

BRIEFS



HORIZON PROMOTES DILLER

TEMPE, Ariz.—Tempe-based Horizon, one of the nation's largest suppliers of integrated turf-care and irrigation solutions, has promoted Lee Diller to regional sales manager of the metropolitan Phoenix area. Diller, an employee of Horizon (formerly known as Mesa Sprinkler) for the past 12 years, most recently was the manager of Horizon's Scottsdale location. In his new role, Diller will be responsible for developing new business opportunities as well as supervising customer service and training throughout the Greater Phoenix area. Horizon is a distributor of Rain Bird, Jacobsen, E-Z-Go, Irritrol and Hunter products.



Lee Diller

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BOWDEN TO HEAD LASCO PERSONNEL

BROWNSVILLE, Tenn. — LASCO Fluid Distribution Products has named Rick Bowden its new human resources manager. Bowden has more than 20 years experience in personnel management, employee relations, training and safety with such companies as GW Composites, Emerson Electric-Motor Division, General Tire and Rubber Co., and Hall Printing Co. of the Mobil Corp. His education includes bachelor's and master's degrees as well as post-graduate work from the University of Tennessee. Located in Brownsville, LASCO is one of the largest manufacturers of PVC pipe fittings in the United States.

FACTS FROM ZENECA FAX LINE

WILMINGTON, Del.—Pest-control and turf-management product information from Zeneca Professional Products is now available by facsimile. Call 1-800-640-2362 toll free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for quick retrieval of documents on any fax machine. Product information will be promptly sent directly to a fax machine. Customers can receive product labels, Material Safety Data Sheets and Worker Protection Standard requirements for products currently offered by Zeneca Professional Products.



GOLF COURSE NEWS

Less fire, more science for Ore.'s grass growers

By KATHRYN BARRY STELLJES

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Farmers in the Pacific Northwest grew over a half-billion pounds of grass seed in 1995 — most in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Several species of ryegrass, fescue and bluegrass make up most of the turf and forage crops. But growing the seed is getting tougher. After 1997, Oregon seed growers can use their most important farming tool — fire — only on a very limited acreage.

Field-burning each year after harvest controls weeds, removes leftover grass straw and destroys diseases, including growers' nemesis, blind seed disease. Infected plants look normal, but many of the seeds won't germinate.

"Blind seed disease was inadvertently introduced, most likely from New Zealand, in the 1930s," said plant pathologist Stephen Alderman of the National Forage Seed Production Research Center, part of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

"By 1944, about 90 percent of the seed fields were infected, and only 13 percent of the seeds in some ryegrass crops germinated. Burning fields between harvests completely controlled blind seed disease and is largely credited with saving the state's grass seed industry," Alderman said.

In 1995, grass seed ranked fifth in agricultural production for the state, worth \$236 million.

Jack Pimm, a third-generation grass seed grower, heard his grandfather and father talk about blind seed disease when he was a child. But in 1995, he saw the devastation first hand in his field near Halsey.

"Only 70 to 75 percent of the seed germinated. That was unheard of," he said. The seed was from Pimm's 1994 crop, grown in a field that had not been burned for six years. Through the Oregon State University Extension Service, Alderman heard of the problem and came in to help discover the cause.

"Sure enough, we had blind seed disease," Pimm said. To stop the disease in its tracks, he burned four of his fields and adopted new management techniques. Fortunately, Pimm was able to sell his seed — but at a substantial loss.

If field burning is so effective, why are growers phasing it out?

As the valley's population expanded in the 1960s, residents began to complain about the smoke-filled summer air. But it was a tragic accident that set the stage for changing growers' management practices.

"In 1988, smoke from a wildfire—believed to have started when the wind blew burning grass straw out of control—

Continued on page 57

Toro, Grizzle settle lawsuit

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Company and Grizzle & Hunter Plastics, Inc. have settled a lawsuit related to irrigation products.

Toro brought suit against former Toro employee Glendale Grizzle and Grizzle & Hunter, a company formed by Glendale Grizzle.

Toro alleged that Grizzle and Grizzle & Hunter used Toro trade secret and proprietary information in its line of irrigation products.

Grizzle and Grizzle & Hunter denied any use of Toro information.

The matter was settled for an undisclosed sum paid by Grizzle & Hunter's insurer, coupled with an agreement by Grizzle and Grizzle & Hunter to maintain the confidentiality of information Toro claims is trade secret or proprietary.

The settlement does not require Grizzle & Hunter to cease the manufacture or the sale of its conversion assembly.

The case had been set for trial in March 1998 before a federal court in Los Angeles.



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



Fairway single-rider golf car.

Single-person golf car may help speed up play

By JOHN FARRELL

WAUKESHA, Wis. — Fairway Golf Cars, a division of Ortho-Kinetics, Inc., is introducing the Fairway 8000 Single-Rider, a golf car that allows each golfer to follow his own ball rather than waiting for his riding companion before continuing play.

In development for four years, the Single-Rider features a dual motor drive, a 48-volt power system with transaxle, maintenance-free AGM batteries, and a dynamic braking system which offers smooth deceleration as well as continuous recharging during braking action.

"Twenty years ago, getting on and off a course in four hours was a bad day," said John Perez, director of sales and marketing for Fairway. "Now it's a miracle."

By changing to a single-rider format, the company believes it eliminates the biggest problem ever caused by two-person cars: the wait.

Currently, courses strive — on a very good day — to return players in about 4-1/2 hours, roughly 15 minutes per hole. But that's a lot of work, according to Perez, who says such efforts can mean having to monitor pace of play and using starters to get people off the tee.

"And what has happened is they have to run in 7- or 8-minute tee times. They can't go any shorter because there's a funnel effect," stated Perez.

Continued on page 55

King, Ideal reach patent deal

ST. CHARLES, Mo. — Herb King, president of King Safety Products of St. Charles, and David Juday, chairman of IDEAL Industries, Inc. of Sycamore, Ill., have reached agreement to settle the patent infringement lawsuit filed by King against IDEAL in February 1996.

While details of the final agreement are confidential, King and IDEAL will each manufacture and sell several sealant-filled connector products under King's U.S. Patent B1 5,113, 037 and any related North American patents.

The 037 patent remains in force, and relates to twist-on electrical connectors prefilled with non-hardening sealants. Such connectors are suitable for a variety of direct burial, wet, corrosive and aluminum to copper applications.

Both Herb King and David Juday are pleased with the amicable settlement and look forward to working together for broader application and increased acceptance of prefilled twist-on connectors in a variety of markets.