



## BRIEFS

### GARRISON TO HEAD E-Z-GO

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Textron Inc. has named John L. Garrison president of E-Z-GO. Garrison will be responsible for all aspects of the golf car and utility vehicle company including sales, marketing, engineering, and manufacturing. He will report to Greg Hyland, president of Textron's Industrial Products segment. Prior to joining E-Z-GO, Garrison was chairman, president and CEO of water and wastewater management manufacturer Azurix Corp. He also served as vice president and general manager for Case Corp.'s North American Agricultural Group.

### SIMPLIOT BRINGS IN RICKARD

BOISE, Idaho — Simplot has selected Dr. David Rickard to fill the newly created position of product development specialist. In this new capacity, Rickard will coordinate the commercial turfgrass research department at Jacklin Seed and the continued expansion of fertilizer and specialty product formulations under the BEST, APEX and Simplot Partners brand names. During his 27-year career, Rickard has worked for state government, chemical companies, universities and recently ran his own consulting firm where he specialized in the development of new agricultural technology products. He has overseen product development in biological controls, methyl bromide alternatives, organic soil amendments and foliar fertilizers.



Dr. David Rickard

Simplot has also named Trent Bradford to the post of fertilizer manager for the Professional Products Division's eastern region.

### GROWTH PRODUCTS ADDS ACKERSON

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — Growth Products has added Gary Ackerson to its staff of technical sales representatives. He will cover a territory that encompasses Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Prior to joining Growth Products, Ackerson was an assistant golf course superintendent, a division manager for a biological company, and a turf consultant for a raw materials company.

## Golf Ventures adds Web site to support nationwide expansion

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAKELAND, Fla. — In a move to support the expansion of its distribution business nationwide, Golf Ventures has introduced an online catalog at [golfventuresonline.com](http://golfventuresonline.com).

The new Web site replaces the now-defunct [golfbusiness.com](http://golfbusiness.com). That property has been split between Golf Ventures and International Club Suppliers (ICS). Golf Ventures, which has been in the distribution business in Florida and parts of Georgia since 1986, will handle turf and ornamental products, and ICS has become a food and beverage provider.

"We are expanding across the rest of the United States and this site will assist us with that," said Debbie Nipper, director of national project and marketing. "The site features the main items that we carry, and has sections for service, forums, auctions and specials."

Golf Ventures, which is under the umbrella of Meadowbrook Golf, distributes fertilizers, chemicals, and golf accessories and has agreements with companies such as Helena Chemical, Par Aide and Standard Golf. It is the exclusive provider for the 110 courses managed by Meadowbrook's International

Golf Maintenance.

Golf Venture's nationwide roll out is already well underway.

"We have already added sales staff in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kansas and Missouri and will be adding more in the first half of the year," said Nipper. The company now has 25 sales



Superintendents try out [golfventuresonline](http://golfventuresonline.com) in Orlando.

representatives and may also add some warehouse locations as it expands.

"The Web site will act as a tool for the sales side," Nipper added. "The superintendent or mechanic can go to the site and find items faster and perform searches. They can call and place an order, go through the sales person or order online."

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## Brandt enters golf business with Parkway purchase

HOUSTON — Parkway Research has been purchased by Midwestern agricultural fertilizer manufacturer Brandt Consolidated, adding to that company's growing presence in the green industry. Brandt, which operates 11 liquid fertilizer and micronutrient plants in Illinois, also bought Florida-based Agra Chem in July.

"Agra Chem produces fertilizer and chemicals for the citrus business in Florida, and Parkway fills in the gaps giving Brandt access to the turf and ornamental and lawn and garden markets," said Ray Kimmel, former Parkway president.

Parkway will become a part of Brandt's Clawel Specialty Products division, but will continue to operate out of Houston and Kimmel will remain on board as the general manager of Parkway. Clawel will now offer micronutrients, specialty chemicals and adjuvants to the commercial agriculture, turf, horticulture and lawn and garden markets.

"This is a pretty exciting time around here," said Kimmel.

"We will have broader product lines and more access to technology. There is a lot of new technology on the horizon, and we expect to announce new releases over the next several months."

In addition to a full line of



Ray Kimmel, right, at the show in Orlando

fertilizers, wetting agents and colorants and indicators, Parkway also makes specialty turf products such as Consan fungicide and Neo-Tec bionematicide.

Kimmel expects the company to continue to thrive in the golf market.

"Our prime market is golf," he said. "We have a highly specialized product line designed to fill certain niches. We don't sell generic products, so as a result we have remained healthier than most."

