Arizona-based ryegrass issue up in the air

By Michael Levans

PHOENIX — A controversy that Oregon seed companies thought was put to bed has been stirred yet again.

In mid-August, a group representing Arizona wheat farmers asked the Arizona State Agriculture Department to reconsider its decision to allow ryegrass planting on golf courses this winter.

In July, the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation asked Agriculture Director Sheldon Jones to ban ryegrass seed from Oregon, the nation’s largest supplier, unless it is certified to be free of the fungus believed to cause Karnal bunt.

The request was the latest attempt by Arizona farmers at lifting restrictions imposed by the federal government. According to recent reports, last year’s federal quarantine on Arizona wheat cost the industry $100 million, while Karnal bunt was found in less than 4 percent of the state’s fields.

Oklahoma’s Department of Agriculture recently met with Arizona. The consensus was to wait until findings were gathered from a bunt and smut disease symposium that took place on August 18-20 in Washington DC.

“The Arizona wheat growers want help in getting this zero tolerance of Karnal bunt removed for exporting,” said Michael Robinson, president of Corvallis, Ore.-based Seed Research of Oregon Inc.

“They have a lot of wheat in storage that they can’t ship.”

William Walsh, president of the Rio Verdi Country Club in northwest Phoenix, said Arizona’s economy would have been hard hit by a ryegrass ban.

“The financial impact to the state would be devastating,” Walsh said. “We don’t try to selling ryegrass...”

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Fertilizer makers dig in for battle

IMC Vigoro restructures, increases distribution’s role

By Michael Levans

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — In the midst of increasingly intense competition, IMC Vigoro’s Professional Products Group, the maker of fertilizers and slow-release products, has eliminated its entire internal direct sales force and has axed its unprofitable product lines in an effort to concentrate on R&D.

“It’s a move that reflects that the industry is very competitive,” said Tom Pasztor, director of communications for IMC Global Inc., parent company of IMC Vigoro. “Our customers are demanding quality products at lower prices.”

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New Product of the Month

LANCASTER, Pa. — Millcreek Manufacturing has introduced its Model 1050 turf core aerator. With a coring width of 102 inches, the new aerator penetrates soil up to 3 inches depending on soil conditions, and can treat nearly 225,000 sq. ft. of turf area per hour. The 1050 comes with a choice of 20 or 30 tine assemblies and is available with three-point hitch mounting, or as a tow-behind with hydraulic lifting control. The operator can add weights to the built-in weight rack to adjust the time penetration depth suitable for specific soil conditions. For more information, contact Millcreek Manufacturing Company at 800-879-6507. If you’re getting ready for fall clean up and winter prep, take a look at the extended product listings, page 31.
lease or purchase arrangements. The developers are often confused about the competition amongst designers is so called "added value packages." which must be early in the planning for design services to range from fifty services to differentiate ourselves, often strong today that most of us have added business plan supported by a market and begin their project with a professional person making the selection.

The depth of services that any one design firm can bring to a project varies greatly, as we have mentioned. The first time golf developer will benefit greatly from affiliating with a firm that can offer a full package of services that incorporates design, facility use and management. An experienced golf course developer may be better served working with a designer who focuses only on that element of the project.

Trying to be completely objective, we would recommend to anyone contemplating the development of a new golf course, or the renovation of an existing course, that they carefully identify their reasons for doing it, the market they are attempting to serve and that they evaluate their own experience and knowledge of golf.

The course designer should be selected based on the experience of that firm relative to the goals of the project. A review of candidates for the design phase can then be more focused and help to avoid the confusion factor.

**Applegate comment**

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Price point alone would confuse the majority. It is possible to encounter fees for design services to range from fifty thousand dollars to over a million. Understanding the scope of services, and comparing them between various design firms, is a worthwhile exercise for the person making the selection.

Whenever the situation presents itself, which must be early in the planning stages, we encourage potential clients to begin their project with a professional business plan supported by a market study. Preferably the study will be produced by someone experienced in the golf business. Several firms are specializing in that field and are recognized by financial institutions as creditable.

**Leslie comment**

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"Or I'll have to arrest you, sir." Sound like a bad joke? Well, in the midst of his busy schedule of bringing about global peace and answering those terrible hounds charging corruption that leads to his door, President Clinton took the time to sign an Executive Order outlawing smoking in the vicinity of federal properties.

Now, keep in mind that our military operates more than 200 golf courses around the country, and you get the picture. In the Muslim countries they have Religious Police, who make sure women remain veiled in public and that everyone prays when called upon to do so four times a day. Here, we can do them one better: Smoker Pokers, armed and ready cops, who will put you in the pokey if you smoke.

Well, at least we won't have to deal any more with those scores of stogy and cigarette smokers sullying our golfing experience. By the by, keep your eye peeled for a class-action lawsuit being brought against the 15,000 golf courses in America by those many people who got cancer from second-hand smoke while golfing.

**Kerley**

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Strem, eastern states and Canada. Brian Smith, vice president of international sales, will lead the sports turf sales group in addition to his international agricultural responsibilities. Reporting to Smith are three regional managers: Dine Unaran, Europe; Salim El Ghazal, the Middle East; and German Aceves, Central and South America.

"We are confident that this new structure will allow us to reach our objectives of focusing on customer relationships with a sales team support concept," said Kolb.

"During the initial stages of grow-in, the AERA-vator was the perfect tool for our most difficult situations. It provided us with a tender cut, helped establish smooth slopes that were constructed from very hard compacted clay. Some of the massive amount of work on the course created a great deal of concern problems that AERA-vator smoothed over without constantly replacing rows or stopping for reparing. The AERA-vator was also used to loosen the soil along the edge of cart paths where a great deal of heavy equipment had traveled. The vibration unit worked extremely well in developing seed beds in hard compacted soil."

Cary Mitchelson, Course Superintendent, Twin Lakes G.C., Oakland Township, MI.

**Ryegrass ban**

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"If they were to put a ban on ryegrass...that's a big market," added Robinson. "But I find it hard to believe that all those resort golf courses down there won't Overseed this fall. That's big business. Talking to superintendent's, they seem concerned. But if it comes down to it...I'm sure they'll put their weight behind it too."

The tourism and the nursery industry is trying to help wheat farmers by writing letters urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Congress to lift restrictions on Arizona wheat. Tests of this year's crop have revealed no blackened or "bunted" kernels.

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