The Mississippi State University “Turf Team” welcomes Dr. Jay McCurdy who joins them on January 1, 2014. Jay will fill the extension position vacated by Dr. Wayne Wells. He will also have a teaching role within the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. Jay grew up in the turfgrass industry. He was raised on a sod farm in Dyer, TN and is familiar with the challenges our industry faces in times of increasing financial and regulatory pressure. Jay is arriving directly from his PhD studies at Auburn University where he researched turfgrass weed control, herbicide resistance, and low maintenance biodiverse turf systems. His resume also includes time as a golf course superintendent in Hong Kong, China and a Masters degree in Plant Sciences from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Jay’s range of experience has led him to this general guiding principle:

*“Reliable turfgrass systems require simple, yet timely and effective management to further their sustainability and economic viability. Management solutions should be science-based and safe for the manager, the environment, and the end user. Implementing these principles requires commitment to the three primary missions of the land-grant system: extension, teaching, and research.”*

Jay believes in extension outreach. His experiences have taught him many things.

“*Among them: to value my own humility and respect the experience of those in the industry; to focus on simple yet elegant research; to maintain visibility within the industry through timely dissemination of results via presentations as well as online, print, and peer-reviewed publications; and that the ultimate purpose of an extension specialist is to remedy the needs of stakeholders.”*

Jay’s teaching appointment will allow him to interact with future industry leaders. As he says, “*Teaching**is an important tenant of any successful career in academia. It is likely the most lasting legacy a professor can contribute to future generations.”* He believes students learn best by actively participating in their chosen discipline through industry involvement complemented by challenging classroom curriculum. He looks forward to placing student within competitive internships throughout Mississippi, the United States, and around the world.

*“Given the chance, I would engage students by promoting discussion and free thought in the classroom. I especially feel that internships provide relevance to the curriculum, ultimately preparing students for the rigors of running a business or contributing to the Mississippi turfgrass industry and broader agricultural sector.”*

Jay is committed to answering scientific questions via field and laboratory experiments. His experience ranges beyond turfgrass management. He has evaluated weed resistance issues in the southeast and hopes to continue collaborations across agronomic disciplines to help attract attention to his program.

Join me in welcoming Jay to Mississippi. He will be an integral part of our organization and industry. I have taken the liberty of listing below a few excerpts from his resume to familiarize you with some of his academic training:

**EDUCATION**

December, 2014; Auburn University; Auburn, AL

**Ph.D., Agronomy and Soils**

Advisor: Dr. Scott McElroy

Dissertation title: *Effects and Sustainability of Legume Inclusion within Low Maintenance Warm-Season Turfgrass Swards*

May, 2008; University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Knoxville, TN

**M.S., Plant Sciences**

Advisor: Dr. Scott McElroy

Thesis title: *Changes in Endogenous Carotenoid Pools of Turf and Weed Species as Affected by Mesotrione and Environmental Conditions*

May, 2006; University of Tennessee, Martin; Martin, TN

**B.S., Plant and Soil Sciences**

Concentration: Turfgrass and Landscape Management