

## Let's Talk Aerification And Money

By Dave Doherty

In my last article, "*Testing Greens when they are Healthy is a Must*", a superintendent in the U.S. Gulf Coast area was planning to adjust his aerification program after our ISTRC visit to his course.

The superintendent made the decision to modify his aerification program based on the physical property testing over the last few years and what was found during the ISTRC site visit.

His aerification program involved changing the size of tine and the time of year.

He planned on doing all of his disruptive aerifying [3/4" tines] during his *slow cash flow* time of year. In addition to the larger tines, which are cash flow disruptive, he would add three or four small [3/8 & 1/2"] hollow tine ventings during this same time of year, and use the smaller [less disruptive 1/4" hollow tines] during the playing season, if necessary.

The physical property analysis had shown that the amount of displacement needed to be increased from what had been done during the previous three years. Our research over the last 10-plus years has shown that smaller non-disruptive tines can be one of our most valuable assets in achieving additional displacement without causing loss of cash flow.

During my conversation with this superintendent the first week of March, he said the club had already aerified twice this year during the first two weeks of February [using 3/8's & 1/2" hollow tines] and that the holes had already healed. Both he and management have been extremely happy with the new program, which is based on the *science of physical properties, communication and commonsense*.

The management company's CEO had shared that each time they did *disruptive* aerifying it cost the club around \$100,000. With 16 clubs and with two disruptive aerifications a year that comes to an income loss of \$3,200,000 a year for the company.

Based on science we feel that we can accomplish the displacement needed with one disruptive aerification and three or four non-disruptive aerifications/ventings each year. Eliminating one disruptive aerification per year per course adds **\$1,600,000** to this firm's revenue.

This recession has forced us to become better stewards of the properties entrusted to our keeping. It and subsequent budget reductions have challenged us to produce the same quality of turf and playing conditions with less resources [staff and money] etc.

As an industry we have always been in the forefront of the movement to **preserve and enhance our environment**. The advancement of the science of physical properties has allowed us in most cases to improve the quality of turf and at the same time reduce the amount of chemicals and water used.

We can and must reduce our costs, while improving our playing conditions.

Can it be done? We're doing it everyday!

*Dave Doherty is CEO and founder of the International Sports Turf Research Center, Inc. (ISTRC) and holds three patents regarding the testing of sand and soil-based greens. He can be reached at (913) 706-6635 or via email: [daveistrc@hotmail.com](mailto:daveistrc@hotmail.com)*

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