**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.

**ASIAN GOLF COURSE REPORT**

Vietnam Vice Premier Nguyen Khach christens the country's first driving range, at King's Island Golf Resort on Lake Dong Mo, outside Hanoi.

**Another Asian market beckons**

**By PETER BLAIS**

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — The lifting of a United States trade embargo will have little immediate impact on golf development here, but will make more investment capital available in the future, according to Asia-Pacific golf industry analysts, government officials and lenders.

Under a plan passed by the U.S. Congress in February, President Bill Clinton has eliminated virtually all restrictions on American developers doing business in Vietnam.

"Clinton's action will have very little effect on golf directly," said Al Furber of DowElanco. "It will hopefully be more investment, which will hopefully be more investment, which will have a side effect for the leisure industry."...

**NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH**

The Short-Cut greens mower is a motorless, hand-push product designed to handle smaller jobs — like putting greens — and is seen in for motorized mowers in the shop. The Short-Cut was developed by the owners of Lowell Greens, a company which installs custom greens for home and commercial use. For more information, contact Dick Moultrie at 509-355-4560.
Natl' Lime & Stone enters golf market

FINDLAY, Ohio — National Lime & Stone Co. (NLSC) is entering the pelletized limestone market with its new ECOpHIRST product line, targeted at the professional turf and commercial markets.

ECOpHIRST Pelletized Limestone — available in regular or mini-sized dolomitic or calcium pellets — is designed to neutralize soil acidity and increase soil nutrient availability. It’s pelletized for easy blending with fertilizer for simultaneous application, according to Dave Ashworth, NLSC’s newly appointed manager of ECOpHIRST Agricultural products.

“The finer grinding aids dissipation and, therefore, plants react faster,” said Ashworth.

In a related move, Ashworth appointed Brad Gwirtz regional sales representative for ECOpHIRST products. His sales responsibilities include accounts in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

For more information, contact Ashworth or Gwirtz at 419-422-4341.

Sustane Corp. merger finalized

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The merger of Bio Grounds Keeper Inc. and Sustane Corp., previously announced in September 1993, is a done deal. The new entity — known as Sustane Corp. and based here in Bloomington — manufactures organic fertilizers and anti-thatch products for the turf, lawn & garden, and agricultural industries.

The merger has created a few change in titles. David Henderson, managing general partner of Founding Partners II, a Minneapolis venture capital fund that participated in the financing arrangements, has been named president and chief executive officer. Donald Brattain, partner with Founding Partners II, has become chairman of the company.

According to Craig Holden, president and founder of Sustane in 1987, he executive vice president and chief operations officer.

Thomas Duffey, president of Bio Grounds Keeper, serves as executive vice president of sales, marketing and administration.

Birth of SePro

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"This is largely due to the growing registration and production costs for low-volume products... At SePro, we recognize the value of these niche markets and the importance of serving them..."

According to Dick Holzschu, general manager of DowElanco Specialty Products, the new move allowed DowElanco to focus on other challenges in the chemical business.

"It’s a win-win situation for both us and SePro," said Holzschu. "This move lets DowElanco reallocate resources internally and concentrate on major opportunities..."

Culpepper, a 28-year veteran of LESCO, has joined SePro's new sales and marketing team for Turf and Ornamental Products, is Roger Storey.

Also coming over from DowElanco, where he most recently served as product marketing manager for Turf and Ornamental Products, is Dick Ashworth, president and chief executive officer. He will serve as vice president of operations at SePro.

Amplification

DowElanco officials have taken issue with wording contained in an article which appeared in the January edition of Golf Course News ("Chemical firms join forces in search for profit"). The story stated that DowElanco had "off loaded a portion of its specialty chemical division," according to Product Marketing Manager Allen Yust, DowElanco had merely given exclusive marketing rights for Culpepper plant growth regulator to LESCO. He added that DowElanco has also divested its interest in three more products — Pipron, A-Rest and Rubigan — all of which are now handled by SePRO Corp.