Golf Summit 90: Industry must give ground on environment

BY MARK LESLIE

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Speaking at Golf Summit 90 in Palm Springs, Calif., experts from the Environmental Protection Agency, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, United States Golf Association and American Society of Golf Course Architects agreed obstacles to golf development will get tougher and laws harsher.

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Californians vote no

BY PETER BLAIS

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A golfer drives from the back tee of the 6th hole at Boulder Ridge Country Club in Lake in the Hills, Ill. Bob Lohmann and Fuzzy Zoeller designed the 18-hole course at the private residential golf community. For more on new courses, see pages 14-15.

Americans share knowledge in Europe

BY VERN PUTNEY

Golf Course Europe drew many of the leading names in the American golf industry to Paris in late November to discuss the state of the game in Europe, considered among the most fertile breeding grounds for new golf course development in the world.

"Golf has its roots in Europe, but now is a universal sport," said Dan Maples, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.
If you muck it up some way by doing something stupid out there, not only are the environment and game going to suffer, you’re going to get a community mad at you. And at least with the degree of activism we see starting to develop around hazardous waste sites, for example, you’ll find that as those activists start to network together... it will be more and more difficult to develop good projects.

"So it is more important that you get yourselves organized, develop a code of practice and standards and stick to it."

Crampton said laws affecting pesticides and other chemicals are dealt with in Washington, D.C., and added: "Most of the chemical companies are part of that dialogue, and so should you be, too. If you are, there will be a lot less pseudo-science introduced into the equation and a lot more realistic-looking costs and benefits of a particular product."

He said, "There are friends of the game of golf at EPA. But you have to be willing to get yourself organized to develop a relationship. Otherwise, you can fight history and go through the same kinds of problems the chemical, steel and other industries went through before they realized they had to get with the program."

USGA Green Section National Director James Snow and GCSAA President Gerald Faubel agreed golfers should be taught that "brown is beautiful."

Declaring that golfers' demand for green golf courses is putting "the gun to the head of superintendents," Snow said: "They are being told: ‘Produce a top-notch golf course all the time or risk losing your job.’ An insurance policy is pesticides... Certainly some are using pesticides to give golfers what they are demanding."

"So in the long run we have to educate and change golfers' expectations. We need to install a philosophy among golfers where they will request a reduction in pesticide use in conjunction with a willingness to accept a few weeds and brown areas on their courses."

He said the USGA plans to educate golfers through the mail, on-site visits, seminars and meetings, publications, and a video.

Speaking for superintendents whom USGA President C. Grant Spach described as the "vital ingredient, the delivery system," Faubel said the GCSAA is seeking a first-class, worldwide education for superintendents and is working cooperatively with Congress, EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"We are developing communication tools for our total industry. We have just developed a new video naming all the positive aspects of golf courses in a community," he said.

"We have to live in harmony with nature and not command it through our design and maintenance practices," Snow said.

Snow added that the cutting edge of safety in golf of greens is "getting ridiculous. It is placing extraordinary stress and requiring more inputs of water, pesticides and other attention on green than is necessary."

"This will continue to be fraught with uncertainty, because it is so highly charged locally. Most wetlands issues never get elevated to the EPA in Washington. This adds a major element of inconsistency to the picture that you have to face in developing new courses."

In respect to pesticides and nitrates, Crampton spoke of EPA's ground water survey at Cape Cod, Mass., and its national survey of pesticides in drinking water wells.

While the Cape Cod study found that use of chemicals on golf courses causes little or no ground water contamination, the national survey discovered some well pollution.

He said the EPA estimates that 10 percent of the nation's community drinking water wells and 4 percent of rural drinking water wells have detectable residues of at least one pesticide, but less than 1 percent are at levels of health concern. More than half the nation's wells contain nitrates, with about 1.2 percent of community wells and 2.4 of private wells showing detection above maximum contaminant levels, he said.

"The big surprise was that the most frequently detected pesticide in the survey was a breakdown product of DCPA (Dacthal). The potential significance of the golf industry is that approximately 75 percent of Dacthal's use is on turf," Crampton said.