— Andrew Overbeck

## ProSource One expects strong 2002 growth

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Now that ProSource One's ownership issues have been settled, the company is moving forward and expects a strong growth curve for 2002.

The fertilizer supplier has bounced around a lot over the past several years. Agrilience bought



Bob Lee

ProSource One in 1999 after it was put up for sale by Terra Industries in 1998. In 2001, the company was almost sold to Royster-Clark Group, but a newly committed Agrilience called off the deal.

"Agrilience is looking at us as a vehicle for growth," said director Bob Lee. "We are working on a plan to grow the professional side of the business without making a major acquisition."

The company currently has sixty-five sales people and sales of between \$170 and \$200 million.

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## Gowan acquires Rubigan fungicide from Dow

By ANDREW OVERBECK

YUMA, Ariz. — Gowan Co. and Portugal-based Margarita Internacional have acquired Rubigan fungicide from Dow AgroSciences. The purchase includes all registrations and trade names. Gowan will market the products in the United States and Canada and Margarita will handle the product outside North America. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

While the principle driver behind the sale were the agricultural and horticultural uses of the product, Gowan said it will still pursue Rubigan's golf and turf uses. Rubigan is a broad spectrum, locally systemic liquid fungicide for curative and preventive control of dollar spot and other key diseases on turfgrass and ornamentals. It is also used to control *Poa annua* in overseeded, warm-season turfgrass.

"We specialize in taking molecules that other companies have lost interest in and breathing new life into them," said Gowan's Jim McNutt. "Rubigan has been on the market since 1987, and it has been neglected because there are newer Sterol Inhibitors on the market. We still think there is life in Rubigan. We think it is as good as the rest and that there are some things to latch onto and leverage to keep the sales going."

Dow AgroSciences decided to jettison Rubigan because it overlapped with the broad fungicide line that it acquired in the Rohm and Haas buy out.

"Rohm and Haas gave us a strategic position in the global fungicide business," said Bruce Meile, general manager of Dow AgroScience's turf and ornamental business. "We discovered that while Rubigan and Rohm and Haas' fungicides were not directly competitive, there were a number of uses that were partially overlapping."

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## Kevin Ross' new product awards

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booths, you can't help but think where we were ten years ago with these units. Fairway topdressers were almost nonexistent, and now every manufacturer has their own model. Turfco introduced new refinements with the **WideSpin 1530**. This unit is being advertised as the dual-purpose machine, to address both super light topdressings and heavier applications for aerification purposes.



Turfco's WideSpin 1530

### OLD BUT STILL SIMMERING

Some items, although not new in Orlando, are still hot topics of discussions. The **Graden dethacher/verticutter** has become maybe the hottest topic in present

day turf management. This unit has gathered some amazing steam since its debut. So much so that it receives my *Imitation is the Best Form of Flattery Award*. At least three other companies have put their Graden version on the market. All the credit should not solely go to Graden, however. The development of the "Superbents" and "Ultradwarfs" certainly has given this

machine an assist in its popularity.

- The **Toro Flex 21** gets the *Hottest Mowing Unit Award*. After its debut in Dallas last year, this mower is riding a wave of incredible popularity. It far exceeded its sales projections for 2001, and Toro is looking forward to an even bigger



Toro's Flex 21 gets Hottest Mowing Unit Award

year in 2002. This year Toro has added a **groomer and two different brush attachments** as options for the Flex unit.

These are all the items that caught my eye at "The Big Show" in Orlando. I can't wait to see what Atlanta 2003 can deliver. ■

## Musick and Quinn buy Florida's LaCita CC

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"We thought a private club was the best market to get into for our first club," he explained. "The daily-fee market, especially here in Florida, is such a price conscious market. There are a lot of golf courses in the state and a lot of competition. We felt a private club would give us an edge up on service and the quality of the facility would enhance the membership. It was a good fit."

The club was previously owned and operated by ClubCorp (CCA). The purchase price was more than two million, according to Musick. "There are four of us as partners," he said. "Dale and myself are the managing partners. There's an attorney, Kenneth Senn, in Colorado who also holds a real estate license and helped out with the legal aspects of the acquisition, and Louis Reeder, a businessman in Texas, who brought a great deal of business experience with him. We each own a 25 percent interest in the club."

### WINNING BACK MEMBERSHIP

The initial goal for the two managing partners is to boost the membership numbers. The club once had over 1,800 members, and currently has just over 900 members with about 245 full golf members. The other memberships include pool and fitness, tennis and social memberships.

