



BRIEFS

E-Z-GO ADDS THREE TO SALES STAFF

AUGUSTA, Ga. — E-Z-GO Textron has added three new members to its sales team. Glen Bell, formerly with Farwest Equipment, will be the operations manager for the Northern California branch. Bruce Speirs will be the new sales representative for the Upper Midwest, having previously worked as a division manager for Puggleasa Co. In addition, Nathan Cobb, former sales manager for Simpson Norton Corp., will be the sales representative for New Mexico.

LANGLEY TO LEAVE RISE, RETIRE

WASHINGTON — After a 34-year career in the pesticide industry, the last six of which were spent as the manager of state government relations for RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), Fred Langley has announced that he will retire August 31. "Fred was an early leader in the development of RISE," said president Allen James. "He was among a small group of industry executives who saw the need for a national association. He helped make it happen."



ROYSTER-CLARK TO FINALIZE DEAL

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The Royster-Clark Group has signed a purchase contract with Agriliance to acquire the assets of Agro Distribution South and ProSource One, a retail professional products business serving the turf and ornamentals market. The transaction also involves approximately 140 Agro Distribution South retail centers. The final closing, which has been delayed since April 1, is scheduled for August 31. Until then, the businesses will be operated by Royster-Clark under the terms of a separate management services agreement. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

TORO ROLLS OUT WORKMAN 1100

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. has begun shipping its new Workman 1100 from its Tomah, Wis., manufacturing facility. The 1100 is the second of Toro's mid-duty vehicles and features a 12-hp Kohler engine.

PTI forging ahead with FarmLinks

Hurdzan, Fry course to be showcase for PTI, industry partners

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Pursell Technologies Inc. has broken ground on its FarmLinks golf course, which will be the crown jewel of the company's brand new 3,000-acre corporate campus.

The Hurdzan, Fry-designed course is being billed as a "living laboratory" and will serve a number of commercial and altruistic purposes.

The company will use it as a research and development facility for its products as well as a showcase for its products during its PTI Tour program for superintendents. The PTI Tour is an all-expenses-paid training program for superintendents. Visitors will now be able to stay in the on-site eight-suite lodge built for the tour.

"We hosted 750 superintendents last year. This year we are planning on 1,000," said company president and CEO David Pursell. "The program is working out better than I hoped. There are fewer surprises the

more you stay in front of your customer base, and that is what this program allows us to do."

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

PTI has also signed agreements with several industry suppliers. Toro Co. will be the major industry partner at FarmLinks and will be responsible for the maintenance equipment and irrigation systems. In addition, Simplot will provide fertilizer and seed for testing;



From left to right: Jimmy Pursell and his wife, Chris, and their children Chris Pursell Fleming and PTI president and CEO David Pursell.

Flowtronex will install pump stations; Club Car will use the course to test its cars; Chipco will provide chemicals; and Harrells will provide fertilizer.

Continued on page 27

Deere to cut workforce by eight percent

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. has announced plans to cut its workforce in the United States by about eight percent, or 1,250 employees, achieving an after-tax savings of approximately \$90 million annually.

Approximately 2,500 administrative and managerial employees will be offered a voluntary early-retirement package. About half are expected to accept the offer. A one-time program expense, estimated to be \$140 million after-tax, will be charged in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2001, the company said.



"The special early retirement offer is part of an ongoing effort to run lean and enhance our efficiency, competitiveness and financial strength for future growth opportunities," said Robert W. Lane, chairman and CEO. "The durable nature of this improvement in our cost structure will benefit the company in all market conditions."

Deere & Co. is undertaking these efforts to offset earnings shortfalls. The company's net income for the first half of 2001 fell from \$242 million to \$184.2 million.

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Hunter's G870 rotor features easy access

Hunter Golf has introduced the G870, an electric, valve-in head rotor with easy access to all serviceable components. The design eliminates the need to dig or disturb the turf during routine maintenance. All sprinkler components can be pulled out for cleaning and maintenance while the rotor body remains in the ground.

The G870 also features a unitized valve unit that includes a snap ring, valve seal and rock screen. During maintenance, the crew can now pull out the unitized valve with a pair of needle-nosed pliers,



The G870's unitized valve allows for quick repairs

flush the valve piping and repair leaks caused by soil or water contamination. The procedure takes just minutes.

For more information, contact: 800-248-6561.

