**Big lenders throttling back on new course development financing**

*By Jay Finegan*

ATLANTA — Is the party over?

After an all-time high for new golf course openings — 515 last year — the financing climate for course construction has suddenly turned cold. Bankers such as Jeff Burkle at Textron Financial Corp. here in Atlanta, and others across the country, are sharply curtailing new loans.

By some estimates, the number of courses securing financing this year will fall between 30 and 50 percent from 2000 levels.

"There are a lot of projects on the books, just waiting to have their finance packages completed, that are dying on the vine," said Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America. "It's got to be a smokin' deal to get funded right now."

**Colorful cowboy converts ranch into links-style layout**

*By Doug Saunders*

ANTIOCH, Calif. — For the past 26 years Jack Roddy has lived the life of the American cowboy, raising cattle on his 2,200-acre ranch on the eastern edge of the town of Antioch. Just as his father did in the 1940s, Jack ran cattle across the rolling grasslands and toiled to make ends meet.

During the prime years, 40,000 head of cattle roamed these hills, located 45 minutes east of San Francisco. But the stupendous Bay Area population surge of the last decade has turned Antioch into a city of 82,000 people, while the profits in

**Experts urge global assault on Asian beetle**

*By Joel Joyner*

WASHINGTON — Insect-control officials here and elsewhere are calling for a worldwide attack on the Asian Longhorned Beetle, one of the most lethal tree-killers on the planet.

A native of China, Japan and Korea, the beetle has now been found in 14 locations in the U.S.
Syngenta is up and running

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challenge that we have right now is the fact that in some cases Novartis was selling to distributors that Zeneca was not selling to and vice versa.

"Until Oct. 31, we have decided to maintain distribution as it was prior to the merger," he continued. "What we expect to do at that time is to select our long-term partners. This gives us time to evaluate the distribution network."

The company is currently working to cross-train its technical staff, distributors and sales representatives.

E-COMMERCE

Also on the table this year are e-business initiatives. Syngenta is live on the Internet with product information and will be working to provide further technical information concerning disease solutions and product use. E-commerce strategies are also being developed, but Pulliam was quick to note that these will be instituted in partnership with distributors. "We have to be able to compete with the technology in the marketplace as it develops," he said. "Long term we are putting money into e-commerce. With our channel partners there are efficiency opportunities in terms of supply and distribution and moving products."

NEW PRODUCTS

While the combined company's product line has also been enhanced, there is still room for improvement. "We have a strong fungicide portfolio," said DiPaola. "The herbicide side is strong, but we don't service broadleaf weed control. We need to strengthen our insecticide, but Meridian will help there."

The prospect of getting Meridian registered by Environmental Protection Agency for use in turf and ornamentals this year is looking good; the agency recently approved the compound for use in seed treatment.

Another new product that will come to the market in the 2001 season is a weed control product called Touchdown Pro. "It has advantages over Roundup in that it offers rapid uptake and faster burn down," said Breeze.

GROWTH

Going forward, Pulliam is bullish about the market for professional products. "We are very fortunate that the market is continuing to grow," he said. "With continuing new course construction, new residential construction and the growth of the lawn care industry, we are confident that we can develop new products and new chemistry that we can put into that market."

Textron Golf & Turf integrates

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will be spending a lot of capital in the next several months to get it done."

RACINE SHUTDOWN

The Racine factory was originally built to manufacture Packard automobiles. Some 275 factory workers will be eliminated in addition to 125 administrative jobs that will be cut once the division transfers its headquarters to Augusta.

Hyland expects that this will be the only plant closing. "Right now that is the only change in our program that is scheduled," he said. "The consolidation of the two facilities will be completed by next December."

The integration, he said, was a necessary evil.

"We are focusing our use of resources in manufacturing, sales and marketing, information technology, accounting and engineering," said Hyland. "We are sorting out overlaps and combining functions so that in the long run we are a streamlined business that is better able to offer premier customer service and products."

On the product end of the spectrum there also is some sorting out to be done, according to Hyland. "With the acquisitions that Textron has made in the golf market, we have a major opportunity to strengthen our market share," he said. "Those brands are well-recognized and..."
Earth & Turf ready with the MultiSpread 300

Earth & Turf Co. has rolled out a new hydraulically driven topdresser, the MultiSpread 300. The unit will spread a variety of materials such as topdressing for golf greens, chips for pathways or salt-sand for sidewalks or driveways. The MultiSpread 300 has a capacity of 22 cubic feet and has a brush or beater spreading system that has spread patterns of 36- to 72-inches. All of the spreading adjustments can be made easily without the use of tools. For more information, contact: 888-693-2638.

New Initiatives

New product development will be another key to the streamlined business. "These businesses fit together very well. We have the top brands and a focus on the golf market," Hyland said. "The next evolution is developing new technology and products."

At this month's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Show, Textron Golf and Turf will be unveiling its E-Z-GO golf cars that come equipped with Pro Link's GPS-system.

"This is the first opportunity to showcase the technology and our affiliation with Pro Link," said communications manager Ron Skenes. "It is already being used broadly on our golf cars and it will have applications with our other product lines as well." E-Z-GO will also be launching a new line of refreshment vehicles at the show.

E-commerce is another area where the company is developing new strategies. "We think the e-business offers a lot of opportunities," said Hyland. "It provides more efficient ways to deal with our market and the way we run our manufacturing process." While a full-scale e-commerce initiative is still in the formative stage, said Skenes, the company has made a commitment to moving forward with e-business.

"We are stepping up our efforts in introducing new technology to end-users in order to make us more important and make their jobs easier," said Hyland.

E-Z-GO's new Refresher

E-Z-GO is introducing an improved version of its Refresher beverage and snack vehicle. The new Refresher line is built on the Haulster, White Truck and WorkHorse 1200 utility vehicle platforms, boasting beverage can capacities up to 810 and consumable ice storage up to 92 pounds. The Refresher Insert fits onto any existing E-Z-GO WorkHorse utility vehicle and offers storage capacity up to 160 12-ounce cans, movable snack trays and adjustable dividers that create up to four separate compartments for ice and beverages. Each Refresher vehicle refreshment center features an aluminum frame and a canvas cover, and also includes a wide array of options, including condiment trays, bottle caddies, mini bottle carriers, cash drawers and humidors. For more information, contact: www.ezgo.com.

Textron

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we are committed to them. But we are evaluating some products on a case by case basis. It will be a continual process to see how all of those [product] lines fit together."

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