N.Y. AG attacks industry's chemical use

By Peter Blais

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has labeled as "unsupported by fact, inaccurate and misleading" a report that golf course pesticides are jeopardizing ground water on New York's Long Island.

But state Attorney General Robert Abrams' office stands by its office's report. Spokeswoman Leslie Gersing said the study is not meant as an attack on the golf industry. Instead it should be viewed as a way to begin reducing pesticide use on golf courses, which uses far more of the chemicals than lawn care companies or agriculture, she added.

"We found that golf courses use chemicals with the greatest ability to leach into ground water," she said. "There are ways to use healthier pesticides that are less harmful to ground water."

Information for the report, titled Toxic Fairways: Risking Groundwater Contamination From Pesticides on Long Island Golf Courses, was voluntarily supplied by the association's scholarship programs and additional funds to finance research projects complementing the U.S. Golf Course Superintendents Association's efforts.

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Golfers enjoy the fifth, and newest, municipal course in Rockford, Ill. The course is named after retired businessman Norris Alden, who donated $2 million in land and trees. For more on the Alden course, see page 31.

Oregon extinguishing seed growers' burns

By Bob Spiwak

Field burning of turfgrass in Oregon will be a thing of the past by the turn of the century.

On Aug. 7, on a hill overlooking Willamette Valley, Gov. Barbara Roberts signed into law a measure that will gradually decrease the number of acres of fields that can be burned.

The bill also increases fees growers will pay to burn, and provides $500,000 a year from state coffers to finance research into alternatives to setting the fields afire.

Burning has long been done to remove straw and thatch from turf fields, with an added benefit of limiting diseases. With more than 400,000 acres of turf seed in cultivation in the valley, the smoke produced has long been a source of controversy.

Two decades ago, a move was made to eliminate the fires, but never came to pass. In 1975, a limit of 550,000 acres allowed to be burned was established.

The new law decreased field burning to 180,000 acres this year, down to 40,000 by 1998 and an ultimate ban two years later.

Propane flaming was restricted to 75,000 acres, with a ban on that method after 1998 unless federal and state pollution standards are met.

According to Dave Nelson, executive director of the Oregon Seed Council, burning with propane produces a smaller volume of smoke than open burning, while ridding the fields of crown stubble and disease.

There is a tradeoff. Whereas a hundred acres can be purged in a half hour.

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Mobay appeals $4.75M EPA fine

PHILADELPHIA — A $4.75 million penalty, the largest ever for a new chemical violation, has been assessed against Mobay Corp. of Pittsburgh, for violations of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued administrative complaints against Mobay and fellow major chemical company Allied Colloids, Inc. of Suffolk, Va. The Allied Colloids fine was $2 million.

A Mobay spokesman said the firm contends that it had complied with the law, and plans to appeal.

Penalties against Mobay and Allied Colloids were determined by applying an en-
By Vern Putney

The latest lightning tragedy, electrocution of a spectator at the PGA Championship Crooked Stick Golf Club in Carmel, Ind., underscores the vulnerability of the golf course audience.

Unlike most spectators at major sports events, golf fans are out in the open if not the cold, subject to Nature's whims. Baseball followers can get under cover, quickly and for a price, and football fanatics caught in a sudden storm may get hit with plenty of snow and rain, but are rarely exposed to lightning.

One way to buck this trend is to add options to existing weather tracking equipment, including the extra measure of weather protection.

Storm clouds of criticism hovered for hours over the heads of several manufacturers of lightning detection equipment following the death of a spectator and injury to five others during the first round of the U.S. Open at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.

Unfortunately, 40,000 persons simply couldn't be dispensed with less than 10 minutes. What could they do when there are few trees and practically all-open area?

The most sophisticated man-made device is at Hazeltine mere when Mother Nature breaks up.

A viewer couldn't help but be sympathetic to a broadcast team explaining the intricacies of the field, battery-operated M-01 Intracourse Lightning Detector being used by Dr. Ralph Markson a few seconds before all hell broke loose.

The M-01 senses intracourse lightning activity, that is, lightning from cloud to cloud or within a single cloud. Ninety percent of all lightning is intracourse.

The Atmospheric Potential Probe made by Airborne Research Associates of Weston, Mass., complements the M-01, searching for raised electrical fields penetrated by thunderclouds that can reach up to 10,000 volts per meter.

Installed in a clubhouse and connected to a personal computer with special software, it permits a course official to monitor thunderclouds within five miles. Yellow warnings and red alert levels display information that automatically can trigger alarms and sirens.

Intracourse systems have made many in the USGA feel justified in lightning detection at the 1990 U.S. Open. Times, weather and course conditions change, however.

Suddenly-severe Nature wasn't in the mood.

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### Idaho field burning may be snuffed out, too

By Bob Spinaud

Air Rights You Grass Growers, There Isn't Enough Room In This Town For The Both Of Us!

