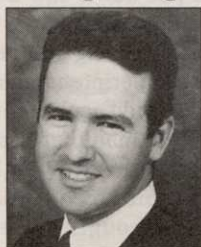


BRIEFS

**ZIRKLE HEADS UP RAIN BIRD MARKETING**

AZUSA, Calif. — Matthew A. Zirkle has been named marketing manager for the golf division of Rain Bird Sales, Inc. Zirkle will oversee the marketing and communications functions for the division. Prior to being named marketing manager, Zirkle served as new business development manager in Rain Bird Golf.



Matthew Zirkle

RIVERDALE NAMES SCHUTZMAN, PHIPPS

GLENWOOD, Ill. — Riverdale Chemical Co. has named Lendel Schutzman as regional sales manager. His responsibilities will include promoting product sales in the turf, vegetation management, forestry and aquatic industries. Mark Phipps has been named Northeast regional sales manager. In his new position, Phipps will be responsible for sales and technical support for Riverdale distributors located in the Northeast and the development of new distributors within his territory.

PEROTTI JOINS JACKLIN SEED

POST FALLS, Idaho — Larry Perotti has joined Jacklin Seed/Simplot Turf & Horticulture as technical service manager. Perotti is responsible for answering questions from Jacklin Seed customers on such subjects as grass species and variety selection, and growth characteristics. Additionally, he provides backup technical and sales services for Jacklin Golf's three outside sales representatives.

NELSON TO LEAD SCOTTS TURF BREEDING

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. has hired Dr. Eric K. Nelson to lead its turfgrass breeding efforts at the company's Oregon Field Station. As senior scientist and turfgrass breeder, Nelson will join Scotts' variety development group in its efforts to produce herbicide-resistant grasses and will conduct traditional plant breeding, drawing upon biotech-based gene sources. He will interact with scientists within Scotts and at universities across the country. Nelson most recently served as senior technical agronomist for Jacklin Golf, where he provided agronomic assistance and technical communications for golf course architects, builders and superintendents.

J.R. Simplot set to expand deal, inject \$20 million into Eco Soil

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RANCHO BERNADO, Calif. — Building on November's marketing and distribution alliance, Eco Soil Systems, Inc. and J.R. Simplot Co. have strengthened their relationship by entering into a multi-faceted letter of intent. Under the agreement, Simplot would acquire \$20 million of a new series of Eco Soil preferred stock. Simplot would also agree to commence field trials of Eco Soil's proprietary products in agricultural markets. The deal also grants Simplot the option of acquiring an interest in Eco Soil's Turf Partners subsidiary during the spring of 2001, depending on Turf Partners 2000 financial performance.



Bill Adams

"Simplot is investing in the parent company," said Eco Soil President and Chief Executive Officer Bill Adams. "But they retain the option of converting that investment into Turf Partners or putting some additional money into the subsidiary to buy some level of shares. They have to make that decision in the next 12 months."

"We are interested in the BioJect and FreshPack products," said Hiromi Yanagisawa, senior vice president of marketing for J.R. Simplot. "But we need to look at it financially to see if it makes sense."

While a 12-month valuation period is unusual, Adams remains unfazed.

"Simplot is not sure whether they want to be fully invested in a distribution company," he said. "At this stage of the game it doesn't matter to us. We wanted to make sure they made a commitment to us since we had made a distribution commitment to them, and in addition, we have some technology that we wanted to shove into their agricultural markets and this was an easy way to do it."

Building a relationship with a vendor also makes a lot of sense to Adams.

"The working capital helps, but the bottom line is that we wanted to get closer to our major vendors because we have always presented ourselves as a value-added sales force," said Adams. "In the final analysis, it is all about positioning someone's product over someone else's. You have to have favorites and Simplot is one of them."

Concurrently, Eco Soil will be working to cut costs after losing \$11 million in the fourth quarter due to restructuring costs and operating losses in Mexico. While Eco Soil continues to expand its revenues — \$22 million in the fourth quarter — it faced overhead expenses of \$17 million in 1999. By streamlining operations and using the proceeds of the Simplot investment to retire debts, Eco Soil expects to trim 2001 costs to \$9 million.