Ewing acquires seven locations from Simpson

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PHOENIX, Ariz. — In a move to protect its market position, Ewing Irrigation has purchased the Arizona and Las Vegas branches of Simpson Sprinkler Centers. The six Arizona locations and one Las Vegas location bring the company's branch total to 101.

"We wanted to make sure we kept a pretty good stronghold in Arizona and Nevada," said Sherri Jones, marketing coordinator. The company now has 12 Arizona locations and four Nevada locations.

Ewing is the second largest distributor behind the newly formed John Deere Landscapes, which includes Century Rain Aid. Prior to the John Deere acquisition, Richton International, Century's parent company, went after Ewing's largest two markets by acquiring California-based Bay Irrigation and Turf Supply. It also purchased Simpson Sprinkler Centers' Texas locations. Ewing has a strong hold in both states with 48 locations in California and 18 in Texas.

Ewing, however, welcomes John

Continued on page 26

Bayer has emerged as top suitor for Aventis CropScience

FRANKFURT, Germany — Aventis SA is proceeding with its plan to divest its agrochemicals division, Aventis CropScience. Aventis CropScience includes Aventis Environmental Sciences, which sells turf and ornamental products through its Chipco Professional Products Group.

Aventis has been shopping the division since early this year, and has been in talks with potential buyers, said company spokeswoman Gisela Vetter-Weirich. She said that the company has decided that a trade sale was the best option for unloading the business unit.

According to news reports over the last month, Bayer and BASF have emerged as potential suitors for the company, which is 76-percent owned by Aventis and 24-percent owned by German pharmaceuticals manufacturer Schering. However, at press time, both companies announced that they were in exclusive talks with Bayer. Previously, Dow and Dupont were also in the running.

Analysts insist that a deal with Bayer will draw scrutiny from regulators because both companies hold strong positions in insecticides. Additionally, Schering will have to approve the sale.

Vetter-Weirich said that Aventis intends to finalize the deal by the end of the year. Analysts predict that price for Aventis CropScience could exceed \$5 billion.

— Andrew Overbeck



PTI bringing polymer coating technology to pesticides

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Pursell Technologies, Inc. has fired up a test run for a new product that will introduce its polymer coating technology to the pesticide marketplace.

The company, which currently uses the technology to produce high-quality controlled-release POLYON fertilizer, is now aggressively exploring possible applications for creating controlled-release pesticides.

The company has received registration for a coated granular acephate product called PRECISE and is now producing it at a pilot unit at its POLYON plant here. The patented no-odor formula of acephate will control mole crickets, fire ants, armyworms, cutworms, and sod webworms. Research is currently being done on grub control.

"PRECISE is being sold under a test market this year due to our limited production capacity until we build a large scale manufacturing plant for these type

of products," said director of market development Jeff Higgins.

According to president and CEO David Pursell, producing a coated acephate product is just the tip of the iceberg.

"We are breaking into a whole new world with the coating of soluble pesticides," he said. "It allows for a controlled release just like our fertilizers. And I think it has the capability to give some of these pesticides a new life because it makes it more environmentally sound as well as safer for workers to handle."

The company will be working with other companies to expand upon this initial use of the coating in pesticides and other products are on the drawing boards. Pursell is bullish about the possibilities. "This is a cutting edge idea that we plan to pursue to diversify the company and grow our business," he said.

I think it has the capability to give some of these pesticides a new life'

— David Pursell

Scotts creates Japanese joint venture

TOKYO — The Scotts Co. has formed Scotts Japan, a joint venture with Mitsui Corp. and Ishihara Sangyo Kaisha (ISK).

The new company will handle the sales and marketing of the Scotts range of specialty slow-release and controlled-release fertilizers for the turf and amenity market. In addition, ISK

will market a range of turf chemicals, including its herbicide Shibagen.

"The formation of Scotts Japan is the first step in providing a comprehensive range of technically advanced brands to the marketplace," said Louis de Kort, Scotts' senior vice president for the professional business group.

This publication gives you good reading, good writing and good arithmetic.

We present the information in our articles clearly, accurately and objectively. That's good writing. Which means good reading.

We present the information in our circulation statement clearly, accurately and objectively. That's good arithmetic.

BPA International helps us provide precise and reliable information to both advertisers and readers.

An independent, not-for-profit organization, BPA International audits our circulation list once a year to make sure it's correct and up to date. The audit makes sure you are who we say you are.

