Jefferson County would be a "disaster" in the Willamette Valley contends Agriculture's (ODA) approval of open pollination of Roundup Ready bentgrass. In a petition filed in August, the group called Roundup Ready bentgrass a "superweed" and said the transgenic turfgrass has the potential to cause ecological and economic disruption because it could contaminate other stands of turf. The organization is also petitioning the USDA to list Roundup Ready bentgrass as a noxious weed.

Bill Rose, president of Turf-Seed, has been the most vocal, predicting earlier this year that the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) approval for open pollination of Roundup Ready bentgrass in an 11,000-acre control area in Jefferson County would be a "disaster." He said, "My goal is to try not to get it banned." Rose is concerned that production fields in the Willamette Valley could be contaminated, jeopardizing exports to Japan and Europe, which have strict regulations on genetically modified organisms.

Ross reviews new products of the year

Walk spreaders. One has to wonder what happened to the Toro 4500-D/4700-D which was the most talked about new mowing unit. By learning from the faults of previous large out-front turf rotaries and increasing engine horsepower, this unit has performed very well for many courses.

Another mower which drew high interest this season was the Jacobsen LF 1880 fairway unit. Although not available for the better part of the season, demo units were out in force, and the feedback among superintendents was generally positive. The concept of this fairway mower falls between the triplex and fiveplex. It was being marketed toward high-end facilities with close-cut fairways. It has 18-inch cutting units that are very similar to a greensmower, and follows turf contours very well. We will have to wait until next year to see whether this machine will make a true splash in the fairway marketplace.

Although not new, two pieces of equipment still seem to be the talk of the industry. The Toro Flex 21 may still be the hottest mowing unit on the market. In its second full season, this mower started to dominate the walking greensmower market. One major reason for this (besides the concept of the machine) was the lack of mechanical problems since its debut. This season, Toro also offered attachments for the unit, from brushes to groomers. These additions now offer even greater benefits for this mower.

The second unit that seemed to be on the tip of everyone's tongue, especially those with newer bentgrasses, was the Graden Dethatcher. As superintendents increasingly scrutinize their thatch management plans, this unit seems to be the answer. It offers a use of one-, two- and three-inch blades and adjustable depth of up to one-and-a-half inches, all depending upon the level of aggressiveness desired on green surfaces. Some courses even combined the Graden with the aerification operation to achieve very high thatch percentage removal.

There is also resistance from groups in the United States like the International Center for Technology Assessment, which is pressing the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to deny Scotts' and Monsanto's petition for approval of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass. In a petition filed in August, the group called Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass a "superweed" and said the transgenic turfgrass has the potential to cause ecological and economic disruption because it could contaminate other stands of turf. The organization is also petitioning the USDA to list Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass as a noxious weed.

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