Toro to help supers hunt the ideal "green"

By Michael Levans

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — In an effort to supplement its existing Near Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy (NIRS) service, Toro has added its Universal Green Turf Scale that incorporates proprietary turf analysis equations designed to monitor the "greeness" of grass.

Toro said the new service, which is available to Toro’s major accounts and key partners using its NIRS, offers superintendents a more accurate way to predict and maintain nutritional levels that result in "green" grass.

The ultimate goal, said Toro, is to arrive at a "universal green."

Since Toro launched its NIRS service three years ago, Dr. Syed Dara, Toro’s leading researcher on turf tissue, has accumulated thousands of turf samples that he said enabled him to formulate these color comparison equations.

"Those samples allowed us to characterize a lot of color changes and the color variability in the turf compositions," said Dara. "That allowed me to write equations which relate growing turf color to dry and brown turf color, which NIRS sees." The more samples that Dara can collect, the more accurate the reading will be.

In turn, superintendents are given an additional color number on their NIRS tissue analysis report that is based on the current composition detailed in the NIRS.

Textron/Ransomes: The pending deal is buzz of the golf industry

By Michael Levans

[Dec. 22]—The industry has been buzzing since the word of Providence, R.I.-based Textron Inc.'s probable purchase of Ransomes PLC hit the streets (see GCW December, pg. 5). Now the golf course industry is waiting to see just how the $144 million deal could affect the dynamics of the "iron" marketplace if Ransomes' shareholder's should accept.

According to Peter Wilson, president and chief executive officer of Ransomes, the deal is currently out of his hands.

"The first possible closing date, the first date when our shareholders could respond, could be Dec. 23," said Wilson. "But there are certain conditions to the bid... and everything may not be in place by that time for everybody to make a decision."

There are a number of factors, said Wilson, including British regulatory issues, that could postpone the timing of the deal.

Meanwhile, Ransomes and Jacobsen distributors are among those most anxious to receive word. Although no formal structure or alignment of Ransomes and Jacobsen equipment has been announced, U.S. distributors are busy crunching the myriad factors and possibilities.

"We're pretty excited about it," said Don DeLaney, vice president of Lake-land, Fla.-based Golf Ventures, an exclusive Ransomes distributor. "Textron will give them [Ransomes] some avenues that they haven't had available to them before."