

ACCOUNT

Meeting between STERF board and Nordic Greenkeepers Associations

A. Kvalbein and P. Melbye

Time and place: 7 February 2008 10 pm to 3.30 am, at Idrettens hus, Brøndby, Copenhagen, DK

Present:

STERF board: Maria Strandberg, Nick Jarvis, SLU, Pål Melby, NGF ,Torben Pedersen, DGU Bruno Hedlund (arrived one hour late)

Greenkeepers:

Jan Ebdrup, Martin Nilsson, John Nielsen DGA

Roy Trydal, Agnar Kvalbein, NGA

Fredrik Seeger, Lars-Göran Bånge (also representing greenkeepers in STERF board), SGA

Absentee:

Trygve S. Aamlid, Bioforsk, due to other urgent mission

Hurdur Torstensson, ISL, due to cancellation of flight

Finish greenkeepers, due to other urgent missions

1. Presentation of STERF

STERF Director Maria Strandberg gave a brief introduction to the Nordic Research Programmer related to golf, and handed out:

Powerpoint presentation

STERF: Research Program and Organisation

STERF: Research and Development Yearbook 2006

She also referred to information which available from new web site: www.sterf.golf.se (not available yet)

2. Information from Greenkeepers Associations

SGA:

SGA plans to reorganize the secretariat during the coming year, and they will be discussing several issues with SGF concerning future allocation of tasks

So far most of the education is done by SGF. NGA is responsible for education of mechanics and a programme for leader's skills.

Most SGA members feel some distance to research. Maybe the SGF consultants should play a more active role in transmitting new knowledge at the ERFA-meeting (which consultants arrange)

The magazine, Greenbladet is read by about 600 people responsible for course management, but we don't know how research news is being adapted through this channel.

SGA has 1800 members

DGA:

Education is relatively new in Denmark and is being offered from the employment authorities. Steps have been made to have greenkeeping recognized as an independent degree, and DGA is optimistic.

A education programme is started within DGA to qualify greenkeepers to head greenkeepers. Now 16 people participate, and this is expected to be a success.

Nordic guide for turfgrass species and varieties has been well received amongst greenkeepers.

DGA feel they have little recourses to participate in research as they would like to, but one week seminars connected give access to research results.

DGA has 600 members and annual turnover DKr 1,5 mill

NGA:

NGA has traditionally presented new research though the annual winter conference, Gresskurs, which normally counts more than 100 attendants. The magazine Gressforum brings also many articles from research. But writing is probably not the best way of communicating this news. Publishing results from research also brings some costs to NGA, because not all sponsor companies accept negative publicity for products.

Education of greenkeeper is now closed down after 8 years due to few students. 100 students has been graduated and about 70 has been certified by the Norwegian Greenkeepers Qualification Committee.

An ongoing project is establishing a special branch within NGA for football groundsmen. We are anxious to see the results of this project.

NGA has 321 members.

We would find it very useful to coordinate the education system on a Nordic level.

3. Involving greenkeepers in Ready-to-use research

Bruno Hedlund, chairman of STERF lined out the history behind this meeting: a vision of bringing the Nordic golf bodies closer though this coordination of research in STERF.

The aim for STERF is to provide golf with a strategic base of knowledge from relevant research. This information should be ready to use not only for the professional greenkeepers, but also for the golf federations and clubs when they need solid arguments when meeting public opinions, media and politicians.

Greenkeepers are important due to their professional attitude and skills.

Bruno led a fruitful discussion from the following headlines about how greenkeepers could contribute building the Nordic base of knowledge:

1. Identifying the problems
2. Production for research results
3. Communicating
4. Education

STERF consider the strategy for communication to be developed by the national golf federations, because golf is organized differently in our countries. But greenkeepers should be active in that process.

Comments from the group:

1. Need for an easy and well known system for reporting problems and ideas for research projects.
2. Greenkeepers could participate by opening part of their course for research. Greenkeepers need some simple guidelines how to improve their "hobby-research" to valuable information. Researchers often need practical input to their work to adjust their experiments, but who to ask?
3. Because Bruno Hedlund and Maria Strandberg is not representing SGF, SGF should point out one representative to the STERF Board.
4. Need for a coordination at Nordic level, fitting into the coming European standards for qualifications

The meeting agreed on:

The associations establish a national group of dedicated greenkeepers to identify the problems and define the need for research. The groups elect one member each to join with STERF scientific committee, which makes recommendations to STERF board.

The national research group can also be asked to give for practical input to ongoing research projects, if a formal reference group is not established as a part of the project.

Next meeting:

Lars-Göran Bonge is responsible to summon for a new meeting with the Nordic Greenkeepers Associations as soon as golf season is over, autumn 2008.