

## PTI unveils plans for Pursell Farms training facility

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Aiming to build better relationships with superintendents and end users, Pursell Technologies, Inc. (PTI) is building a new corporate headquarters, guest lodge, research and demonstration sites, and an 18-hole golf course and First Tee facility at Pursell Farms here.

"We wanted to do something to break us out of the pack, something to showcase and sell ourselves," said David Pursell, chief executive officer of PTI. "We want to tell the Pursell story, about the family-owned company and about the technology."

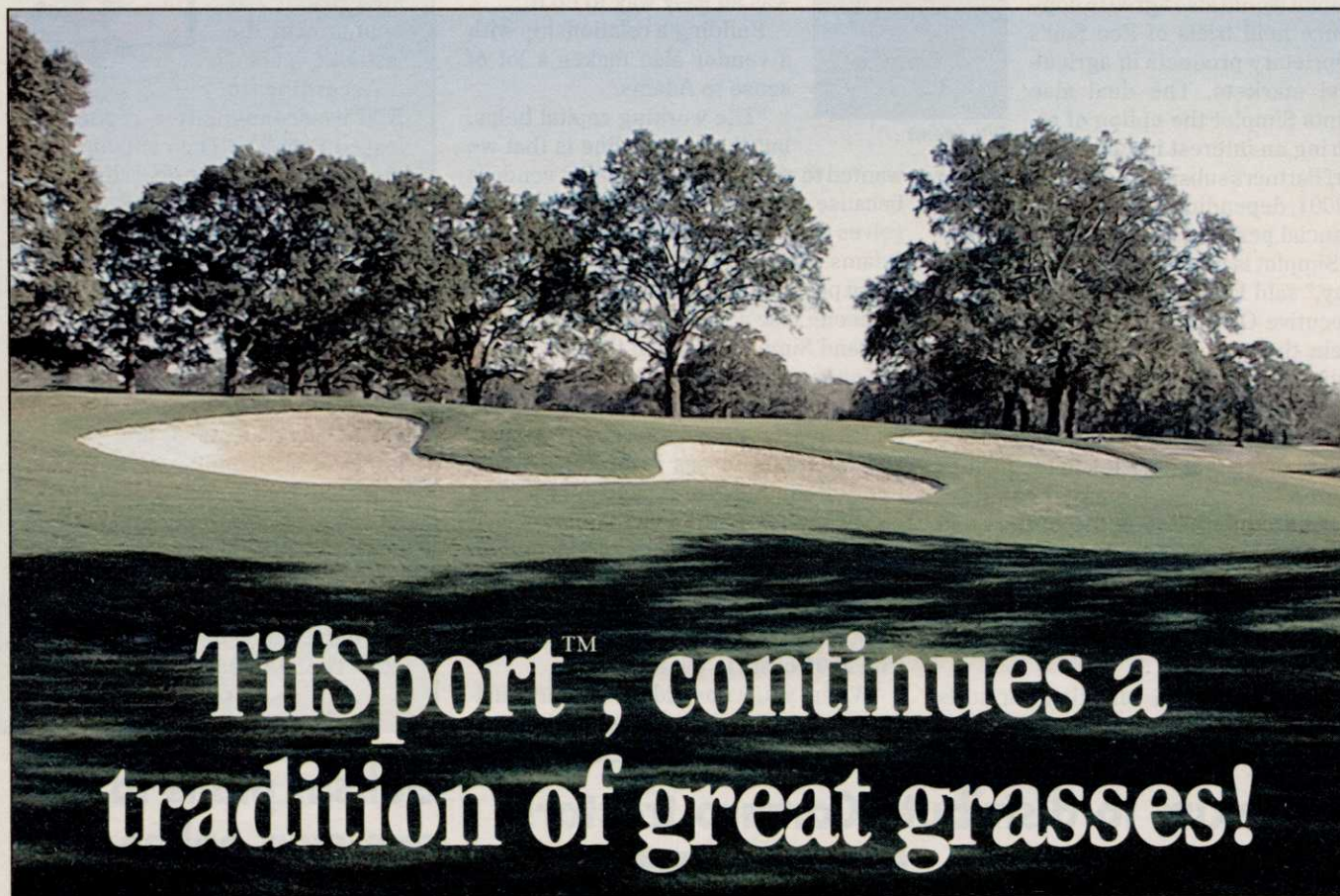
Pursell intends to bring in selected superintendents eight at a time to go through an all-expenses-paid two-day training process. Superintendents will stay on-site at a guest lodge on the property and attend a three-hour educational session at the newly opened PTI-Max theater, a space-age facility that looks out over the company's Polyon factory.

At the center of the training process is FarmLinks, an 18-hole, Hurdzan/Fry-designed course. Here, superintendents will be able to see Polyon products in action.

"The course gives us the ability to show them how the products work," said Pursell. "We can tell them



The master plan for 2,700-acre Pursell Farms.



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when an application was made, how much was put down and do side-by-side comparisons with other products." Pursell envisions using golf cars fitted with GPS to guide superintendents through the course and provide application information.

While many fertilizer companies have built one or two golf holes or work with area courses to showcase products, Pursell thought it was important to build an entire course.

"We could have done what others have done and build a relationship with an area course, but we wanted to have full control over construction, course management and of the amount of play," said Pursell. "I do stuff up at Shoal Creek [Ala.] Golf Club and people are impressed. But how much of that is Shoal Creek and how much of that is my product?"

In addition to providing product information and training, the superintendent's visit to Pursell Farms will include a healthy dose of Southern hospitality. Visitors will have a plethora of recreational options at their disposal. Along with the golf course, there are several bass-fishing ponds, an 800-acre duck and deer hunting preserve and four-wheeling and hiking trails.

"This way we can get to know the customers and talk with them," said Pursell. "Once they are comfortable, they will let you know what they think about your products. This will help us to be a better company and be more responsive to end users needs."

Director of Professional Sales Dave Heegard is looking forward to using Pursell Farms as a sales tool. "This is sales made easy," said Heegard. "This lets superintendents know about the technology and that they are doing business with real people, not a distributor."

While he wouldn't disclose the total cost of the project, Pursell acknowledges that it is a risky concept.

"People may think I'm off my rocker. It would have been easy to take my money and stick it in my back pocket and continue bringing people out to the little house on the property and to find another spot in town for the headquarters," said Pursell. "But I wanted to follow this dream and invest in the future of this company."

Pursell believes that the company has the product to back up the risk that it is taking.

"We have new products in the line-up," he said. "We are waiting to clear regulatory hurdles on a coated pesticide technology that offers improved efficacy, greater retention and lengthened control."

Pursell anticipates that the corporate offices and guest lodge will be completed this fall and that FarmLinks will be open for play by mid-2002.