Chemical exhibitors pump up the volume

Making noise is perhaps the primary objective of exhibitors at the annual Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSSA) show. By that I mean creating some buzz on the show floor. You know what I'm saying: People talking about, making noise regarding a particular company's products.

Without a doubt, chemical companies made the most noise in Las Vegas. This industry sector was busy on several different fronts, from new product releases, to division realignments, to distribution relationships.

Who made the most noise? It's a toss-up between Novartis — the newly merged entity comprising what were formerly Ciba and Sandoz — and Zeneca, which rolled out its highly anticipated new broad-spectrum fungicide, Heritage.

Ciba and Sandoz — and Zeneca, which rolled out its highly anticipated new broad-spectrum fungicide, Heritage. The Heritage buzz was enormous (see stories page 59).

The Heritage buzz was enormous (see stories page 59). Testing has shown the product to be effective on just about everything except dollar spot. Indeed, the prospects are so good for Heritage that companies were lining up to distribute it on Zeneca's behalf. Not just anyone, mind you. But The Scotts Company, United Horticultural Supply, Lesco, Terra, Wilbur-Ellis and others. Clearly, this is a product to watch.

Another new product creating a stir, though it has yet to receive Environmental Protection Agency approval, is Mach2 — an insecticidefungicide spray between American Cyanamid Co. and Rohm and Haas (GCNFebruary '97). Principals in the joint venture, called RohMid, held a news conference in Las Vegas to herald the coming of Mach2, which has tested very well in the field. When EPA signs off sometime this spring, Mach2 will go directly to market.

Novartis made noise by distilling the message behind its mega-merger, which was announced last spring and finalized Jan. 1. While Novartis is Latin for “new skills,” the company brings a plethora of existing skills to bear. At a news conference held in Las Vegas, Novartis formally introduced its new Head of Specialty Products, Thomas McGowan; its Director of Turf & Ornamental Products, former Sandoz employee Gene Hinte; its National Sales Manager, former Ciba employee Jose Milan; and its new Market Manager for Golf, Jerry Scotts Company, United Horticultural Supply, Lesco, Terra, Wilbur-Ellis and others. Clearly, this is a product to watch.

Letters

A SPIKELESS BUT HARDLY TOOTHLESS REBUTTAL

To the editor:

Mr. Chris's comments on the spikeless revolution taking place now in golf (“They wouldn’t let me wear my spikes, your honor”, GCN January '97) are both uneducated and that of the ambivalence, characteristics that are lurking everywhere now.

Apparently he hasn’t read about the gentleman member of a country club that just recently was awarded a large amount of money because he tripped with metal spikes and fell off the front walk of the clubhouse after consuming eight drinks. Why are cart paths finished rough or grooved? It is so golfers with metal spikes don’t slip.

Furthermore, courses are not mandating “softspikes”, they are mandating that metal spikes may not be worn. I think he is right in his second paragraph where he stated that he is “getting old,” meaning he is unwilling to change. Of the centuries that golf has been played, spikes have only been around since the 1950s. And if he is so old he should check with an orthopedic doctor, who would probably recommend that spikeless golf shoes will save his feet and ankles in the future.

Novartis made noise by distilling the message behind its mega-merger, which was announced last spring and finalized Jan. 1. While Novartis is Latin for “new skills,” the company brings a plethora of existing skills to bear. At a news conference held in Las Vegas, Novartis formally introduced its new Head of Specialty Products, Thomas McGowan; its Director of Turf & Ornamental Products, former Sandoz employee Gene Hinte; its National Sales Manager, former Ciba employee Jose Milan; and its new Market Manager for Golf, Jerry

Continued on page 10

WE NEED ANOTHER DEAD-BALL ERA

We need another dead-ball era

Hump. Thump. Thump. The drum beats escalate, calling for a special less-juiced golf ball for the Tour. It is a call that has ramifications for all in the golf industry — a call that would protect the integrity of our older golf courses,” according Dennis Griffiths, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Was it Jack Nicklaus or someone else who began the cry for a special Tour golf ball — one that reduces the distance, say, 10 percent? At Pinehurst last spring Nicklaus declared that a 10-percent reduction in distance would return a course to the way it was meant to be played.

Now others are banging the drum. It has become a hue and cry. In Las Vegas in February the beat went on:

- Ben Crenshaw: “I'm close to agreeing with Jack. We've got to do something with the golf ball... We're at a critical red line about a lot of things with equipment.”

- Griffiths: “We can look at USGA statistics all day long. But if you look at black-and-white, real-world examples of what's going on, I don't think the statistics support the way the Tour is playing.”

Griffiths lamented the fact that Tour pros oftentimes need not hit their mid-irons because they can hit today's ball so much farther than was possible when the grand old classic golf courses were designed.

“Take a par-4 from 1970 on which you hit a driver-7 iron, or even driver-wedge,” he said. “In 1970 the average Tour player hit the driver around 240 yards and the wedge 115 yards. That's 375 yards. Today, they hit a driver an average 280 yards. Put a wedge in their hands at 135 yards, and you're at 415. How do we put a medium iron in these guys' hands? You have to have a 500-yard hole.”

Historically, a shot of under 100 yards demanded finesse — determining how much of a swing to take. It was one of the toughest shots in golf.

But in 1997, pros are carrying three or four wedges, pared off so that they can be played with a full swing from 80 to 135 yards out. A Georgia guy, Griffiths used a NASCAR analogy. Here it goes:

“Car racing and golf are very similar. They require ultimate concentration. The first thing you have to do is beat the track you're on, or the course you're on. The second thing is to beat your competitor. In 1969, about 175 miles per hour won the pole position at Daytona. That speed climbed — very much like our [golf] cars.”

Mary P. Knaggs
knap0002@gold.tc.uwm.edu.

Congratulations to your mag and the wonderful new Website on the Internet. As a golf course superintendant in Fulton Ill., at Fulton Country Club, it is a pleasure to read such a fine magazine on the goings on in the golf course business.

In reading your latest mag I found your new website and was thoroughly impressed with layout and content. Keep up the good work and remember to think young!!!

A. Simmons
Fulton Ill.
asismon@sanay.com

I'm a golf course superintendant, just new to the web. I'm totally impressed with the job you did on the Golf Course News web site! As the newspaper itself exceeded it! As only the web can! I added it to my "favorite places" folder... Good timing. Nice addition to a good publication!

Great job, keep up the good work.

John Cummings, CGCS
Charleston, W.Va.

JCBHCTurf@aol.com
No, It Won't Solve All Of Your Turf Problems.

the same high levels of protection against Rhizoctonia and Pythium you've come to expect from CHIPCO ALETTE, plus cost-effectiveness that no other turf stress management option can offer. And, CHIPCO ALETTE SIGNATURE not only helps your turf stay more vigorous and healthy, but it actually enhances its appearance, too. This year, let new CHIPCO ALETTE SIGNATURE fungicide take some of the stress out of your life. Because, goodness knows, you've got enough problems to worry about.

CONTAINS PATENTED TECHNOLOGY

Daconil Ultrex is a registered trademark of ISK Biosciences. As with any chemical, always read and follow instructions on the label before using. For additional product information, please call 1-800-334-9745. © 1997 Rhône-Poulenc Ag Company.