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. The new Web site replaces the now-defunct 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 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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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. Agrilance bought ProSource One in 1999 after it was put up for sale by Tyco Industries in 1998. In 2001, the company was almost sold to Royster-Clark Group, but a newly committed Agrilance called off the deal.

"Agrilance 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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Textron retools sales and marketing team

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products has named Dennis Schwieger as its new director of global distribution. He joins Textron from Valmont Industries where he was vice president of sales and marketing for turf and professional lawn care (PLC) division.

Three other new vice presidents will report to Schwieger:
• Ralph Nicolota has been promoted to vice president of marketing and product management — turf and PLC. Nicotera has been with the company for 27 years, most recently directing sales and dealer development for turf and PLC.
• Joe Thompson has been appointed as vice president of sales – turf. Prior to joining Textron, Thompson worked for John Deere and Case Construction.
• Joel Lafollette is the new vice president of customer care — turf and PLC. He joins Textron from CNH Corp, where he held several executive sales and marketing positions.

Syngenta, Bayer end neonicotinoid dispute

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“...continue litigation we were going to incur heavy legal bills, and it became a business issue for both parties to come to an agreement that benefited both of us,” said director of corporate communications Ken Gordon.

As part of the settlement, Syngenta will pay Bayer $120 million in return for full access to crop protection and related markets worldwide for thiamethoxam. The company expects global sales of thiamethoxam to top $200 million.

According to Chuck Buffington, market manager for Syngenta’s lawn and landscape division, it is not unusual to have different patented active ingredients within the same chemical class.

“Heritage and Compass are both trade-marked and patented strobilurin chemistries but are significantly different products,” he said. “Now there are two neonicotinoid chemistries.

While Syngenta has already registered thiamethoxam for agricultural and crop uses elsewhere in the world, it is still waiting for the Environmental Protection Agency to register Meridian, its first thiamethoxam product for the turf and ornamental business.

Meridian offers lower use rates, broad-spectrum control on multiple grub species, and increased late season activity, Syngenta expects registration by late 2002 or early 2003.

For its part, Bayer is confident that its neonicotinoid product, Merit, will continue to lead the grub control market.

“The dispute was costing both parties a lot of time and money,” said Dan Carrothers, director of marketing for Bayer Garden and Professional Care. “Setting the date was the right decision. We feel very strongly about our position in grub control.”

Bayer has been selling Merit since 1994 and has unveiled a marketing campaign that offers a full guarantee that its product will control grubs.

According to turf and ornamental brand manager Michael Daly, the new campaign will help superintendents mitigate risk by helping them time applications of Merit for preventive control and applications of Dylox for curative control.

Dow sells Rubigan

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We had to choose between Eagle or Rubigan, and Eagle is newer and more widely recognized.”

According to Gowan’s turf sales manager Steve Peterson, Rubigan will be a big part of the company’s turf offering. “We are going to run with it on the turf side,” he said. “We will maintain the existing market and keep it in front of the Poa annua market.”

In the short term, McNutt said Gowan will not make any major changes. “Initially, I don’t see a whole lot of changes between what they were doing and what we are doing,” he said. “It usually takes us a year or two to get used to a new product and hear our sales and technical team find new fits and uses and different positions that we can take.”

With the divestiture of Rubigan, Meile said the integration of the Dow AgroSciences and the Rohm and Haas product lines is pretty much complete. “We are 95-percent done,” he said. “It has been eight months since the close date and we have taken care of the people issues, technology transfers and product overlap.

The final challenge, according to Meile, will be wrapping up product code issues, revising logos and literature, and handling registration and state label problems.