

## Reevaluation of T.U.R.F. Funding System

The NTA Research Committee has recently conducted a reevaluation of its current funding system for research. After six years of primarily supporting research technician positions at Oregon State University, WSU-Puyallup, and WSU-Pullman, the committee recommends that the NTA return to a system of funding based on proposals submitted by researchers.

Under the new system, researchers could submit proposals for either a research project, a technician position, or an educational program. The NTA will review the proposals and commit financial support to those projects or technicians whose work is most beneficial for the industry. Multi-year funding would be available at the discretion of the NTA.

The NTA Research Committee has identified several reasons for going back to a proposal-based funding system:

- **Providing Value to Members**

Although the NTA is technically a regional turfgrass association, the reality is that most of its members and T.U.R.F. contributors are in the golf industry. It is essential that the NTA support projects and technicians that provide the most value to this segment of the turfgrass industry (see NTA Self-Evaluation Summary).

- **Flexibility**

Being committed to \$60,000 per year in research technician funding makes it virtually impossible for the NTA to support any new research projects. A proposal-based system will give the NTA more possibilities for funding research that is of practical use and interest to golf course superintendents. It will allow the NTA to explore cooperative funding as a means to support research projects.

Proposal-based funding would also allow the NTA to be more flexible as needs in the industry change. Environmental issues have moved to the forefront in the industry, and it is important for the NTA to be able to contribute to projects that have an environmental focus.

- **Fiscal Responsibility**

The NTA has struggled financially over the last six years. The financial situation is much better now than it has been, but it is still necessary for the NTA to build up a reserve. That has not been possible with a minimum of \$60,000 per year committed to research technicians. The NTA needs to make saving a priority. It is not reasonable for the NTA to commit itself to funding technicians indefinitely given its own financial constraints.

- **T.U.R.F. Fundraising**

The fundraising climate has become increasingly more competitive in the golf industry. The NTA needs to be able to attract new contributors and retain current contributors. The proposal-based system will allow the NTA to fund research that benefits the golf industry, and then use that research to promote T.U.R.F. to potential contributors. The goal is to be able to raise even more money for research than we do now.

The NTA Board approved these recommendations in the summer of 2007.