



## **ATRF Update Q3 - Oct-Dec 2022**

Happy New Year!

As the ATRF begins its 4th quarter, please accept this update on our foundation activity. Snow mold trials are routine at the research center, where following applications we install snow fences to ensure adequate insulation. We all appreciated the predictable fall, our last snow mold application was perfectly cued with snow falling within the hour! While mother nature gave us a predictable fall, we are experiencing a historic 20yr low snow cover so far this winter. Ski hills and golf courses alike are as concerned, the risk of desiccation and direct low temperature kill is a threat this winter. For open areas like ours at the PTRC, snow fences can be a solution to these challenging winters by creating a snow block - holding snow that would otherwise not accumulate.



After our research plots are put to bed, the ATRF takes a couple months to submit our year end reports to various service contractors. Each fall we travel extensively to support our organizations with outreach lectures and CEU education. This fall we were thankful to have provided over 20hrs of educational lectures and CEU seminars to Canadian Superintendents Association, Saskatchewan Turfgrass Association, Sports Turf Canada, Landscape Alberta's Industry Show, the Sod Growers Commodity Group, and the Alberta Golf Superintendents Association. The next wave of conferences begins in February, looking forward to seeing (and presenting) to many of you at the GCSAA in Orlando Feb 6-10, WCTA Feb 15-17, and CGSA in February. 22-24. For those headed for sunny Orlando, keep an eye out for our Olds College Turf Bowl team competing in their 10th event.

### **Projects invested 2022:**

The ATRF have invested \$29,000 into turfgrass research projects in 2022:

- \$15K Sportsturf Canada - Development of Sports Field Construction Manual
- \$4K Oregon State University Carbon Sequestration Project
- \$4K Laval University "Deep Machine Learning" tool for disease prediction
- \$4K contribution to the CTRF's National Research Membership



### **Submitted for CTRF grant funding 2023:**

Just one project was submitted to the CTRF for funding in 2023, a feasibility study of remote and spraying drones for golf courses, sportsturf, and sod farms. Although many are hesitant to travel this "higher" road, our industry continues to seek solutions for labor shortages, the high cost of capital, and a need to reduce

the costs of maintenance. The “Drone Spraying Feasibility Study”, aims to understand if the spray drones will remain in agriculture, or also may have a place in the turf industry.

### **Varietal Trial Project:**

A new partnership with A-List Sustainable turf will begin in 2023 at the Prairie Turf Research Center at Olds College. Approached by Executive Director Kylee Dickson Ph.D. in October, we agreed to partner on the annual testing center program for low input sustainable turf varieties - much like the NTEP program, tailored to western Canada climate. The PTRC will establish a 36 variety trial program, leveraging data for drought tolerance, optimal wear tolerance, height of cut, and specific uses for all turf sectors. The Alberta Turfgrass Research Foundation will be joining a prestigious cooperative group of American universities including Purdue, Rutgers, Michigan State, Madison-Wisconsin, Virginia Tech and others. [LINK](#)



### **New Projects in 2023**



Another exciting new project includes a commitment by the Sod Growers Commodity group and the City of Calgary, who will be pursuing a drought avoidance trial. The trial evaluates and compares respective drought tolerance of perennials to sod in drought/dormancy avoidance. For the first time, different species will be evaluated in tandem, comparing relative water use required up to the point of dormancy and/or wilt. With 16 different perennial species, 8 sod types,

and 3 ground covers, the three year project has assumed a \$97K commitment among the City of Calgary and Sod Growers Commodity group. Spring 2023 begins our establishment year of this unique applied science trial. To determine the true water needs of Calgary’s “Yard Smart” planting program in a volume per m<sup>2</sup> compared to selected sod & ground cover, we hope to provide definitive data for designing future residential and commercial landscaping infrastructure.

### **Ongoing Services and Diagnostic lab Activity;**

Excellent weather this summer and fall was welcomed by all. Very few diagnoses came into the lab which indicates our turf managers had a relatively stress free fall and closure. On a typical year the diagnostic lab will receive between 30 and 50 turf samples where we evaluate and identify turf disease. Lab rates will remain at \$180/sample in 2023 despite the spike of inflation. Several service contracts remain underway, we’ll take this opportunity to thank Brett Young, Syngenta, and Premier Tech for continuing to work with the ATRF for routine product testing and evaluation.



### **Financial Outlook:**

The Alberta Turfgrass Research Foundation contributes 100% of its profits towards turfgrass research. At the end of our 3rd quarter and Dec 31st of 2019, we are on track to meet the budget, and our non-profit will record a zero profit target. We have exceeded our annual contribution in this fiscal year by \$24K, expecting to meet our 2023 forecast with thank to all our members and contributors through 2022!

Your board of directors aim to represent each sector of the turfgrass industry; Sod growers, Golf, Parks and Recreation, Landscape Designers and Industry suppliers. In order to bring perspective to the most relevant research projects, we meet quarterly to motivate projects and direction for funding. If you are interested in becoming an industry representative, please reach out to Jason, [jpick@oldscollege.ca](mailto:jpick@oldscollege.ca), or 403-556-8243

