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

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 turfgrass

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 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.

EcoAegis changes modern hydoseeding 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 erosion control device.

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

"We first used it on landfills. 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 guar bonding agent creating a matrix cover that prevents erosion by absorbing the

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 back-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
Club Car picks up Dash Golf Cars

WOODCLIFF LAKE, N.J. — Club Car, Inc., a division of Ingersoll-Rand Co., has acquired Dash Golf Cars, Inc., based in Indio, Calif. Dash Golf Cars sells new, used and reconditioned golf cars and utility vehicles, and offers a line of customized vehicles designed for the personal golf car market. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Dash Golf Cars is the largest North American retail dealer for Club Car. The company has three retail outlets in California, two in Palm Desert and one in Rancho Mirage. It conducts manufacturing and assembly operations in Indio.

"Dash Golf Cars provides us entry into the personal golf car market with a line of deluxe vehicles, selected models of which will be available to our Club Car dealer network," said Herbert L. Henkel, president and chief executive officer. "In addition, we gain retail presence in a strong regional market, which will enable us to develop and test innovative downstream product and service concepts."

Lesco reports record first quarter sales

CLEVELAND — Lesco, Inc. reported record sales for the first quarter ended March 31.

Net sales for the first quarter of 2000 increased 19 percent to a record $88.9 million, compared with net sales of $85.1 million for the same period last year, reflecting growth in all major product categories. Lesco also reported a loss for the first quarter of $1.2 million, or $0.14 per diluted share, compared with a loss of $1.8 million, or $0.21 per diluted share, in the same period a year ago, a 33 percent improvement. Due to the seasonality of its business, the company typically reports a loss in the first three months of its fiscal year.

"We are also encouraged by the significant progress at Commercial Turf Products, and are optimistic that Lesco's 2000 results will continue to show improvement throughout the year," said William A. Foley, LESCO chairman, president and chief executive officer.

GPS systems on the way for superintendents

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August 1998 and launched John Deere Golf Technologies. Toro Co. made an equity investment in San Juan Capistrano, Calif.-based ProShot Golf in January 1999. Earlier this year, Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products announced that it is working with Sarasota, Fla-based ParView Inc. to develop a maintenance-based GPS system.

The basic GPS system will track maintenance equipment on the golf course, allow superintendents to ensure that workers are performing assigned tasks and, when integrated with the golf car system, send workers to areas of the course that are not receiving much play.

"What we want to do is wrap our SkyLinks technology around the superintendent's duties," said Tom Meyers, marketing manager for John Deere Golf Technologies. "That will involve everything from preventative maintenance tracking to site specific management, precision spraying and mowing, accurate compliance with Environmental Protection Agency record keeping, detailed material analysis and application and inventory and cost control."

Profile snaps up Conwed Fibers

Buffalo Grove, Ill. — Profile Products LLC has purchased wood-based hydraulic mulch products manufacturer Conwed Fibers.

Based in Conover, N.C., Conwed Fibers has 35 years of experience producing high-quality products for the golf course, DOT highway, landfill, commercial and residential markets. The acquisition includes Conwed manufacturing facilities and all products and brand names, such as Futerra erosion control blankets, Hydro Mulch products, home lawn products, tackifiers and nettings.

"The addition of Conwed complements our existing line of proprietary products," said Mark Lewry, president of Profile Products. This addition builds on the company's August 1999 acquisition of the Terra-Mulch company, maker of cellulose mulches and amendments.

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Trion's Skylinks GPS system.

John Deere's Skylinks GPS system.

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GPS on the way

Continued from previous page

what has taken place over the last few years. That way he can hit the ground running," he said.

ParView’s golf car system is in use on 70 golf courses and Whurr expects that the maintenance equipment GPS system will go into beta testing in the next few months.

"Toro is attempting to take the GPS technology and couple it with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and take it to another level and apply it to our own equipment," said Chip Engdahl, marketing manager for Toro’s commercial division.

"One of the big ideas is precision turf maintenance and management. By coupling GPS, GIS and variable rate spraying technology you can be more precise on rates—tracking where, how much and when you put stuff down."

"Stress can be caused by a lack of fertility and nitrogen," he said. "This won’t tell you what the problems are, but it clues you in to dig deeper. You have to open the IPM tool box, get soil cores and send in samples. The point is to get as early a jump on stress issues as possible."

"The tool could help us justify what we do from an environmental perspective," said Whurr. "The tool could help us justify what we do from an environmental perspective," he said. The cost is $2,000.

"We are working with compost and the dynamics of nitrogen," he said. "We are doing a weekly analysis of different plots that have different rates of compost.""It is a tool that can be used by higher-end courses or more innovative superintendents. The final price has not been set, but it will likely cost around $2,000." Dinelli thinks the tool could have a universal use to back up fertilization practices. "The tool could help us justify what we do from an environmental perspective," he said. "It could help reduce nitrogen applications or justify the ones we do."