Ransomes America shakes up turf divisions; Aal steps down

By Peter Blais

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Ransomes America Corp. has eliminated divisions and dismissed 100 employees in an effort to streamline operations, cut costs and become more competitive in the turf care industry.

The new organization has been reduced to two divisions, consumer and commercial. Ransomes formerly had four divisions — consumer, commercial international, commercial American and property (overseeing the company's vast, worldwide land holdings).

Leading the list of dismissed upper management personnel is former Ransomes America President Irv Aal, who left Jan. 27. Aal took over Ransomes America in 1991 shortly after Britain-based Ransomes Plc. purchased Cushman Inc. and its affiliates.

“[Irv] recognized the company’s performance hadn't been as good as we’d hoped,” said Commercial Group Chief Executive Peter G. Wilson.

“We’re not reducing manufacturing capacity,” assured Wilson, whose group includes the golf market. “We’ve simply reduced tiers of management in order to become more efficient.”

Wilson said the streamlined company is still the only manufacturer of turf equipment with assembly facilities on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The commercial group's four plants are located in England, Lincoln, Neb., Johnson Creek, Wis., and Orville, Ohio.

The new arrangement allows those facilities to share engineering expertise and marketing strategy, with Wilson orchestrating turf divisions.

Continued on page 62

Another Asian market beckons

By Peter Blais

WORCESTER, Mass.— EcoScience Corp. has announced it has entered into a long-term collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) in Beijing, People's Republic of China (PRC), to develop and commercialize microbial agents and beneficial insects for pest control.

The CAAS is a governmental agency that sets national agricultural policies. It supports the Ministry of Agriculture in formulating national and international agricultural policies. The collaboration includes an initial technical development and screening program (Phase I) and the formation of a PRC-based joint venture operating company (Phase II). It is anticipated that the joint venture will be operational before the end of the first quarter 1995. The

Continued on page 63

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

The Short Cut greens mower is a motorless, hand-powered product designed to handle smaller jobs — like putting greens — and enjoy at golf courses and larger operations. For more information, contact Dick Moultrie at 509-355-4560. For more new products, see page 65.

Continued on page 63

INDIANAPOLIS — Three former DowElanco executives have formed a new company, SePro Corp., which will market four former DowElanco products to several specialized markets, including the golf course market.

Indianapolis-based SePro—which formally began operations Jan. 3, 1994—has purchased from DowElanco A Rest plant growth regulator, Sonar aquatic herbicide, and Pipron, a fungicide for the control of powdery mildew in greenhouses. SePro has also acquired exclusive distribution rights to market Rubigan EC fungicide.

“We realize the importance of these specialized markets and understand that, at times, large chemical manufacturers have been unable to focus on those niche markets outside the mainstream of their core business,” said William Culpepper, SePro CEO and former director of DowElanco-trio forms SePro Corp.

Continued on page 60
Rohm & Haas acquires rights to Dimension

Continued from page 1

terms were disclosed.
The bid procedure was essentially blind, as suitors lined up and made Monsanto their best offers.
"We had a high level of confidence, but we didn't know who we had won until they called and said so," explained Bob Gordon, product manager for Turf & Ornamental at Rohm and Haas.
"It's an excellent fit for us. That's why we pursued it so aggressively. We're very excited."

Dimension is currently sold commercially for weed control in turf markets in the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia. Golf course superintendents use it for both post-emergent and pre-emergent control of crabgrass, goosegrass, foxtail, spurge and oxalis.

Other products involved in the sale include thiazydryl, a new herbicide used for control of weeds in orchards and olive groves in Spain and for tree fruit and forestry uses in South Africa; and thifluzamide, a fungicide in development for use in a number of crops.

"Monsanto's difficult decision to divest itself of this chemistry is based on the desire to focus on products that have technical fits in key agricultural crops such as corn, soybeans and wheat," said Budzynski.
"Monsanto will develop these agricultural products aggressively in the turf and ornamental markets, as well as where they have a technical fit."

Gordon explained the acquisition of Dimension is merely one aspect of a strategic purchase.
"We didn't just buy a turf product," he said. "We bought a chemistry which has many other applications."

"We don't compete in the row crop marketplace. We're niche marketeers. We go after specialty markets. That's why I believe this is such a good fit for Rohm and Haas."

Ransomes shake-up

Continued from page 59

any joint efforts. The staff reduction program has been underway since Dec. 1, Wilson said. Several new people have joined the firm, including Ransomes PLC Chairman of the Board John Clements, former chairman of several large British firms.

Continued from page 59

Scotts funds S&R internship program

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Students from around the United States will have an opportunity to earn while they learn, thanks to a new program created by a partnership between the O.M. Scott & Sons Co. and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Scholarship & Research Fund.

The O.M. Scotts Scholarship Program will offer students summer internships with Scotts corporate and field sales staff and on golf courses throughout the country. Students who successfully complete their internships will then be eligible for special Scotts/GCSAA collegiate scholarships.

To fund the program, Scotts will provide grants totaling more than $100,000 over the next three years. The gift is the largest ever made to GCSAA S&R by a corporation.

To find out more about the new O.M. Scotts Scholarship Program call GCSAA's development department at 913/841-2240.

Complete details and applications will be available in early spring.

SCOTTS TO SPONSOR TRADITION

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — The Scotts Company has been named the presenting sponsor of The Tradition, one of the four major tournaments on the Senior PGA Tour. The Tradition will be held March 26-April 3, and will be broadcast nationally on ESPN. While it has long supplied product to golf course superintendents, Scotts also sees the dual opportunity to address the home lawn-care market. "We view this as an excellent opportunity to reach millions of consumers during spring buying season," explained Theodore J. Host, Scotts president and CEO.