Lesco acquires Pro-Lawn

C LEVELAND — Lesco, Inc. has signed an asset purchase agreement to acquire the Pro-Lawn Division of Agway, Inc. for an undisclosed amount of cash.

Pro-Lawn is the largest regional supplier of professional turf care products serving the golf course, landscape, commercial and lawn care market in the Northeast. The division markets fertilizer, turf seed, turf protection and other specialty products in 16 states to a broad array of customers. Annual sales revenue is approximately $50 million.

One of the key benefits of the acquisition is the freedom to serve the professional turfgrass industry with a larger array of products.

The soon-to-be-completed facility is planned to be a Southeast Region office here at 206 Langston Mill Court, Raleigh, N.C. 27606. Phone: 919-387-4704.

Beebe will manage agrochemical monitoring studies, environmental site assessments, and hazardous materials remediation projects.

BARENBURG HIRES SALES MANAGER

TANGENT, Ore. — Barenbrug USA has named John Farrell sales manager at its Garfield-Williamson Division's professional products division. In his new position, Farrell will handle sales to the professional turfgrass industry at Garfield-Williamson’s Eastern region, while also fulfilling selected responsibilities nationally for Barenbrug USA. Farrell spent the last 10 years with Lotta Seed Co. as a golf turf specialist, serving golf course superintendents, and golfers and builders.

BEEBE TO COORDINATE JACKLIN PR

Brandie E. Beebe, a lifelong resident of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, has joined Jacklin Seed Co. Beebe will be working in the Marketing Department, coordinating the advertising and public relations for Jacklin Seed Company and the newly formed division, Jacklin Golf. Beebe, a 1994 graduate of the University of Idaho, received a bachelor of science degree in public relations.

BILLMAN JOINS ZAJAC STAFF

ALBANY, Ore. — Michael Billman has joined Zajac Performance Seeds as warehouse supervisor for the company’s office/warehouse here. The soon-to-be-completed facility is situated on a 33-acre site, and is equipped with advanced mixing equipment and an extensive truck-handling capability for prompt, efficient shipments. The warehouse will serve as the consolidation point for the company’s proprietary turf grasses and mixtures as well as for common grasses and forages.

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Behold, the Water Hog, an Irish invention that removes surface water at a rate of 6,000 gallons per hour. Now manufactured in the U.S. by Star Transportation of Englewood, Colo., the ride-on Hog, powered with an 11-hp Honda engine, retails for $11,500, while the Hog Jr., a lightweight, walk-behind model, goes for $795. Both machines use the principal of sponge-covered, kick-up drums which act as wheels. The sponges, which are non-invasive to the terrain, feed water to a drum which collects and stores the water, which is wheeled away and emptied.

The ride-on model, as you can see, simply shoots the water away—up to 50 feet away. For more information on the Water Hog, call Star at 800-495-4429. For more new products, see page 66.

Fish-based fertilizer shows real promise

By JOHN SCHMITZ

Cold ocean waters off the Oregon coast are the principal source of a new organic fertilizer formulated to grow healthier greens, tees and fairways. So far, the product is showing good promise during testing at a nine-hole course on the Long Beach Peninsula in the state of Washington.

BioGro (9-3-5), which is made by fish feeds producer Bioproducts of Warrenton, Ore., consists mainly of the organic by-products of fish-processing plants along the Oregon coast. Rob Gould of Pacific Organics in Salem, Ore., who consulted with Bioproducts, said the natural, slow-release nutrients it contains actually serve to increase the health of soil microbes, which in turn leads to healthier grass plants.

There’s certainly nothing new about

While keeping an ear to the trade show floor

By HAL PHILLIPS

ORLANDO — The GCSAA show has traditionally been an effective platform from which companies introduce new products and technology. Though its secret weapon is still winding its way through the offices of the Environmental Protection Agency, Rhone-Poulenc made a big splash in Orlando with its new mole cricket control system, Chipco Choice. Experimental Use Permits have been approved in six Southeastern states where, by all accounts, Choice has met with rave reviews. "Super-“Super-“Superindi-"Superintendents and researchers are telling us they’ve never seen anything like it," said R-P’s Andy Seckinger. The active ingredient in Choice, fipronil, attacks the mole cricket nervous system. However, according to R-P researchers, fipronil has minimal effect on mammalian nervous systems and, thus, might have broader applications in the pest-control market. Seckinger said Choice should be approved for superintendent use sometime this spring, hinting that it would have been okayed by now if Democrats and Republicans hadn’t shut down the government three times since November.

There’s nothing like a good ol’ fashioned catfight, especially when it’s played out between respected companies on a trade show floor. In Orlando, the best example pitted Rain Bird and Toro Irrigation in a battle over which company supplies irrigation systems to the Golf Digest Top 10. Rain Bird claims five of the top 10, prompting Toro to claim seven of the top 10, prompting Toro to claim seven of the top 10, prompting Toro to claim seven of the top 10, prompting Toro to claim seven of the top 10.
An ear to the floor...

Continued from page 59

100. Competition breeds this type of one-upmanship, but it also breeds studied innovation; and no segment of the golf industry has benefited more from a spirited technological free-for-all than irrigation. Case in point: While celebrating the 20th anniversary of its computerized Maxi system this year, Rain Bird trotted out its Maxi for Windows Stratus, the company’s second generation of Windows-based software designed for superintendents with little or no computer experience. Toro countered with TouchNet, an irrigation control system operated via fingers on a computer screen, as opposed to key strokes. Obviously, this innovation is also aimed at the technologically challenged superintendent.

In November, on the heels of Pursell Industries’ alliance with J.R. Simplot and Vigoro Corp., Kubota’s recommitment to golf, I opined on the increasingly crowded, competitive fertilizer industry. This dog-eat-dog situation was highlighted in Orlando, where all players fought for the attention of superintendents while trotting out the market’s new product line: slow-release technology. Vigoro jumped into the game with V-Cote, which joins The Scotts Company’s Poly-S, Pursell’s Polyon, and ESN! from United Horticultural Supply. However, the prime-time players — which also include Milorganite, Lebanon Seaboard, Vicksburg Chemical and The Andersons — would be well advised to peer over their collective shoulder at Terra, golf’s sleeping giant. Once an ag-only firm with $3 billion in sales, Terra has set its considerable sights on golf by aggressively gobbling up distributorships in the Midwest and Southeast. While most of Terra’s 400-plus distributors are primarily agricultural, the firm plans to convert them all into golf/ag dual outlets. Further, by its own admission, Terra products target the public-access market, i.e. the mid- to smaller-budget courses that now comprise two-thirds of the nation’s golf course stock. Terra has developed a fairly complete line of chemical and, yes, fertilizer products, making the Sioux City, Iowa-based firm one to watch...

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Rohm & Haas, makers of Dimension pre-emergent herbicide, have taken a gamble by cutting recommended application rates when the product is applied to fertilizer. If the weather is good this year, they’ll likely come out smelling like a rose as performance will probably not dip commensurate with the application rate. This will also place pressure on competitors to follow suit by similarly cutting application rates, and profits. However, if the weather is less than cooperative, conditions more favorable to disease — the lower rate could backfire on Rohm & Haas. Key to applying pre-emergent material to fertilizer is pellet size: The smaller the pellet, the more evenly the chemical is spread. With a lower application rate, it’s even more vital that superintendents test out the smaller pellet. Stay tuned.