Asian market remains strong

Remember all those old jokes about what you get when you cross a rhinoceros with a banana tree, or a giraffe with a blowfish? Well, we're there, at that very point in man's history when he can play creator (lower case). My favorite for instance is that geneticists actually have inserted firefly genes into tobacco to give us that suave day-glow effect.

This is not the Orwellian, if we were discussing something other than turfgrass, this could get scary. Thankfully, I think our friends at the turfgrass labs won't be causing the trouble for mankind that may possibly be coming out of the hospital and animal laboratories of the future. There is no Dr. Frankenstein here, methinks; and, therefore, the golf industry can rest easy.

A whole new turf world has opened up — propelled into the future by extraordinary scientific advancements borrowed from other fields of endeavor.

You want herbicide-resistant bentgrass? It exists, is growing in the fields, and will be on the market before you know it. You want drought-tolerant turf? Salt-tolerant? You can hold your breath for the wait — we'll get them that soon. With funding, it will take three to five years maximum, says Dr. Marian Sticken of the University of Texas (see story page 15). And that is but a mere millisecond in the normal timeframe of turfgrass development.

How important is this new wave of scientific research in what Dr. Sticklen calls the Green Revolution? She tells this story of another revolution from the 1830s: The mayor of New York writes to President Jackson, saying, "Dear Mr. President: There is a new revolution called the railroad industry. It has enormous vehicles called trains that move at the breakneck speed of 15 miles per hour. Not only do they make fire in farms, but they frighten cattle and women and children.

"Mr. Jackson did many stupid things," says Dr. Sticklen, "but, in any case, he finally decided to say, "I don't want the market before you know it."

By J. Barry Mothes in the March issue of Golf Course News and couldn't agree more. Walking is one of the fundamental traditions of the game of golf, and it's inconceivable that more golf course developers, owners and operators can't figure out a way to maintain cart revenues while enhancing customer service.

Last spring, Greenwood Development Corporation announced that a new restrictive walking policy on all three of our courses at Palmetto Dunes — the Robert Trent Jones, George Fazio and Arthur Hills — as well as our Robert Cupp course at Palmetto Hall Plantation. Our guests simply pay one fee, whether they choose a cart or walk, so there's no lost cart revenue. No one has complained about the one-price, ride-or-walk policy. In fact, they appreciate the fact that instead of saying "no" to walking we can now say "yes" anytime.

Speed is not the issue; I agree with you that the pace would be quicker, because it's usually the better player that wants to walk. As for volume, our courses that allow cart use have walking play of less than 160,000 rounds a year. The key is customer service...and preserving the traditions of this great game.

Breit Barton, Director Advertising and P.R. Greenwood Development Corp.
Hilton Head, S.C.

In terms of genetic advances the future is definitely now

Letters

IN DEFENSE OF ALGAE FANS

To the editor:

I am confident that superintendents will continue to feel comfortable in sharing ideas in your "On the Green" column. Freely comparing maintenance practices in the interest of motivating and sharing ideas is the best superintendental practice in the industry. I have read many articles, including some in your publication, that have been very helpful. Some, of course, can not be used on every golf course, or in every situation.

Mr. Ray Kimmel of Parkwood Research, however, hopefully realizes the importance of open discussion of new ideas, knowing they may not work in every application. Mr. Kimmel, therefore, was out of line to comment that the use of a fan to help combat algae problems (GCN, April, page 10). In giving Mr. Kimmel the benefit of the doubt, I would have assumed that he knows the fans work in many instances — and what an opportunity for some free advertising!

The McLoughlin Group
Quail Ridge Golf Course
Memphis, Tenn.

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10

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