

Advanced Turf Solutions merges with Turf Professionals Choice

FISHERS, Ind. — Advanced Turf Solutions and Turf Professionals Choice, two Indianapolis-area distributors, have merged operations under the Advanced Turf Solutions name. The combined company, which focuses on post-patent chemistry, now serves all of Indiana and Kentucky as well as Southern Ohio.

Alex Cannon is the president of the new company and Dan Dunham is vice president of operations. Vic Garcia, the founder of

Turf Professionals Choice, has ownership in the company and serves on the board of directors. Garcia will continue to service his customers in the field and play other key roles in management.

The company distributes a full line of professional turf maintenance products and golf course accessories. Advanced Turf Solutions is headquartered in Fishers where it has a 28,000-square-foot facility. The company also has a smaller facility in Lexington, Kent.

Textron focus

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and turf backgrounds. We are taking a fresh look at all of this equipment."

Among the areas being looked at said Vickers are next generation cutting units, alternative power sources, and technology from Textron's other divisions such as Omnicup and Bell Helicopter.

Vickers' first task will be to streamline Textron's product platforms.

"We will whittle down the number of configurations and go to a minimum number of platforms," he said. "For example, we have duplicate platforms in the triplex mowers but we have to target that while retaining functionality for all the markets."

At the same time, Vickers is also working on new products.

"We have the new LF 1880 fairway mower out there right

now and we will be looking at how we can add a greens mower and a trim mower to that new platform," Vickers said. "We will also be concentrating heavily on walk-behind greens mowers because our competition already has an advantage there. The first phase of a new line of walk-behind greens mowers will be announced later this year."

Textron is also ramping up its testing facility at its 270,000 square-foot factory in Charlotte.

"We will have a 24-hour-a-day track for outdoor durability testing and we are also putting in a par-3 hole that will give us all of the elements of the golf course right there at the factory," said Vickers.

The 125-yard hole will have a 6,000 square-foot green, three different tee boxes and will have sand traps and waste bunkers.

"It will give us the capability to look at different aspects of a development program without having

Syngenta

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earlier than scheduled.

"You can now use it as a trim and edge product around ponds and lakes and other bodies of water," Pulliam said.

With Bayer's buyout of Aventis approved, Pulliam re-

"To maintain our top position we have to find new projects and make formulation improvements."
— Keelan Pulliam

mains confident that Syngenta will remain on top in the turf and ornamental market.

"Acquisitions and consolidations and mergers have been a big part of this industry in the last five to seven years and as a supplier you learn to deal with it," he said. "We will continue to be number one in turf and ornamentals after the acquisition."

As part of the Aventis acquisition, European Union officials and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission have forced Bayer to shed several insecticide products (see story on previous page). Pulliam said Syngenta might be looking to pick up the pieces.

"We are always interested in opportunities if they present themselves," said Pulliam. ■

to go to a golf course," Vickers said. "It will also allow customers to try out our new products at the factory." ■

SRO to remain 'vigilant'

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the market this year as opposed to the incredibly low prices that we saw last year."

Dunn said that he recognizes that many courses have had budgets cut this year, but believes overseeding usage will be about the same as it was last year.

"Some courses may reduce overseeding acreage this year, but I don't think many will forgo overseeding altogether because it is just too risky," he said. "I am not saying that budgets have not come under pressure, but with fewer golfers out there the competition for them will be keener. Courses will find a way [to overseed]."

The construction slowdown doesn't worry Dunn either. "With more renovation work going on we are working on our approach

to smaller projects. Instead of selling 50,000 pounds of seed to one project, it now takes three projects," Dunn said. "So we are stepping up our communication between our tech support agronomists, architects, builders and distributors to try and improve our service on that side."

With Mike Robinson working internationally and on new product development, Dunn is looking forward to continuing SRO's advancement.

"SRO has a good reputation in the business and that is not something you create overnight," said Dunn. "My challenge is to work in a market that is much tougher and to stay vigilant and look for opportunities while working to support the customer and keep them satisfied." ■

Becker Underwood aligns ops

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The company now has 27 global sales representatives on three continents.

"The market in the United States is continuing to grow as the market trends toward using integrated pest management practices," Underwood said. "The market in Europe is even stronger because the portfolio of traditional pesticides is really small."


Aware that many superintendents are wary of biological solutions, Underwood is putting emphasis on developing real world product tests.

"We put our superintendents hats on when we do this work," he

said. "Often in when there is research going on in a lab there is more 'r' going on than 'd.' Many things work under perfect conditions. But there aren't perfect conditions in the real world. We are working on provable solutions that give the superintendent value."

Going forward, the company has new products in the both the traditional and biopesticide areas that are getting closer to market.


"One is a biopesticide that will provide superintendents another biological option besides traditional insecticides," Underwood said. "But we are still in development and we are summarizing the data." ■




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