"While most wells pose no health risks, "at the same time the findings underscore the need to be more diligent in order to avoid more serious problems in the future," he said.

Crampton said because EPA will focus on re-registration of all List A pesticides, "more chemicals are..."
Course development forecast cloudy

By Peter Blais

Tracking golf course development is the purview of National Golf Foundation programs and concerns the entire golf industry, according to a panel of experts assembled at last summer's Palm Springs Summit '90 in Palm Springs, Calif.

"Golf course development affects everyone (in the industry) either directly or indirectly," said Richard Norton, vice president/general manager of National Golf Foundation Consulting.

Progress and Trends

With Baby Boomers lining up to enter the golf market, the limiting factors are not always at fault here. We can even exchange lab personnel... This can help lessen the impact of the major pesticide re-registration review that's under way," said Dr. Michael Hurdzan, former president of the ASCGA, agreed that people in the industry will have to get politically involved.

"There are many people who purport to be environmentalists, who offer their services as environmentalists, who simply do not have the training or background to be effective. We're talking job losses, probably a lot of pseudo-science out there. You have to develop a code of practice that says 'we will not do anything that's detrimental to the environment. The environment and environmentalists are not always at fault here."

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Regardiing wetlands, Crampton said, "The law is pretty certain. If wetlands are involved you can go elsewhere to build your development unless you can prove that another is site is impossible, that environmental problems will be mitigated and you will not harm the existing ecosystem."

Delays in permitting can be skirted if a site's wetlands are considered a project. Yet, with all the discussion about the environment, the very lack of public knowledge may be the biggest obstacle to golf development, Crampton inferred.

"The decision to allow a golf course to be built in a community is an emotional one. It is not scientific... Increasingly, more environmental items are being given to stop courses from being built," he said. "Developers and course architects are going to have to being given to stop courses from being built in a community is an emotional one. It is not scientific... Increasingly, more environmental items are being given to stop courses from being built," he said. "Developers and course architects are going to have to

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dents clopyralid and triclopyr — "really blasts" clover. But he added, "I caution wall-to-wall application of Confront on bentgrass until we study it for another year."

"Divots, places where skunks or golf cars have dug up the turf -- these are places where clover can germinate and re-establish," he said. "Clover seed remains viable in soil for at least 10 years and probably longer. If it gets a foothold in an exposed spot it can then creep out and re-infest the turf."

"The future" When PBI Gordon's Carroll said most non-phenoxys products "are not an economically feasible option right now," "other experts say scientists are concentrating on their research on non-phenoxys, post-emergence products."

There are a number of products that can replace 2,4-D but are a lot more expensive," said Dow Elanco Product Marketing Manager David Marquardt, "but their ingredients are not as toxic."

"Our research and development people are looking primarily at triclopyr and others in that same line of chemistry, with very low rates of application," he said.

Maurer said, "This is true of most companies. Society is telling us they want pounds and pounds of chemicals going out."

He said that, typically, it costs $40 million to $60 million and takes eight to 10 years to develop a new product from the laboratory to the marketplace.

In today's environment we have to do a battery of environmental impact and toxicity studies, and it takes years," he said.

NGF studies show parts of the United States have two many golf courses. Far more have too few. With Baby Boomers lining up to enter the golf market, the limiting factor for golf course demand, Norton said. It's supply.

"If Boomers act like their parents, there's a lot of potential demand for courses out there," the NGF official said.

Existing courses will help satisfy a potential demand the NGF says could almost double from 474 million rounds annually in 1990 to 884 million by the year 2000. But with existing facilities at 85-90 percent of desired capacity, there isn't much room there to meet increased demand, Norton said. That means new courses are needed. But they can't be placed anywhere. They must be built "where they're needed, at the right price, at the right investment and for the right fee," Norton said.

While there is a need for new facilities, Norton said there are four major factors constraining golf course expansion -- global and domestic economies, upward cost pressures, profitability and financing.

New construction is affected by external economic factors. For ex-

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