"When you consolidate all the busi-

Continued on page 62

Redexim to distribute Carraro tractors

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PITTSTON, Pa. — Redexim Charterhouse has entered into an exclusive marketing and distribution pact with Padova, Italy-based tractor manufacturer Antonio Carraro. Redexim Charterhouse has had a distribution agreement in Europe with Carraro since August 1999.

"The success of the European joint venture led us to roll out U.S. operations," said Philip Threadgold, executive vice president of Redexim Charterhouse. "Carraro was looking to get into the U.S. market and we offered the distribution."

The tractors will be distributed in



Carraro's TTR 440 in action.

the United States through Redexim Charterhouse's network of 47 distributors. Replacement parts will be stocked at the company's new warehouse facility in Pittston.

Continued on page 66

AgriBioTech files Chapter 11; asset sale to follow

HENDERSON, Nev. — Citing low seed prices, high expenses and slow collections, AgriBioTech (ABT) has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The full-service turfgrass seed company has been struggling to integrate the 34 companies that it has bought over the last four years.



According to ABT's second-quarter report released Feb. 22, "The company has incurred significant operating and net losses since inception and has been unable to generate sufficient cash flow from operating activities to meet projected debt service and other obligations as they become due."

ABT reported a net loss of \$19.5 million for the second quarter ended Dec. 31, 1999, and posted losses of \$49.8 million in fiscal year 1999. The company's second-quarter sales were \$52 million compared to \$75.9 million in the same period last year, a decrease of 31.6 percent. As of Feb. 11, the company had outstanding debts of \$68.9 million. The NASDAQ National Mar-

Continued on page 66

Golfsat plans to be one-stop online source for supers

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEW ORLEANS — Looking to fill the Internet gap that exists in the golf course maintenance industry, Golfsat has launched its website (www.golfsat.com) and industry portal to golf course superintendents.

Golfsat Chief Executive Officer Mike Scott equates the site's unveiling to the Oklahoma land rush.

"Everyone is running to the Internet and is not sure where they are going," said Scott.

"The Internet has embraced this industry. There are a lot of manufacturer and distributor websites. But by and large there has not been a formation of e-commerce or a virtual community for superintendents. That is what we are creating at Golfsat."

Scott aims to get superintendents online, create a high-speed industry network and design and develop industry-specific software and content.

CONTENT

Registered Golfsat users can use the Golfsat search engine to locate information on turfgrasses and cultivars, diseases and insects, biological and chemical



Mike Scott

Golf Course News STOCK REPORT (2/24)*

Company	Symbol	Stock Price	%Change 1/1/00	%Change 1/14/00	P/E	52-week Range	Proj. 5-yr Earn. Growth
Astrazeneca	AZN	33.25	-20.36	-18.90	22.83	31-48.94	10.30%
Deere & Co.	DE	38.25	-9.73	-20.31	38.14	32-47.5	9.20%
Dow Chemical Co.	DOW	106.375	-19.79	-23.68	18.16	90-141.5	8.60%
Family Golf Centers	FGCI	1.125	-20.00	-26.47	N/A	0.72-10.125	25%
Golf Trust of Amer.	GTA	18	6.27	6.64	14.17	14.5-25.75	8.80%
Ingersoll-Rand	IR	36.08	-34.47	-32.52	10.01	35-73.82	12%
Lesco Inc.	LSCO	16	-5.88	7.53	11.76	12.25-19.5	15%
Nat'l Golf Prop.	TEE	20.88	5.72	-2.32	18.1	18.38-27.75	N/A
Toro Co.	TTC	32.88	-11.88	-9.61	12.38	28.5-39.5	12.5%
Textron Inc.	TXT	60.88	-20.61	-11.74	4.04	57-98	14.3%

*DATA PROVIDED BY VALUE TREND LINKS, LINKS FUND UP 11.48% IN '00, WWW.GOLFMUTUALFUND.COM

Eco Soil ready with e-commerce strategy

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RANCHO BERNADO, Calif. — In order to increase customer service to superintendents, streamline distribution and provide more visibility to its proprietary products, Eco Soil Systems, Inc. has launched a business-to-business e-commerce initiative. The company will launch the e-commerce strategy in several phases, beginning first with its Turf Partners subsidiary.

