First Tee gets good news

Armed with 14 colleges and universities providing scholarships to participants, The First Tee is on track to meet its goals.

Lesco to add stores-on-wheels

President and CEO Michael DiMino is leading the charge to expand Lesco's sales and distribution capabilities.

Drought concerns linger into winter

State water restrictions forbid the irrigation of roughs this summer at Dauphin Highlands Golf Course in Oberlin, Pa.

Bayer to sell fipronil product line to BASF

The deal for Bayer's acquisition of Aventis CropScience and the creation of Bayer Environmental Sciences would be more appropriate.
Turf-Seed continues research on male sterile and naturally Roundup tolerant turfgrass

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HUBBARD, Ore. — The development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass by Scotts and Monsanto has been a contentious issue at the center of a national debate over the use of genetically engineered herbicides in the United States. Bill Rose, president of Turf-Seed, has been the most vocal in predicting that creeping bentgrass would be a "disaster." 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.

Turf-Seed, founded by Carrothers and Fire Star. Bayer divests fipronil

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walk spreaders. One has to wonder what took so long for us to have these.

When it comes to iron, the debut of the Toro 4500-D/4700-D was probably 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 fivelex. 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 a popular choice. It offers the use of one-, two- and three-mm 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 "superweeed" 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.

Rose, however, is trying to avoid the above scenarios by developing Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass that is male sterile, reducing the chances of any cross-contamination. In October, researchers said that they had a male sterile bentgrass plant.

"We found a number of plants that are transgenic that are proven to be male sterile," said Rose. "The results in October look very good, but we will wait until January or February for another generation to confirm it." After confirmation, Rose said, the next step will be to conduct field-testing and that will require getting a permit from the ODA.

Bayer divests fipronil

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developed for the greenhouse industry, the fipronil diversitewill directly impact the golf market. Current fipronil products include Chico Choice, Top Choice and Fire Star.

"We have the right to negotiate licensing back the products, but there is no guarantee," Carrothers said. "But the opportunity for a co-exclusive is part of the negotiations. If licensing back the products doesn't pan out, Carrothers said Bayer ES would still have a very strong product line. "It is not critical to our business model," he said. "Our portfolio is still extremely strong. We have products like 26GT, Merit, Compass and Bayleton that will make a huge impact in the golf market. Bayer ES also has three insecticides, two herbicides and four fungicides in development right now.

Three of the new products are currently in the registration process with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Those being reviewed include: Triton, a broad-spectrum fungicide; Lynx, a sterile inhibitor fungicide; and Revolver, a post-emergent herbicide that removes cool-season turf from warm-season turf.

"When we look at our project review, we look at what diseases and pests are controlled and what the unique selling proposition is," said Carrothers. "Then we look at whether the active ingredient is compatible with an EPA perspective. All of this is being looked at to make sure we come out with new technology that our customers want and need. We need to bring new solutions to superintendents to help them more effectively manage their courses."