Fertilizer business
Here's the poop:

...the fertilizer industry, where big things are happening. To wit:

* Pursell Industries of Sylacauga, Ala., entered into an alliance with J.R. Simplot of Pocatello, Idaho, to manufacture fertilizers for the turfgrass industry. Pursell, best known for its controlled-release product, Polyon, has supplied fertilizers to Simplot for 10 years. Simplot is known for its phosphate fertilizers marketed under the Best and Apex labels, aimed somewhat to the turf industry, but mostly to agricultural and retail markets. This new agreement makes both firms national players, giving them strength to compete with newly rejuvenated...

* Vigoro Corp., which has overhauled its ParEx brand line with new management, manufacturing arrangements, public stock, and marketing emphasis. "I think you're being kind if you say there has been a decline in the impact of ParEx over the past two years," said Ron Gagne, Vigoro's new vice president and general manager of the firm's Professional Products Unit. "We have created a separate division with separate manufacturing facilities for the turf business. That explains some of the reorganization." Gagne comes to Vigoro from competitor O.M. Scott. Indeed, Gagne reports to another former Scott employee, Senior Vice President Ken Holbrook, prompting a few industry folks to worry about the new regime, "O.M. Vigoro." Alas, Vigoro has also hired a new chief financial officer for its Pro unit, Jay Ferguson, and he's not from Marysville, Ohio. He's a 20-year veteran of General Electric. Look for Vigoro to debut its new slow-release nitrogen nutrient, IBDU, early next year. Also look for the firm to concentrate on selling to the management companies with larger course portfolios.

* When it comes to models, you could do worse than O.M. Scott, the fertilizer giant which continues to capitalize on its double brand equity. Consumers know Scott, as do superintendents. Scott's title sponsorship of the Senior PGA Tour's L.A. Championship.

Continued on page 51

SCHOOL POLICY?

To the editor:

I certainly enjoyed reading the articles about porous ceramics in the September issue. It is most gratifying to know that the industry is beginning to take notice. I believe we are seeing extremely important advance in soils management and root-zone engineering. I would like to offer some clarification in a few areas that were addressed in the article, if I may.

I think it is important to state that porous ceramics and organics are not necessarily in competition with each other. They may, in fact, be complementary in many instances. In some sands, porous ceramics may be all that is required. In others, it is desirable to include both types of materials in order to achieve the most ideal balances. The goal is to create root-zone mixes that has excellent water-holding characteristics while maintaining very high percolation rates and to facilitate drainage while helping to accomplish those objectives. Porous ceramics offer the advantage of being permanent, while organics offer the advantage of change due to biodegradation.

Another comment centered around the differences between "calcite and clay" vs. diatomaceous earths. The proper term is calcined clay; also calcined diatomic earth. The calcining process is the firing process, which renders the materials physically and chemically stable. By definition, calcining is heating a material up to, but just short of, the melting point. The amount of time and the exact temperatures are extremely important to properly calcine a material. Profile is double-calcinable, while Isolite and Asia are calcined once. Also, because of the difference in base materials, Profile will increase CEC, while the diatomaceous products will not. Soil pH is also affected differently, due to pH differentials between the base materials.

Lastly, I would like to comment on Ed Seay's statement regarding the elimination of rock and tile. This is certainly a possibility with increased flexibility and with the promotion of grassing this type of decision.

We should remember, however, that some of the most outstanding golf courses in the country have no sub-surface drainage. They exist on some of the fine old golf courses and were built long before the USGA concept was introduced. The Denver Country Club, where I was once the superintendent, is a prime example.

It is my hope that the industry will not look at porous ceramics, per se, as simply a new product in the marketplace. The emerging technology surrounding these materials indicates that they are understood and intelligently applied in the golf and sport turf industries. The result will be better golf, safer fields and more environmentally sound turf.

Lou Haines, director
Technical Operations
Soils Management

Golf Course News

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Golf Course News

12 November 1995

FROM THE EDITOR

Living long and prospering in the golf course universe

...he Star Ship Enterprise, going places where no one has ever gone before." Fast-forward that film, please, to the new series. Yes. That's it: "Golf Ship Enterprise, taking golf to places it has never gone before." Can you hear the Fred originator Gene Roddenberry now? I can... almost. Because it is true: Even this late in history, citizens of Golf Nation are taking the game to parts of this earth where not even those Scots of old had introduced it.

No, not everyone in the world plays golf. In fact, not everyone even knows what is the world golf. In some places folks are just happy if they know what food is; their minds are otherwise occupied with this game. For them, it could be far more than a game. It could be food in their mouths.

In the Dominican Republic, golf course architect Pete Dye is the Man Who Could Be King. The Teeth of the Dog and Links courses he designed at Casa del Campo, built in 1971 and 1976, have brought employment to many. Jobs, jobs, jobs. Jobs as sport, sport, sport. We just need a few more crewmen aboard Golf Ship Enterprise.

There were heroes of the past who hot- rodded the game with visions of golf courses on topographical maps rolled under their arms. Their numbers are legion, and some of them are legendary. They took golf wherever they could find the land and the equipment to build a few holes. Fromuster Mackenzie and C.H. Allison to Peter Thomson and Robert Trent Jones Sr.

But they didn't reach every nook and cranny. And today the heroes of this tradition may even come from the masses — the dedicated masses of people who want to share the experience golf has given them with others.

Let's take a quick look at one such person, my Maine main example: Dr. Steve Polackwich. An 80-year-old retired ophthalmologist, former Maine Amateur and three-time New England Senior champion, who traveled this summer to Poland — one of those countries where his golf mission was twofold: visit friends and talk about golf's possibilities in that country with Juliusz Sochan, deputy director of the Department of Interna-

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Letters

POROUS CERAMIC FOLLOW-UP

To the editor:

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Technical Operations
Soils Management

Continued on page 51

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Jamestown Island was accessible only by ferry, and the Depression era didn’t help. A new nine-to-18-hole course was opened for private play in 1926 — very private play. In fact, Tillinghast designed Beaver Tail for one man, owner Audley Clarke, on whose estate it was built. Shortly after he christened the course, however, Clarke started leasing it to various management companies, who could never make it profitable. At that time, Jamestown Island was accessible only by ferry, and the Depression era didn’t help matters. Nine holes were eventually sold for housing and, when Clarke died in the 1940s, the situation went from bad to worse, culminating in the complete abandonment of the course operation in 1947.

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