McManus named to Becker Underwood board
AMES, Iowa — Becker Underwood has named Ian McManus to its board of directors, who oversees the company's global operations. McManus, who was formerly a member of the executive committee of Aventis CropScience, will be integral in the company's strategic planning and market expansion.

Bayer gains FTC approval for Aventis CropScience buyout
WASHINGTON — The Federal Trade Commission granted conditional approval for Bayer’s purchase of Aventis CropScience May 30. The FTC approval was the final step in the $6.4 billion deal that was approved April 17 by the European Commission.

As part of the buyout, regulators are forcing the companies to divest their acetamiprid and fipronil crop insecticides and their atrazine and other herbicides. Bayer is required to divest for each product must be found within six months.

The deal marks the end of the road for Aventis CropScience, which was put on the market by its parent company Aventis SA in November 2000. The Bayer buyout was announced in October 2001 following a summer of exclusive talks between the two companies. The combined company will be the number two player in the agrochemical marketplace behind market leader Syngenta AG.

Becker Underwood aligns MicroBio operating and marketing functions
By ANDREW OVERBECK
AMES, Iowa — In a move to capitalize on its expanding global presence, Becker Underwood has aligned the marketing and operations activities of the Canada and U.K.-based MicroBio Group it acquired in 2000.

“Becker Underwood didn’t get any of that brand equity because many of our customers did not recognize that we owned MicroBio,” said Roger Underwood, CEO. “They are the largest beneficial nematode producer in the world and it has a strong biopesticide business. But Becker Underwood didn’t get any of it, either.”

By consolidating MicroBio under the Becker Underwood name, Underwood hopes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

“When we torn the wall down, it is no longer us and them,” he said. “We will have more global staff meetings and development teams are being put together.”

Syngenta primed for continued growth
By ANDREW OVERBECK
GREENSBORO, N.C. — Syngenta Professional Products has adjusted its management structure internally to improve operational efficiency and drive growth.

“There is no change in the original structure that was put in place when Syngenta was formed but we have refined the structure to create an organization that had business units aligned around similar end user groupings,” said Keelan Pulliam, group head of professional products.

“Last year we had three groups and this year we have four. We wanted to get groups that have more similar activities and projects to align marketing efforts.”

While business has been dismal on the agricultural side, the professional products division is primed for future growth according to Pulliam.

“On the professional side the markets have grown over the past four years and we are restructuring professional products as a net gainer of people and resources,” he said. “To maintain our top position we have to find some new projects, make formulation and packaging improvements and build better information systems.

In order to do this, Syngenta has beefed up its strategic marketing and customer management staffs.

“We are also getting closer with our new soil insecticide thiamethoxam,” said Pulliam. “We expect registration from the Environmental Protection Agency in time for the 2003 season.”

While Syngenta continues its work on thiamethoxam, its Touchdown Pro glyphosate product gained EPA approval for forestry and aquatic use.

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH
The Bobcat T190 Compact Track Loader features improved flotation with 12.6-in. rubber tracks that produce five pounds per square inch of ground pressure. This decreases ground disturbance and allows the unit to be used in wet weather conditions. The T190 is powered by a 56-hp turbocharged diesel engine and has a 1,900-pound rated operating capacity, a 118.2-inch lift height and auxiliary hydraulic output of 16.7 gpm. For more information, contact www.bobcat.com.