

**Conduct 'on-site' research with UNL help  
3/9/15**

Did you see a new and interesting product at GIS or other tradeshow this conference season? Are you interested in trying it but are unsure how it will work with your existing management programs? Is it worth the extra cost? The only way to learn how a product or practice works is to test it. Our university research programs evaluate many products, but we don't have the resources to test everything and rarely product combinations. The best way to know if a product is right for you is to test it at your facility. Production Ag researchers call on-site product evaluations "on-farm research." It's a great way for farmers to evaluate products on their farm and under their management.

The turf program at UNL has been conducting similar "on-course" research for years. We have collaborating golf courses from Omaha to Gering and beyond. In addition to being a great resource for our research program, on-site research can provide valuable information to the turfgrass manager that is specific to their facility. For years the turf research community has advocated placement of a plywood board over turf as it is sprayed. This non-treated area allows managers to assess effectiveness of that application. This method does have drawbacks which limits its use, however. Mainly, spray tanks typically contain a mixture of several different products. This makes it difficult to know how an individual product is working.

An alternative would be to set up small scale research plots at your facility. We'd be happy to assist with the experimental design, offer guidance on treatment application procedures, and help with basic data analysis. There are also a bunch of resources available from UNL Crop Watch, <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/farmresearch/>. The amount of extra time and energy required to conduct on-site research typically isn't too substantial. It may be as simple as rating the appearance of the turf plots every week. The insight gained typically outweighs the effort. In some cases, on-site research can even help with golfer/member PR. It looks great to be working with the UNL turf program.

I encourage you to try some "on-farm" research at your facility this year. We're here to help. Stop guessing how a product or practice is performing; discover it for yourself. Feel free to contact me if you are interested.

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Figure 1. On-site winterkill research was conducted at six courses around NE and SD this winter. A big thanks to Awarii Dunes GC, Dakota Dunes GC, Dismal River Club, Minnehaha CC, Monuments and Shadows GC, & Sand Hills GC for their help with this research!



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