"We'd like to get the golf membership numbers up to around the 325 to 350 mark," said Musick. "In a five year period, CCA had seven general managers here at the club. It was basically a revolving door. Our objective is to win over the support of our current members and begin to grow the membership through word of mouth. Members have told us that having two of the owners available here on location is a big benefit."

Musick and Quinn closed the deal Nov. 30, on a Friday, and were out on the course making changes the following Monday. "It was a little wet in some areas, and we put in a considerable amount of drainage," said Quinn.

Drainage was installed on holes five, eight, 12, 13, 14, and 15. "The project was

well received by the members. On the fifth hole, members had never been able to take their carts out into the fairway. After the work, they were in the fairway within less than four weeks," said Quinn.

The club is situated on 150 acres of property. "We've also done some landscaping around the clubhouse, and we've recently established an 'adopt-a-hole' program here," said Quinn. "Groups of members have been interested in enhancing the landscape on the course. We'll have four or five families for each hole, and we'll focus on things like beautifying the tee

boxes. They are certainly enthusiastic and want to participate, so they can help out by donating some of their time and dollars. They also can go out in the evenings to fill divots and repair ball marks on their adopted holes."

The club is also creating a memorial for those members who have passed on, according to Quinn. "They approached us about establishing a memorial," he said. "We've already cleared a visible area on the course where members will be able to purchase commemorative bricks. There will be about 900 bricks made available to them, and we expect that they'll sell out rather quickly."

### LOCAL BUSINESS, GROWING MEMBERSHIP

The club is targeting corporate events and building a strong connection with the community. "We've tried to keep a lot of our business local," said Musick. "We do business right across the street at the bank, we have our lease vehicles from the Ford dealership in town, and our carrier for all of our property and liability insurance is just across the street. We're working to remain community focused. They

help make up our membership, so it's a two-way street."

Though private, the club does host outside events like corporate outings and charitable fund-raisers on the agenda. "There's a Hospice fund-raiser coming up, and we've got the fifth an-



The ninth green at LaCita Country Club

nual Space Coast Junior Golf tournament in April during the weekend of the Masters," said Quinn. "David Leadbetter brings his top 20 students to the club, and the field is limited to 84 players." The club is supportive of local junior golfers by inviting young players and high school students to play the course free of charge.

The club has implemented a membership incentive plan that will carry through until the middle of March. "We've sent letters to our members to invite their friends and associates to join the club," said Musick. "By helping us sign up new members, they'll receive a reduction on their monthly bill."

"After the middle of March, we'll be looking at some outside advertising," he added. "In addition, from CCA files, we sent about 200 letters to previous members offering them a 50 percent reduction on their initiation fee if they wish to return to the club. Right now, we think that word-of-mouth will be a key factor for us. Once previous members hear that the service, quality of the course, and consis-

## ProSource One eyes growth

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ProSource One covers the United States from the upper Midwest to the Southeast and has a small presence in New England and the Southwest that may soon be expanded.

According to Lee, the company has already added two members to the sales team in the Carolinas and has bolstered its staff in Florida.

Hiring will be key to the company's short-term growth, Lee said. "We want to hire people who can bring business with them," he said. "We are getting new, experienced people on board and we are improving our business in the markets we are already in. We also will be looking at some small acquisitions."

The uncertainty surrounding ProSource One has afforded the company some advantages, said Lee.

"We have been through the hardest part," he said. "I think we have taken out most of our weak spots, and now we just need to work on growing the business."

While he admitted that the turf business was going to be difficult going forward, Lee said he is confident that they can grow the business.

"The market itself is not growing and [superintendent's] budgets are going to be conservative," said Lee. "Our sales staff has to be more of a consultant and help customers solve problems. We can't just be coming in and selling on price." ■

— Andrew Overbeck

## Golf Ventures

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Nipper said the site will eventually serve up online parts information, technical tips and support.

### OTHER AGREEMENTS

Although Golf Ventures works exclusively with Meadowbrook, that association does not preclude it from offering its services to other management companies.

"We offer management companies an opportunity to control prices," said Nipper. "We see the opportunity there and want to provide them with quality products as well. We are working with other major golf course owners, and we have several national accounts pending."

In addition, Nipper said the company is pursuing an agreement with the National Golf Course Owners Association and is exploring ways it could work with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Golf Super-Market. ■

tency is back at the club, we believe a lot of members will return."

The club projects anywhere from 35,000 to 37,000 rounds of golf this year, according to Musick. The facility also features a swimming pool with a cabana and Jacuzzi, a fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment, a tennis facility across the street with six courts and a separate building with two racquetball courts. ■