The system will give superintendents

access to products sold through the Turf Partners network, including many turf products offered by the J.R. Simplot Co. and Eco Soil's BioJect and FreshPack microbial products. Turf Partners has 70 salespeople/agronomists and distributes maintenance and proprietary products to 7,500 golf courses nationwide.

"The system is designed to be an integrated tool for superintendents," said Eco Soil Chairman and Chief Executive Officer William Adams. "Superintendents

have a project philosophy. They have to schedule people and products and keep up with a big budget."

Eco Soil is designing the interactive program around this project mentality. Turf Partners salespeople will work with superintendents to develop an agronomic plan that will become the superintendent's daily schedule.

"When he comes to work, he turns that schedule on, and as a vendor we are connected into his plan," said Adams.

Through the integrated on-line, order-entry system, salespeople will continu-

ally help the superintendent build their program by showing them how to use products more efficiently and environmentally, ensuring that they have picked the correct products for the project and supplying them with the products.

"Superintendents will enhance their credibility by having a partner who is capable of helping them build and execute a plan that makes them smarter, faster, cheaper and more efficient," said Adams. "We become a better vendor because we anticipate needs faster and sooner. Our whole purpose in this business is to preserve and enhance the job of the superintendent. We want them to keep their jobs and get a big raise."

Adams expects the salesperson/superintendent relationship to strengthen as a result of the new program.

"With the order-entry system, there are scheduled delivery days, so instead of coming around and asking for orders, salespeople can go out and see how projects are going. They can really be an asset now instead of someone who bugs you for an order all the time," he said.

Eco Soil introduced the system to its sales force in January. The company is now working to bring everyone through the program so they can access and build the systems themselves.

"Our sales staff is wildly enthused. A year ago they were afraid that we were going to kick them out and go direct," said Adams. "But it is just the opposite. We are trying to allow the sales guy to be an agronomic consultant."

Adams said Turf Partners will introduce the program one customer at a time and expects to have the system operational by this summer.



Eco Soil/Simplot

Continued from page 59

nesses that we bought you end up, instead of realizing all kinds of benefits, creating additional costs because in some cases you are building double systems," said Adams. "Because of the 12-month evaluation period, Simplot forces us to eliminate a lot of that overlap."

In the next year, Eco Soil could wind up not owning all of Turf Partners, but Adams said the company is still committed to the turf business.

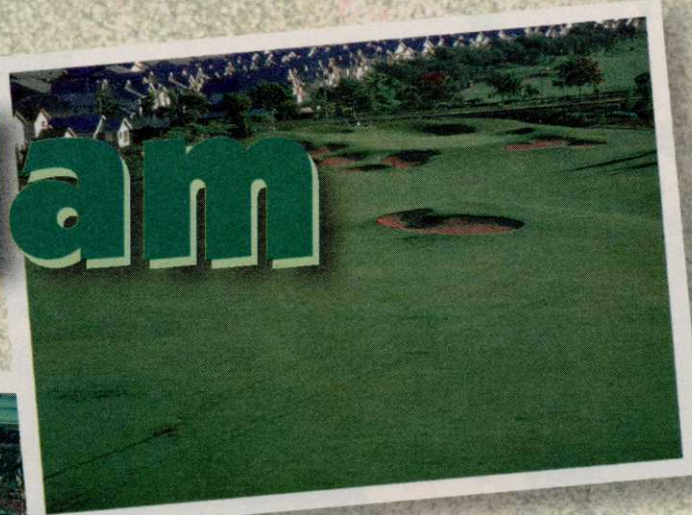
"We have a proprietary product line to sell in the turf business and we bought the distribution channel and started building that because we want to control our destiny," he said. "Hopefully, Simplot's share of ownership in Turf Partners will allow us to grow that market together."

Even during the evaluation period, Adams will continue to work at making Turf Partners a national player.

"There are a couple of big markets that we have zero presence in. We have very little in the Southeast, Texas, Northern California, Nevada and the Middle Atlantic states," said Adams. "So we are going to try and pick up people where we can. And if there are some businesses that are there that are opportunistic, we could consider consolidating them this year or the next." ▴

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