This information enables our advertisers to determine if they are reaching the right people in the right marketplace with the right message.

The audit also benefits you. Because the more a publication and its advertisers know about you, the better they can provide you with articles and advertisements that meet your information needs.

BPA International. Circulation Intelligence for Business & Consumer Media.

270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 212-779-3200.



Tralies comes out of retirement

After just a year of retirement, Phil Tralies has returned to the golf business by taking the post of president and CEO of Club Car.

While Tralies wouldn't equate his move to Michael Jordan's rumored return to the NBA because he "can't go left like Michael can," the 21-year industry veteran admitted that his competitive fires are still burning.

"I felt like I still had some gas left in my tank," he said. "I am 55 years old and I thought I was ready for retirement. I knew that if I wanted to go back to work, it would have to be in the golf industry because of all of my experience and relationships that I have developed over the years. When [previous CEO] Mont Miller and Ingersoll Rand chairman Herb Henkel gave me a call, it was an opportunity I had to take."



Phil Tralies

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Tralies does not think that his 14 years with E-Z-GO, a top competitor, will give him an advantage in his new position.

"I left E-Z-GO in 1994, and the world has changed since then," he said. "I don't think it gives me an advantage per se. But what does give me an advantage is the fact that I know the industry and I have made a lot of mistakes over the years that I won't make twice."

Right now Tralies is focusing on meshing with Club Car's corporate culture.

"Club Car is a very successful company," he added. "I have always said that I never wanted to move into a job where I have to replace Mickey Mantle. Unfortunately, I am coming in here to replace Mickey Mantle. Mont has done a wonderful job here."

— Andrew Overbeck

Club Car, Uplink

Continued from page 1

CEO Phil Tralies, who joined the company in May (GCN June 2001) after 21 years at Textron, the first 14 of which were with E-Z-GO. "Our customer base is looking at ways of increasing revenue, driving cost out, or an accommodation of both. Aligning ourselves with companies like Uplink is strategically important for us as well as for our customers."

More alliances are in the works, according to Tralies, although the focus now will be on capitalizing on the existing agreements.

VALUE-ADDED SOLUTIONS

The Uplink system is designed to enhance the golfer experience and help golf clubs improve profitability. The GPS unit provides distance measurement and allows the golfer to communicate with the pro shop and order food and beverages. It also enables the club to track golf car rounds, monitor car locations and provide emergency contact to and from golfers.

"Uplink is our choice because they hold patents on the technology and we wanted a company that was not only good today but that would be strong going forward," Tralies said.

The Uplink system will be available as an option on all Club Car models, and will be leased separately. Tralies estimated that the additional cost per round will be \$1 for the monochrome unit and \$2 for

color. Course owners will have access to continuous technology upgrades throughout the life of the lease.

"Now the challenge is to drive out cost or increase revenue equal to or greater than the cost of the system," added Tralies. "Cars are the second-largest revenue generator at clubs. This adds value because it helps clubs differentiate themselves from competition and attract additional revenue."

Tralies expects GPS systems to be standard on all cars in the future.

INDUSTRY'S 'TOUGH TIMES'

While helping clubs generate more revenue through value-added solutions is a positive, Tralies said, eventually there is a threshold for how much they can charge for car rentals.

"With supply exceeding demand," he said, "courses are going after smaller pieces of the pie. The only way to offset that is to increase revenues by charging more, but then you have to worry about what your competition is doing."

Strange as it might seem, Tralies welcomes the slowing development trend.

"I shouldn't say that because every new course represents a new customer," he said. "But on the other hand, you have to worry about your customer base at large and make sure they have the ability to be viable in the long term."

"It boils down to getting more people into the game. Hopefully the Golf 20/20 program and the higher ratings for golf on TV will lead to more people being interested in playing golf." ■

Ewing buys Simpson locations

Continued from page 25

Deere's presence and competition in the marketplace.

"We feel that Deere is going to make it a lot better in terms of competition. They are a quality company and so are we," Jones said. "When you have people out there low-balling [contracts] and cutting each other's throats, then you have companies losing out like Simpson

did. With Deere coming in, we think it will be a benefit for all of us."

John Deere's entry will not change Ewing's strategy of steady growth, said Jones. The company plans to keep growing, primarily by opening new outlets and identifying new markets. Jones, however, would not indicate which markets the company is targeting and how many locations it plans to open this year. ■