EPA-friendly
Feds seek green industry cooperation with new pesticide stewardship venture

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Truce!
Soil labs & USGA settle differences

EPA puts product approval on fast track?
By MARK LESLIE
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division, created in November to speed up registration of biological pesticides, is accomplishing the task, according to spokesmen Anne Leslie. A chemist and turf industry liaison with the EPA, Leslie said that in the division's first three months, three new active ingredients were registered and registration actions had been completed on three others. Historically, it has taken three to five years to approve an active ingredient for use, she said.

Owners buy into group purchasing
By PETER BLAIS
CHARLESTON, S.C. — Insurance, electric bunker rakes and used turf equipment are the latest products to find their way onto the ever-growing list of discounted service and merchandise available through the National Golf Course Owners Association Smart Buy Program.

Brauer to assume ASGCA presidency
By MARK LESLIE
SCOTLAND — When the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) meets here in April on the eve of its 50th anniversary, a week of travel and meetings will be climaxed with the passing of the gavel to a new president — Jeffrey Brauer. Already, Brauer's sights are set on April 1996 when the society holds its golden anniversary at the hallowed greens and fairways of Pinehurst, N.C. Questioned about his objectives, the president of GolfScapes in Arlington, Texas, answered: "I will begin to play..."
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moved into the '50s there were
turf development. As we
early 70s we were in an era
where the challenge I think was
of declining budgets and empha-
into a golden era in the '80s
possibly could. Our challenges
to spend as much money as you
that I see right now is, relatively
speaking, we are in an era of

Q&A: Brauer keys on ASGCA's 50th

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effects on design in terms of
'minimalism.' Certainly the envi-
mental challenges are strong
and probably getting stronger
every day. Other things are the
usage of land, the overall regula-
tory constraints, water usage and
some of the other technology that
will work in partnership with su-
perintendents and the USGA to
keep the game going.

GCN: What technologies do
you mean?

JB: Drought-tolerant plants,
designing golf courses with less
acreage of turf, and at the same
time accommodating the ever-
lengthening tee-shot.

GCN: What are your expecta-
tions traveling with the ASGCA
to Scotland at the end of April?

JB: The most exciting thing
for me is that John Colligan and
Eric Nelson on my staff have
achieved associate membership
in ASGCA and will be going: I've
shown them in pictures these
great concepts, but I'd like them
to see it first-hand. If you look at
the design of golf courses after
the architects took our first trip
to Scotland in '80 there was a
significant impact on design. You
could see it on almost
everybody's work. It changed.
The variety changed. The trend
toward faster courses came out.

GCN: Has that effect faded?

JB: If you analyze it, it kept up.
But so many people were doing
it that it melded toward the
middle. We all came back really
talking about the origins of golf,
about how different it was.

What are the plans for
the ASGCA's 50th?

JB: Plans are still developing.
We want to return to Pinehurst,
if nothing else to recreate the
first photo [of members] out on
the veranda. The last time we
were there, we played the
Pinehurst courses, but not Mid
Green, neither Pines, which are
pretty much untouched
[Donald] Ross courses. We will
try to play those untouched Ross
courses on this occasion.

GCN: Turning attention to
course construction, what's your
take on expenditures today?
Is more money spent?

JB: The most exciting thing
why the cost of building
a golf course is still rising. First,
environmental mitigation costs
are rising at an alarming rate. It
is not uncommon for over five
miles of silt fence to be required
in the construction of a new golf
course. I understand from Bill
Heath that the Caves Valley
Course in Maryland required
nearly $1 million of environmen-
tal protection, most of it in the
form of erosion control. Less
than ten years ago, I built some
fairly nice golf courses for just
over $1 million.
The clients desire more sophis-
tication, despite the pressure to
offset other rising costs. Irriga-
tion systems run by computer,
lighting protection (due to law-
suits), and wall to wall irrigation
even in the most benign climates,
have made irrigation a more sig-
ificant cost component of the golf
course. Some changes are also
reflective of environmental de-
mands. For example, at Giants
Ridge we were required to avoid
use of low pressure heads, which
were thought by the environmen-
talists more likely to wash pesticides off leaf blades. As
it happens, the lower pressure heads
tend to be the lower cost heads.

Environmentalists and superin-
tendents alike want more precise
control of the irrigation system.
The design response for this is
closer spacing of heads and more
flexible control, both of which
drive up cost. In addition, it is now
common for dual heads to be
placed on the perimeter of the
greens. One head will be used
to spray on the green (in the south,
Bentgrass, which has varying pre-
cipitation needs than the sur-
rounding Bermudagrass) and a
second to spray the banks. In some
cases, more part circles are re-
quired due to the use of effluent
water, or the desire to protect cer-
tain native areas from a change
in environmental habitat.

Lastly, as of late 1994, the fi-
nancing crunch seems to have
cased somewhat for golf courses.
While this is good news in gen-
eral, the golf course supply and
construction industry, which has
held back price increases over
the last several years due to eco-
nomic conditions, has seized the
opportunity to raise prices. For
example, the price of most plas-
tic pipe materials has risen four
times this year alone.

GCN: Minimalism. Has it, or
has it not returned to golf course
design?

JB: Minimalism has returned
to a degree, but not as much as
several magazine articles will
have you believe, and not neces-
sarily for the reasons they would
have you believe. While it is true
that course design critics prob-
hly do influence the thinking of
most architects, it is also true
that speed of construction, envi-
Environmental concerns and the ever-present desire for a "new look" among better architects are the primary causes of the new wave of golf course design. I sense that everyone is aware that the best way to create "green" and we are all realizing once again that the best way to create a unique "sense of place." This is the first lesson any aspiring landscape architect learns in Landscape Design 101.

Minimalism has been an important feature in my work, primarily as an assistant in cost control. On a good site, nothing drives up the cost of golf course construction faster than stripping topsoil, shaping the fairway to create man-made rolls and knobs, and re-topsoiling that fairway. Of course, erosion-control measures must be implemented for all areas graded. Typically, the cost of such fairway shaping can run between $2,000 and $4,000 per acre, resulting in a total increase in golf course construction costs of $200,000 to $400,000. On rolling sites, I have never believed that it is worth the money to grade in the fairway unless a change of grade will create a visual link to the target areas, level the fairway to provide a fair stance or lie, or to create drainage that would not otherwise exist where the site is so flat.

"The specs called for tee to green bengtgrass. I compared and saw how much better Southshore was. Now in less than a year, these greens are the best in the area."

Bob DiPalma, Superintendent
Minisceongo Golf Club
Pomona, New York

"Look at these greens! They were seeded in September 1993 and all 18 holes were opened for play July 1, 1994. Now, less than one year later, the greens are the best in the entire area, bar none! Even with the severe winter and extremely hot summer we had, they came through beautifully. No disease problems and we used very little chemical. We're already seeing 12" roots on most of these greens. The trees and fairways are coming in nicely despite some washout problems. By next season this entire course is going to be top-notch. Eric is so pleased with what Southshore has done here, he's already considering it for his next project,"

— Bob DiPalma.