The fairway flock has few options. Summer weather and its mercurial twists and turns are a fact of life.

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### Ore. field burning banned by end of decade

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field burning, propane flame requires an hour to do five acres.

Nelson estimates a day to rake and bale the straw of burned acreage up to supplying the state's wide propane torch. Growers have questioned the economic feasibility of the propane method.

Burning fees paid to the state have been raised from $3.50 to $10 per acre field-burned, and a dollar an acre levy has been imposed on propane flaming. This has led some growers to consider places such as Alberta, Canada, or New Zealand, as alternative growing sites.

"You always get a few growers who are going to the moon," said Nelson. Headdled that growers, in the main, have decreased reliance on field burning, citing a 60 percent reduction of burning compared to three years ago.

He said that Alberta is "cashing out" for good cash crops, but all the province could produce is boreal red fescue, a grass comparatively coarser in texture than finer fescues such as Chewings, which are close to 100,000 acres in Oregon cultivation. (Annual and perennial ryegrasses are grown over about 200,000 acres, and bent grasses occupy another 15,000 acres.)

New Zealand, Nelson went on, probably has reached its maximum growing potential in the neighborhood of 20,000-30,000 acres.

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Mobay Corp. fined record amount by EPA

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Mobay Corp. is being fined a record amount by the EPA, according to a lawsuit filed by the agency last week. The lawsuit contends that Mobay has failed to comply with a number of provisions of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which are designed to protect human health and the environment. EPA's complaint against Mobay, which is the first of its kind in the history of the agency's enforcement, contains more than 400 counts, alleging that Mobay:• imported chemical substances for chemical purposes that were not on EPA's TSCA inventory; • falsely certified that the import shipments were in compliance with TSCA; • filed incomplete PMNs that failed to include all known trade names and all intended uses for the specified chemical substances; • provided false information to EPA regarding the date certain substances were first imported; • improperly reported certain substances to the TSCA inventory during the initial reporting period; and • submitted inaccurate or unsupported information in required reports. Under TSCA, companies may not manufacture or import chemical substances unless they are reported to and listed on a inventory of chemical substances compiled by EPA. New chemical substances must be reported to EPA 90 days prior to manufacture of import through a pre-manufacture notice notice which includes information on the intended use of the substance, as well as test data related to human health and environmental effects.

Edwin B. Erickson, regional administrator for EPA Region HI, said: "In seeking large penalties for these violations, EPA is sending a message to all chemical manufacturers to abide by the law. When a company violates TSCA rules, it risks exposure of the community and the environment to hazards associated with potentially harmful chemicals."

Lightning plagues golf courses

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lightning detector once again was the deciding factor in suspending play at the recent Kroger Senior Classic in Cincinnati.

The local weather service had told officials to expect rain, but no electricity for Wednesday's ProAm. "We had just started in the afternoon rain and it suddenly became very dark," said Henning.

"The detector was giving us a warning even though we could not see lightning. We decided to suspend play and call players off the course. Fifteen minutes later, the rain opened. Not only did it rain very hard, but there was cloud-to-ground lightning. Fortunately, everybody was safely under shelter."

Ken Lindsay, PGA of America director, noted that in a tourney at Jackson, Miss., "Airborne equipment helped us to determine the rain time to suspend play and evacuate the golfers. Eighteen minutes later, everyone was off the course. Twenty-five minutes later, the lightning began and it started to rain even harder."

While this Airborne-linked action takes care of the players, 40,000 watchers face a dilemma. How and where do you flee to safety?

Castle Pines GC in Castle Rock, Colo., bought French-made "Preventor S6" conductors as added lightning safeguards for World-Agars International tour tournament. Used mainly on tall buildings and nuclear power plants, each is said to shield a 200-yard radius of a designated safety zone.

These terminals, about the size of a football and costing $3,500 each, have a self-contained electrical device that generates ions under storm conditions, creating a path for the lightning to follow and thus directing it away from sensitive areas.

Lightning claimed 106 lives in the United States last year. Now, if the M-01, the Probe and the S6 work as well as the Patriot missile, mankind may have taken a small step to combat, or at least deflect, unforgiving and capricious Nature.

Ore. burning

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hope is that after years of uncertainty about legislative action, it will "...give a known direction, and get rid of the political squabbles..." associated with the issue of burning.

The future will require new methods as well as different cultivars. For sanitation of fields, experimental raking and thatching are being tried which may take the debris out of the plant crowns. Chemical methods are being investigated. And there are huge field vacuum cleaners, complete with brushes and fans which are another hopeful alternative to burning. Propane burning will not be banned, provided emissions meet federal "PM-10" standards. These require that particulate matter 10 microns or less not exceed 20 pounds per acre, based on an annual average of 24-hour periods of measurement.

It appears that, despite the cries of some doomsayers, the law will not kill the Oregon seed industry.