Eco-terrorists strike Pure Seed test farm

By JAY FINEGAN

HUBBARD, Ore. - An underground eco-terrorist group styling itself the Anarchist Golfing Association attacked Pure Seed Testing Inc. here last month, smashing into greenhouses, overturning and stomping on experimental grass plots, scattering identification labels, and spray painting such slogans as "Nature Bites Back."

Crystal Fricker, director of research and new president, estimated damage at about $500,000, but said the value of projects destroyed in the raid could easily have run over $1 million. "It's hard to put a value on it," she said. "We've lost years of research."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation swung into action quickly, assigning 10 agents to the case. At press time, no arrests had been made.

The vandals stole onto the 110-acre research farm during the night. "They hit two different greenhouses and went across 70 acres of the farm, hitting different nurseries, pulling up plants, cutting the heads off plants, and dumping 200 pots of ornamental grasses collected from around the world," Fricker said. "They left little clues that they had been everywhere - golf balls emblazoned with their insignia: a circle-A anarchist symbol.

Dot-coms primed to revolutionize market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

While the buzz surrounding the launch of several Internet-based business-to-business ventures earlier this year has laded, work behind the scenes continues as these high-tech companies clamor to define strategies, attract vendors and buyers and get up and running. In the meantime, web-savvy superintendents are beginning to embrace the concept of purchasing goods on-line.

New players have also burst onto the scene in recent weeks, bringing the total of superintendent specific e-commerce ventures to 10 agents to the case. At press time, no arrests had been made.

Destructive beetle spreading fast through Northeast

By JAY FINEGAN

BRENTON WOODS, N.H. - An unusually pernickety turf-destroying beetle, the European chafer, is marching briskly through Northeastern states and appears poised to extend its range. Speaking to superintendents from Maine and New Hampshire at the Mount Washington Hotel here, entomologist Stanley R. Swier said the chafer can do "a phenomenal amount of damage."

Swier also expressed concern that the insect may be on the verge of a breakthrough phase. "The chafer will lay its eggs in potted nursery plants, and these plants will be shipped around the country," he said. "They can be carried by cars and trains. They emerge by the millions in late June, and they'll fly right into vehicles. When you look at
Since you can’t control this irrigation system, we’re giving you more control over ours.

Presenting the new E-Series OSMAC Satellite

As business-to-business Internet sites continue to reshape the U.S. economy, the golf course industry is struggling to develop proper e-commerce strategies. Many manufacturers and distributors are torn between signing on with a dot-com company or starting their own e-commerce sites, while also trying to figure out how to use the Internet as a sales tool without eating into existing sales and distribution channels.

To cover all the bases, Lesco, which is pursuing agreements with different e-commerce sites, is also planning its own e-commerce site. “The difference between Lesco and the other dot-com ventures is that we have a business model that has reached out to the golf courses in this country,” said Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Wayne Murawski. “Our concept is e-enablement. It allows customers more access to us. We plan to integrate e-business into our bricks and mortar business.”

By taking the middle ground and building its own web site and joining up with other dot-coms, Murawski expects to expand Lesco’s geographical reach and grow its customer base.

However, according to superintendent Marc Davison at Green Bay (Wis.) Golf and Country Club, e-commerce must be kept simple.

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the existing distribution structure that is out there and creating software and capabilities to enable a distributor to log onto Golfsat through a control center and put up and take down product information and pricing.

A new version of Golfsat.com’s site will be launched at the end of this month featuring technical information and access to university research. The company’s 1.0 software is due to be up and running in September.

“At that point we will have our five beta sites begin purchasing from a select group of beta distributors,” said Scott.

While Scott thinks larger ticket equipment items will eventually be bought on-line, the site will initially target commodity items, such as fertilizer, chemicals, small power tools and replacement parts.

“Larger ticket items won’t happen right away,” he said. “But a distributor can now [with golfsat.com] take his salespeople out of the low margin commodity transactions and allow them to focus on higher margin, value added sales.”

**PROFESSIONAL GOLF COMMERCE**

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On pgcgolf.com, vendors will be able to access customers directly, decreasing mailing and customer service costs and ultimately increasing savings and profits, said Sanders.

The site already has more than 350 members and 57 superintendents signed on, but will not start to collect a membership fee until the first transaction. “Until we aggregate the critical mass of suppliers, we will waive the fee,” said Sanders, who anticipates having the superintendent part of the site up in the next 60 to 90 days.

**GOLFBUSINESS.COM**

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) announced June 9 that it has teamed with Apollo Real Estate Advisors to form golfbusiness.com, a vertically integrated marketplace for the golf course industry. The site, which brings 4,000 buyers and 40 sellers from the organization’s Smart Buy Network into the fold, will go live Sept. 1, according to Michael McLaughlin, vice president of operations. The site will cover food and beverage, pro shop and maintenance goods.

“This will not just be an interchange,” said McLaughlin. “We will be doing our own distribution. We will process orders and place them via vendors or go through logistics relationships.”

This way, a course will deal with one vendor and get one set of purchasing orders and one monthly statement to streamline accounting he said.

**SyncroFlo adds MESA**

NORCROSS, Ga. — SyncroFlo, Inc. has added Pleasanton, Calif.-based MESA Energy Systems to its list of pump station service agents.

MESA, an EMCOR Group company, will service SyncroFlo golf, irrigation, commercial and municipal installations in California.