EPA close on reassessments
Agency working on possible use restrictions for three turf-related chemicals

**INSIDE**

**Simplot, Budd make offer for ABT assets**

**By ANDREW OVERBECK**

HENDERSON, Nev. — AgriBioTech (ABT) has reached an agreement in principle to sell its turfgrass seed assets and Professional Turfgrass Division to Kenneth Budd, former ABT president and chief operating officer, and Post Falls, Idaho-based J.R. Simplot for approximately $65 million, plus assumption of liabilities. The two parties are also expected to assume ABT’s obligations under contracts with its growers. The exact details of the Budd/Simplot deal were not disclosed.

For the past two months, Development Specialists Inc. (DSI) has been overseeing the reorganization of ABT and taking bids on the company’s assets. DSI expects the deal to close by the end of June, but stresses that it must first be approved by the bankruptcy court and that competing bids may still be submitted by other parties.

Simplot has been aggressively expanding its reach in

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**EcoAegis changes modern hydroseeding rules**

**By A. OVERBECK**

NORTH OXFORD, Mass. — Growing turf on bunker, tee and green surrounds was once a job that was best suited to sod. That, however, is changing.

EcoAegis, a bonded hemlock fiber mulch and seed mixture, produced by Canadian Forest Products (Canfor) of Vancouver, British Columbia, is becoming more widely used in steep sloped areas as a seeding agent and an erosion control device.

Hydrograss Technologies, based here, is the exclusive East Coast distributor of EcoAegis.

“We first used it on landfill sites. Engineers used it on 3-to-1 slopes in lieu of erosion blankets and had great success,” said Robert Arello, president of Hydrograss Technologies.

EcoAegis combines hemlock fiber with a bonding agent creating a matrix cover that prevents erosion by absorbing the

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**Hampton Golf, Orender cater to beginners**

**By ANDREW OVERBECK**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — M.G. Orender’s new management firm, Hampton Golf, is moving ahead with its beginner-friendly club management philosophy.

“The concept is simple,” said Orender. “The first club I was a pro at, we had sluggish business, so I started a junior program. We started with six kids and grew to 160 kids in about three years. In that time, our gross receipts doubled and that happened because when you get kids out there, you get the parents involved too. I learned that if the beginner is comfortable and is treated well, they won’t go anywhere else.”

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**Irish golfers open new Stephen Kay links in New York**

**By JAY FINEGAN**

UNION VALE, N.Y. — A little touch of Ireland has sprung up in New York’s Hudson River Valley, thanks to the financial backing of 500 golfers of Irish descent and the talents of golf course architects Stephen Kay and Douglas Smith. The Links at Union Vale, just now opening, undoubtedly ranks as one of the most unusual golf course development projects in recent years.

The par-72, 18-hole, links-style layout is the brainchild of the Irish Golf Association (IGA), comprised of about 30 clubs clustered in the New York metropolitan area. "Much like bowling leagues, these are

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**Manufacturers eye total course Global Positioning technology**

**By ANDREW OVERBECK**

In today’s information-crazed society, satellite-driven Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are becoming more widely used as the technology improves and costs come down. GPS systems are being used as navigational devices by backpackers, businesss, road weary and, yes, even 300 courses in States have in-systems on golf age speeder players to pin-shot distances food and beverage revenues.

Not to be left out of the GPS revolution, large maintenance equipment manufacturers have teamed up with "clubhouse based" GPS companies to develop a total course solution that would bring the satellite technology to superintendents.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

John Deere acquired Boston-based Player Systems in

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recent months, signing an exclusive distribution agreement for POLYON fertilizers with Sylacauga, Ala.-based Pursell Technologies, Inc., and agreeing to purchase Turf Partners, the distribution arm of Rancho Bernardo, Calif.-based Eco Soil Systems, Inc.

ABT brings a lot to the table, said Wayne Burk, senior vice president of Simplot Turf and Horticulture. "We are looking for fits with our strategic growth plan," he said. "There are a few distribution businesses that we had an interest in and obviously from the seed side there are a number of varieties that have some real brand equity."

J.R. SIMPLOT ON THE MOVE

EARLY MARCH 2000 — SIGNS POLYON MARKETING AGREEMENT WITH PURSELL TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

LATE MARCH 2000 — AGREES TO PURCHASE TURF PARTNERS ASSETS FROM ECO SOIL SYSTEMS, INC.

MID-MAY 2000 — J.R. SIMPLOT/KENNETH BUDD PURCHASE BID ACCEPTED FOR ABT'S PROFESSIONAL TURFGRASS DIVISION.

DIVISIONS OF J.R. SIMPLOT

JACKLIN SEED
BEST/APEX
MEDALIST AMERICA
JACKLIN GOLF

If the deal goes through, Simplot would pick up such distributors as Las Vegas Fertilizer, Phoenix-based Garden West and Florence, Ky.-based George W. Hill. Also in the mix would be top varieties like Loft's L-93 bentgrass, Palmer ryegrass and Rebel tall fescue.

However, even if Budd/Simplot wins the bid they will conduct due diligence and could either submit a lower bid or decline.

For now, Burk remains cautiously optimistic.

"For example, Las Vegas Fertilizer is attractive to us because they were a big distributor of ours and they are a dominant player in that market," he said. "But their business is not what it was six to eight months ago, so there are some issues there. However, we are also in the process of acquiring Turf Partners, and if we can add a facility like Las Vegas Fertilizer to Turf Partners, it makes sense."