



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.

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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

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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

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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. ■