

Scotts acquires exclusive rights to gene gun

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Company has announced a strategic alliance giving it exclusive marketing rights to turfgrass that has been genetically engineered using various technologies, including the biolistic process.

The biolistic process employs a "gene gun" to deliver DNA into turfgrass. Using this technology, Scotts will develop turfgrass varieties with improved characteristics such as resistance to disease, insects, and herbicides. The results will make it easier for turf managers and homeowners to grow healthy, thick turf with less need for insecticides, fungicides, and other treatments.

Scotts and Sanford Scientific, Inc. (SSI) reached a collaborative agreement this past year. John Sanford, Ph.D., principal of the Waterloo, N.Y.-based company, was principal inventor of the gene gun. SSI will work with Scotts to engineer improved turfgrass varieties. Scotts has been preparing a dedicated genetic engineering laboratory to conduct the program at the Dwight G. Scott Research Center here in Marysville. The program will be directed by Lisa Lee, Ph.D., who conducted research on genetic engineering of turfgrasses at the Center for Agricultural Molecular Biology, Cook College, Rutgers University before joining Scotts in December.

Initial work on the program at Scotts was directed by Virgil D. Meier, Ph.D., a 25-year Scotts veteran and one of the country's leading experts in turfgrass variety development. Meier received Scotts' annual John A. Long Excellence in research Award for his contributions in establishing the company's genetic engineering program.

"We are extremely excited about using this technology for genetic engineering of turfgrasses," said John Neal, Ph.D., vice president, Scotts Research and Development. "Employing genetic engineering in our program will allow our researchers to add desirable traits as well as speed up the process of turfgrass variety development."

With genetic engineering, it should take about half of the time previously required to create and market genetically improved turfgrass. This accelerated process should take only about seven years, compared to the 12 to 15 years previously required. In addition to introducing new traits into the plant varieties, this timetable also includes testing the new traits, followed by seed production for commercial release.

In her research at Rutgers University, Lee used the gene gun to conduct non-commercial genetic engineering of bentgrass. The Rutgers research team was successful in making a bentgrass variety resistant to a

widely used weed control product. That makes it possible to selectively control broadleaf weeds and grassy weeds, or even another turfgrass, without affecting the desirable turfgrass.

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Virgil D. Meier, Ph.D., of The Scotts Co. recently received the John A. Long Excellence in Research Award.

The peer-nominated award was presented at Scotts' annual research and Development awards banquet. The award acknowledges Meier's outstanding contributions in the field of turfgrass variety development,

including his work in establishing the company's genetic engineering program.

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Carlos Reyes and Charles Wise received scholarships from the O.M. Scott/Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Scholarship Program. They were each awarded \$2,500. As part of the scholarship program and selection process both Reyes and Wise served as 1995 summer interns with Scotts.

Reyes, majoring in golf course management at the University

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Luper joins Golf Ventures sales team

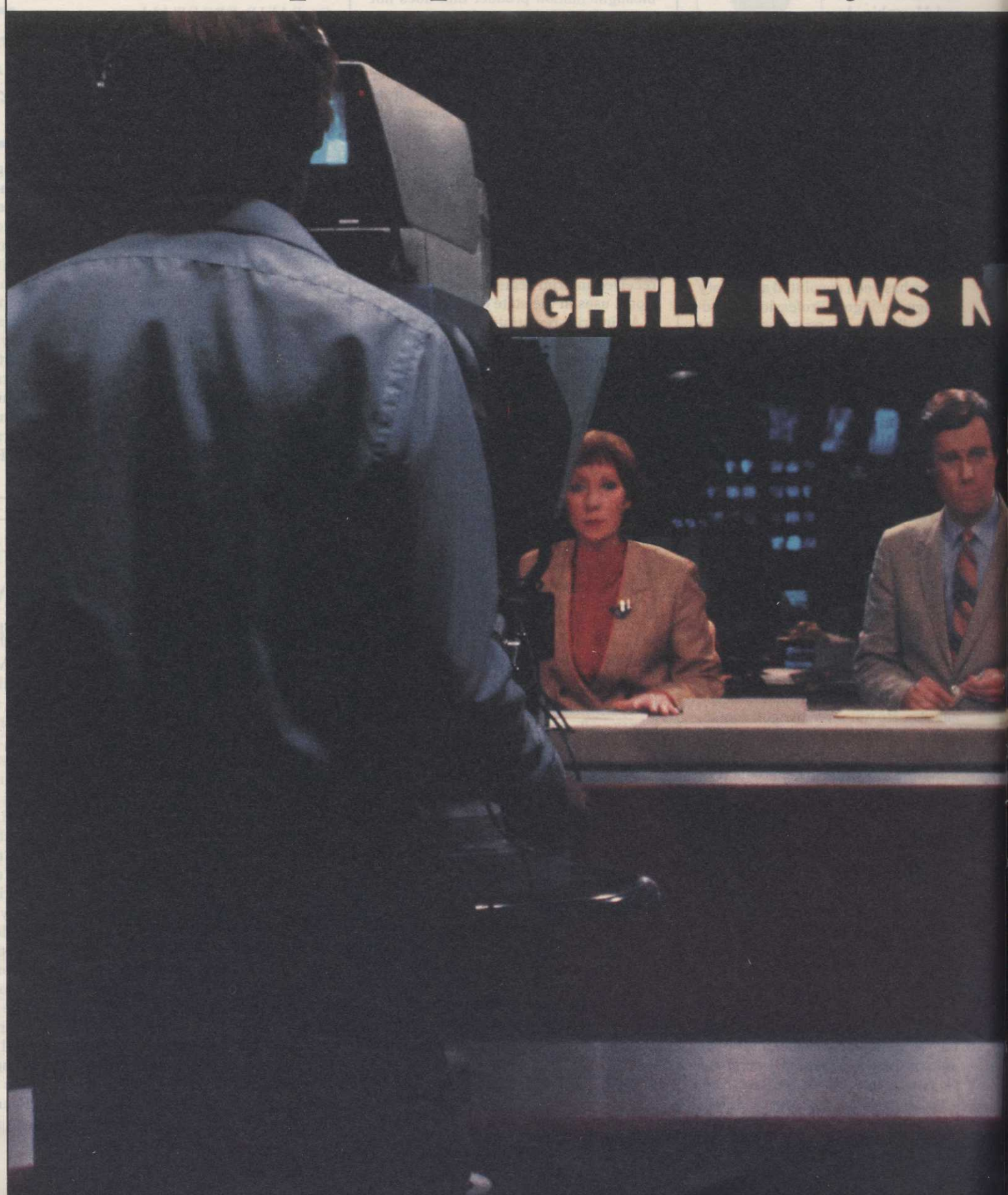
LAKELAND, Fla. — John Luper has joined Golf Ventures, Inc. as territory manager for West Central Florida, where he will supply superintendents in a four-county area with agronomic advice and turf products from the Golf Ventures line.

A Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Luper was most recently employed as southeast sales manager for GreenTurf International, exclusive distributor for the water quality product pHair-

way. However, Luper has held a number of golf course positions. From 1983-90, he worked at Bardmoor Country Club in Largo, progressing from golf course superintendent to general manager.

At Bardmoor he was also responsible for overseeing construction of the Tom Fazio-designed Bayou Club course. Prior to joining Bardmoor, Luper was superintendent at a pair of Clearwater country clubs, Countryside and Clearwater.

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Strong first-half numbers turned in by Ransomes

LINCOLN, Neb. — Ransomes plc has released its half-year sales and profit results for fiscal 1996. The firm also announced that it has resumed dividend payments on common shares.

Halfway through fiscal 1996 (as of March 30), Ransomes' operating profit increased 8.1 percent to \$17.4. Pre-tax profits advanced from \$7.4 million to \$9.9 million over this time last year. Other highlights of the report include:

- An interim dividend was declared .05 cent per common share, the first payment of its kind since 1991. The dividend, which will be paid on Sept. 2, was promised as part of a rights issue announced last December.

- Turnover is up 10.1 percent, or \$14 million, at \$153 million (1995: \$139 million).

- Dividend payments on convertible preferred shares are up to date.

- Earnings per share increased from one to three cents.

"I am pleased to report that the confidence shown by our shareholders in supporting the rights issue in January has been justified by a continued and substantial improvement in both sales and profits," said John Clement, chairman of Ransomes plc. "This has been achieved despite a slow start to the grass-cutting season in Europe and North America because of the exceptionally long winter."

Scotts scholarships

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of Maryland's Institute of Applied Agriculture, is employed at Indian Springs Country Club. He has received scholarships from the Maryland Turf Council and is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

A graduate of Oklahoma State University, Wise holds a degree in horticulture/turf management. Currently with the Shawnee Country Club grounds crew, he was previously a four-year member of the Firelake Golf Course grounds crew. Wise is a member of GCSAA and the Oklahoma Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Agronomy Club.

The scholarship committee has selected five finalists for the 1996 program. Each individual will complete a summer internship and will be considered for a scholarship later in the year.

The finalists are Carrie Mescher of Iowa State University, Donna Catrambone of Lake City Community College, Whitney Elmore of Western Kentucky University, Terry Pasadore of University of the Pacific, and Christopher Carter of Colorado State University.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Century Rain Aid names sales reps for Carolinas & Florida

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The building boom in this area has prompted Century Rain Aid, one of the largest U.S. distributors of landscape irrigation equipment, to add David Bush of Pineville as area outside sales representative.

Bush will work out of Century's branch at 4205 Golf Acres Dr., Charlotte, under the direction of Branch Walt Summerville. Reachable at 704-398-7344, Bush will call on professional irrigation contractors within a 50- to 75-mile radius of Charlotte. Century also has a branch in Raleigh. The branch distributes Hunter, Hardie, Vista and some 60 more of the most prominent equipment lines in landscape

irrigation, fountains and landscape lighting. It is also the exclusive distributor of Legacy Golf irrigation systems for western North Carolina and much of South Carolina.

In other Century news, David Lukach has been named the firm's first full-time golf irrigation sales rep covering central Florida. Lukach will work from the Century branch here, located at 485 West 27th St.

Lukach can be reached by phone at 407-839-3771; or by pager at 407-899-2542. A second generation irrigation contractor, Lukach owned his own firm here, County Irrigation & Landscape Lighting, Inc. for six years.

VERMEER NAMES NEW PRODUCT DEMONSTRATOR

PELLA, Iowa — Nathan Wallace has been named tree product demonstrator for Vermeer Manufacturing Co. In his new capacity, Wallace will perform tree equipment demonstrations for dealers and customers around the country. Prior to joining Vermeer Manufacturing as a product demonstrator supervising the planning and presentation of tree products, Wallace served nearly 10 years as an officer in the U.S. Army. Wallace can be reached by calling 1-800-829-0051.



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