Engelke breaks bentgrass care mold

By MARK LESLIE

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — With his sights keen on growing the cool-season bentgrass into the Deep South, Dr. Milt Engelke has broken the mold of turfgrass care and developed a regimen he feels will, once and for all, make his dream come true.

He already points to success here. Working with Old Marsh Golf Club superintendent Steve Ehrbar, the Texas A&M professor said, “We feel strongly that we will be okay [with the regimen].”

What does it entail?

• Lean water management, irrigating every fourth day.
• Frequent flushing.
• Watering, not syringing.
• Keeping the nutrition level up in the summer.

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Meditrust to sell off Cobblestone Golf Group

By PETER BLAIS

DEL MAR, Calif. — As part of a major reorganization, financially troubled Meditrust, a Massachusetts-based real estate investment trust, plans to sell Cobblestone Golf Group of Del Mar. Cobblestone’s management, headed by Chief Executive Officer Bob Husband, is among the half-dozen finalists in the bidding to acquire Cobblestone.

Meditrust, which bought Cobblestone in late 1997 for $241 million, said the reorg

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ABT: Changing the paradigm one phase at a time

By MICHAEL LEVANS

HENDERSON, Nev. — Adhering to its coolly-calculated, three-phase business plan — acquisitions, integration and transformation — AgriBioTech Inc. (ABT) has single-handedly changed the seed business over the past three years.

As 1999 shifts into gear, the company is ready to jump into its integration phase, the second step in its ultimate goal of “consolidating and transforming the turfgrass and forage seed sector in the...”

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Meditrust
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-organization will divide most of its other properties into separate real estate investment trusts (REITs), according to the San Diego Union-Tribune.

The reorganization ends an aggressive diversification strategy Meditrust launched last year. Meditrust shares fell 56 percent by mid-November as its debt

"We’re trying to keep the company here . . . and we’re trying to keep what we’ve built here,” he told the Union-Tribune. "[The restructuring] has nothing to do with the success or failure of Cobblestone.”

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Forecaddies
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D’Aleene. “Five hours a round is the norm at resort courses. Here, it’s 4:17 a round. With forecaddies, we don’t need marshals out on the course. They move play along.”

The Seaview program is run by Caddie Masters Enterprises of Fairfax, Va. Caddie manager Kieran Bell said the forecaddies serve a variety of purposes.

“The forecaddies certainly affect speed of play,” he said. “They have a local knowledge of the course. They go out ahead of the foursome to spot balls so you eliminate a lot of time spent hunting for stray shots.”

The caddies also give yardages, rake bunkers, clean clubs, fix ball marks on greens and read greens.

Bell said the Seaview program “is the first time forecaddies have been marketed to a great extent.” He added that feedback from players has been positive. The club has rating cards that golfers fill out concerning the performance of their forecaddie and that 90 percent of the ratings have been excellent.

When Seaview went to a cart path only rule on its Pines Course, officials worried about speed of play. The forecaddies have eliminated that fear, said Bartley.

“We were worried that the cart path only rule would add three quarters of an hour to rounds on The Pines Course. But with the forecaddies, the average round has not gone up significantly.”

Beyond the speed of play issue, Bartley said the forecaddies have brought smiles to the resort’s maintenance crews.

“The maintenance people are kissing my feet,” he said with a chuckle. “Having forecaddies raking bunkers and fixing ball marks on greens really has improved course conditions on a day to day basis.”

Bartley said Seaview adopted a mandatory forecaddie program for several reasons.

“We wanted to make the program an added plus for golfers here. And, it just wouldn’t have worked had we allowed golfers to an option. What if the foursome ahead of you didn’t have a forecaddie and you did. It would have made for some uncomfortable moments on the course.”

Seaview toyed with the idea of installing laser yardage finders in its golf carts. “But that just didn’t fit with what Seaview is. We wanted a person dealing with the customer and that’s what the forecaddies do for us,” Bartley said that while he has fielded some complaints about mandatory use of forecaddies, the vast majority of comments have been favorable.

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