Audubon jumps into course development

By Mark Leslie

SEIKIRK, N.Y. — When Audubon International (AI) entered the world of golf, no one would have dreamed of the heights it is about to reach — no one except, perhaps, President Ron Dodson. AI has created the Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust to accept "real property interest" that will be used to facilitate development of Audubon golf courses as environmental research and demonstration centers.

"We asked, 'Who better to implement our beliefs than us?" said Dodson. "One of the criticisms we've had about our Cooperative Sanctuary System is that we have no assurance that our...

Continued on page 17

One-stop equipment deals on rise

By M. Levans

BLOOMINGTON, Minn./LINCOLN, Neb. — As the industry sees more courses gathering under management umbrellas, the number of exclusive provider deals between management companies and manufacturers — including equipment, equipment maintenance and ancillary services — appears to be following suit.

In the past month, both the Toro Co. and Ransomes America Corp. have added substantial new agreements to their growing list of exclusive arrangements.

Toro cut a five-year deal with Whitbread/Marriott

Continued on page 48

Public Golf Forum sessions take shape

By Mark Leslie

OAK BROOK HILLS, Ill. — Pioneering technology for quickly “mapping” a golf course to optimize irrigation and chemical and fertilizer applications is one of several topics in a full package of maintenance sessions planned for the 1997 Public Golf Forum here, Oct. 27-28.

Golf course superintendents around the country, taking advantage of special registration offers, are expected to attend the forum at Oak Brook Hills Resort for public-access golf course superintendents, owners, operators and developers.

Along with a half-day session on "Biological Controls: Current Status and Future Prospects," led by Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornell University, they...
Toro, Ransomes

Continued from page 1

Hotels to be exclusive provider of turf equipment and maintenance for Whitbread's eight existing courses and two currently in development. Ransomes will be the exclusive manufacturer and maintainer for the eight courses under the watchful eye of Myrtle Beach National Co.

Toro already has agreements on the books with Canadian Pacific Hotel Group and Valderrama, the home of this month's Ryder Cup matches. For Ransomes, Myrtle Beach is its fifth contract.

From an administrative standpoint, the deals seem to make sense. From the management side, companies get a total package which helps cash flow and the company's yearly budgeting process. From the manufacturer's side, the company can easily track equipment maintenance records, allowing the equipment maker to take a piece of equipment back and keep it in circulation with more confidence.

Outside the financial benefits, the deals create "a mutually beneficial comfort level" between the two parties, said Peter Whurr, director of marketing at Ransomes. "When you put a deal together, the customer benefits because he knows he now has a direct route into the company. It's more of a business partnership, even though he's still the customer. We can now say, 'If you want some help, just call us.'"

"It allows us to put together a total package," said Don Masini, managing director of international sales at Toro. "Following that, it's easier for us to follow up and keep in contact with the customer in order to meet all their needs," Masini said.

According to Masini, the exclusive provider deal was an American concept that is growing, and will continue to snowball, overseas, where management group ownership is skyrocketing.

"Outside the U.S., there aren't that many that are pay and play. So funding is getting more difficult," said Masini. "If you don't have the funds then you can't improve the golf course, and the members don't want to increase the dues they're paying."

"It's about achieving a comfort level for everyone involved," said Whurr. "We sat around a table, asked them what they needed and how we could get there. It was the first stage of a closer relationship."

For Myrtle Beach National, the issue boiled down to cost and time savings. "With us, you're spending too much time and money on the repairs of equipment we had kept too many years," said Clay Brittain Jr., chairman of Myrtle Beach National. "This caused a lot of downtime. When we decided to bring our equipment up to date, Ransomes came to us with an exceptional package."

"When a management company enters into one of these agreements it's almost like leasing a car," added Toro's Masini. "At the end of the agreement, they can walk away and get a new one or they can purchase it. Either way, it keeps newer well-maintained equipment on the course."

Masini believes exclusive partnerships are simply going to snowball. Whurr heartily agrees.

"There's a much better relationship between the two parties," said Whurr, who added that Ransomes currently has a number of deals in the pipeline.

IMC Vigoro

Continued from page 45

Growing better quality products, more innovative products. To improve the profitability of the business, we're going to take that money and plow it into R&D as well as additional quality improvements," Vigoro said that its Professional Products Group will now only market through a network of 70 worldwide distributors supported by a veteran sales team.

"Our link to the customers will now be through the distributors," said Pasztor. "We believe that to be a much more efficient way to do business. These are established distributors, so nothing will slip a beat," Pasztor said.

In addition, the company has stopped manufacturing its "low-volume, marginal products." This, the company said, will permit it to concentrate on its most popular products, those responsible for more than 90 percent of its net sales, such as Par Ex and Woodace.

"The products eliminated were high specialty products that accounted for less than 10 percent of total sales," said Pasztor.

"The lion's share of what a golf course superintendent has come to count on from IMC Vigoro will continue to be produced. "These actions are expected to improve the Professional Products Group's profitability and enable it to more aggressively pursue new product development and quality improvements," said Frank Wilson, IMC Vigoro's president. "Our objective is to serve our customers better, reduce our costs and position the business for long-term industry leadership. We believe this restructuring will accomplish that goal."

CLASSIC QUALITY, START TO FINISH.

Get a good start with CLASSIC ROYALE when establishing quality turf or feeding ornamentals.

CLASSIC ROYALE provides NPK the right way - ammonium and nitrate nitrogen, highly soluble phosphate, chloride-free potash and sulfur in every prill.

CLASSIC ROYALE supplies nitrate nitrogen for actively growing plants even in cool weather and ammonium nitrogen for prolonged feeding.

The Phosphate in CLASSIC ROYALE is 100% available for vigorous root growth during turf establishment and ornamental feeding.

Chloride Free Potash and Sulfur - derived entirely from chloride free potassium sulfate to aid in resistance to disease and weather stress.

CLASSIC ROYALE supplies available sulfur in the sulfate form.

High Analysis - CLASSIC ROYALE's 1-1-1 formulation contains 45% primary plant food plus 6% sulfur to support proper turf establishment and ornamental nutrition.

Homogeneous Prills - no segregation of nutrients; even application. Each prill contains the stated grade of nutrients. CLASSIC ROYALE produces precise, uniform feeding without "hot spots" when applied through properly calibrated equipment.

HYDRO AGRI NORTH AMERICA, INC. For Service: 1-800-234-9376 1-800-23 HYDRO

Growing with America since 1946®