

On June 3, 2004 a historic event in the turf industry took place. At the main USDA administration building in Washington, DC, the National Turfgrass Federation, Inc. (parent organization of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program) and the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to agree to cooperate in developing a national turfgrass research program, the National Turfgrass Research Initiative, within ARS. The \$32.4 million Initiative will allow for the hiring of up to 72 turfgrass scientists within ARS and also provide about \$10 million in annual funding to universities for cooperative research with ARS. The MOU formalizes the commitment made by both organizations to the Initiative. Congress will now need to provide the funds to start the first phase of funding for the Initiative. For the official ARS press release, please see the link below:

www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2004/040603.2.htm

More information on the National Turfgrass Research Initiative can be found at www.turfinitiative.org or www.turfresearch.org . If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kevin Morris at kmorris@ntep.org.