12, 2009 in Minneapolis, MN.