



National Agricultural
Statistics Service

NASS

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Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service

COOPERATING WITH



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Turfgrass Industry

The Turfgrass Industry- Adding a Significant Contribution to Virginia Agriculture and its Economy

Employment in the growing and maintenance of Turfgrass has rapidly expanded totaling over **394,135 jobs** statewide with an annual payroll or **more than \$698 million dollars**. Labor expenses make up more than 45 percent of all annual maintenance expenses.

In 1998, there were **1,368,500 acres of maintained turfgrass** in Virginia, more than any other single agricultural crop grown in the state. Turfgrass acreage increased 66 percent over what was maintained in 1982. This phenomenal growth is expected to increase as citizens continue to value the functional, recreational and aesthetic benefits of turf.

The ten sectors included in this report accounted for nearly **\$2.55 billion in 1998 for labor, contract services, equipment, supplies, new turf establishment and capital improvements**. Annual maintenance expenses rose 439 percent over what was spent in 1982.

Equipment purchased and leased in 1998 by homeowners and turfgrass professionals totaled more than **\$527 million**. The value of turfgrass equipment bought prior to 1998 totaled \$2.44 billion. Turfgrass equipment value in 1998 rose 214 percent over what was owned or leased in 1982.

Home lawns accounted for 714,000 acres of turfgrass in Virginia. There are also 26,400 acres of turf in Virginia's state, regional, and city **park systems** and 290,000 acres were maintained in **state roadsides**.

Sod farms produced 4,800 acres of turfgrass sod in 1998 with sales totaling nearly **\$10.9 million**. These sales were larger than many of Virginia's other agricultural commodities such as barley, potatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, snap beans, sweet corn, and bell peppers.

Golf courses maintained 33,900 acres of turfgrass in 1998, an increase of 40 percent since 1982. These courses employ **3,700 workers** and have annual maintenance expenses of **\$91 million**.

Service companies reported 764,000 active accounts in 1998 and gross receipts totaling more than **\$679 million**. Annual maintenance and equipment expenses totaled nearly **\$339 million**.

Summary of Turfgrass Expenditures - 1998 (thousand dollars)

Sector	Tons Produced		Bearing		Non-Bearing		
	Paid Labor	Value of Unpaid Family Labor /1	Contract Services	Equipment /2	Non-Equipment /3	Capital Improvements	Total Expenditures /6
Home Lawns	55,472	1,203,675	261,713	420,291	636,464	521,365	1,895,305
General Areas	67,772		136,744	28,044	41,465	48,171	322,196
Cemeteries & Churches	11,423		11,557	6,391	6,811	2,122	38,304
Highway & Roadsides	6,725		10,100	2,600	7,773	0	27,198
Airports	465		55	570	137	89	1,316
Parks	9,386		4/	5,773	7,301	23,743	46,203
Schools	14,000		4/	2,118	8,476	4,820	29,414
Golf Courses	56,450		902	18,898	73,117	34,924	184,291
Sod Farms	145		4/	1,502	3,929	103	5,679
TOTAL	221,838	1,203,675	421,071	486,187	785,473	635,337	2,549,906

/1 Used \$5.35 per hour to compute value of unpaid labor.

/2 Includes equipment purchased or leased in 1998.

/3 Includes maintenance expenses, except labor and contract services. Also includes new turf establishment costs and all other expenses not reported separately.

/4 Not asked in survey.

/5 Excludes value of unpaid family labor.

Turfgrass Acreage in Virginia has expanded 65% since 1982

Sector					
	1972	1982	1998	%Increase	
		-Acres-			
Home Lawns	392,908	499,599	714,000	+43	
Roadsides	90,050	196,160	290,000	+48	
General Areas	67,350	46,197	215,000	+365	1/
Cemeteries	13,042	8,561	15,400	+80	2/
Schools	19,037	24,649	43,200	+75	
Golf Courses	19,598	24,263	33,900	+40	
Parks	2,920	8,117	26,400	+225	3/
Churches	4,679	9,280	15,600	+68	
Airports	6,649	7,139	10,200	+43	
Sod Farms	1,690	2,156	4,800	+123	
Total	617,923	826,121	1,368,500	+66	

1/ Not comparable with previous surveys. In 1998, only multiple family dwellings and commercial properties were included.

2/ not comparable with previous surveys. In 1998, family -owned cemeteries were excluded.

3/ Not comparable with previous surveys. In 1972 and 1982, only federal and state park systems were included.