EMERSON, N.J.—Meadowbrook Golf's growing contract maintenance division, International Golf Management (IGM) has hit a roadblock in New Jersey, losing five contracts in the state over the last year.

As a result of the poor conditions at Emerson, UPG decided to close the course in September 2001 and shift play to its sister course, Valley Brook Golf Club in Rivervale. The lawsuit said this situation caused UPG to lose revenues from 2000 to 2001, the average fee charged at Emerson. As a result, the owners allege both courses suffered damaged reputations and conditions at Valley Brook suffered from heavy play. Both courses are still charging pro-rated rates this season to drive play back to the layouts.

According to Scott Zakany, executive vice president for IGM, the poor conditions at Emerson GC were due to poor construction. "Last summer was a tough summer in New Jersey with heat and rainfall," he said. "We lost three greens because they were 85 to 95 percent Poa annua. The rest of the course was in good shape. These greens don't drain, they are bowls. When they don't drain they stay saturated. When you have saturated grass growing in the sun with poor drainage, you can't water it."

They lost greens for several years prior to IGM coming on property, and they lost again this year after IGM ended the relationship with the course," Zakany added.

As the result of the damage, the Senior PGA Tour's Lightpath Long Island Classic, which was held the first weekend in August. The damage, however, did not disrupt the tournament.

The damage, however, did not disrupt the tournament. The vandals struck sometime during the night of July 29, digging holes with shovels on the second, fourth, and fifth fairway greens. The green on the par-3, 195-yard fourth hole suffered the most damage with an 18-inch wide by one-foot deep hole dug around the cup in the middle of the green.

"We found the damage at 5:30 a.m. Tuesday morning," said superintendent John Carlone. "We had holes two and five fixed and back into play that morning but we had to close the fourth green." All 18 holes were ready to go for the tournament by Friday.

On the fourth green, Carlone's crew took sod from the back of the green and placed it over the damaged section. They then patched the back of the green with sod from their on-site nursery.

N.Y. course recovers quickly from activists' vandalism

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JERICHO, N.Y.—In a communiqué issued July 31, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) took responsibility for vandalizing three greens at The Meadow Brook Club, the host of the Senior PGA Tour's Lightpath Long Island Classic, which was held the first weekend in August. The damage, however, did not disrupt the tournament.

As a result of the damage, the Senior PGA Tour's Lightpath Long Island Classic, which was held the first weekend in August. The damage, however, did not disrupt the tournament. The vandals struck sometime during the night of July 29, digging holes with shovels on the second, fourth, and fifth fairway greens. The green on the par-3, 195-yard fourth hole suffered the most damage with an 18-inch wide by one-foot deep hole dug around the cup in the middle of the green.

"We found the damage at 5:30 a.m. Tuesday morning," said superintendent John Carlone. "We had holes two and five fixed and back into play that morning but we had to close the fourth green." All 18 holes were ready to go for the tournament by Friday.

On the fourth green, Carlone's crew took sod from the back of the green and placed it over the damaged section. They then patched the back of the green with sod from their on-site nursery.

The Nassau County Police Department's Special Investigations Unit is handling the case.

Construction down, participation up, according to first Golf 20/20 report

By DEREK RICE

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla.— Gone are the days of the 1990s, when new course openings were at an all-time high. New course openings are becoming fewer and farther between as the industry tries to adjust to new participation levels, according to the first annual Golf Industry Report from Golf 20/20, which took a look at the state of various aspects of the game.

In fact, the report concludes, fewer courses are being planned and opened now than at any time in the last decade, and an increasingly smaller percentage of those being planned and opened are public-access courses.

The increase in the number of courses in recent years have gone from 3.2 percent in 2000 to 2.1 in 2001 percent. The projected increase this year is only 1.8 percent. However, given no change in rounds played from 2000 to 2001, the average number of rounds per course went from 33,737 in 2000 to 33,000 in 2001. Last year also saw the closing of 27 courses, five of which are scheduled to reopen in the future. Of the remaining 22, closed for financial reasons, while the others closed for either environmental reasons or because they were designed by a public entity for public use, such as a highway.

Where these courses have closed, the land has been used for everything from schools to housing developments. Twenty-five of these 27 courses were daily-fee and two were municipal.

However, all the news in the report was not gloomy. Among the other findings are:

• The number of participants rose from 36 million in 2000 to 37.1 million in 2001, which meets the industry's objective of adding at least one million participants (defined as someone five or older who has played at least one round of regulation golf or used an alternative facility or golf range in the last 12 months) per year from 2000 to 2020. On the other hand, the number of golfers (someone 18 or older who has played at least one round of regulation golf in the last 12 months) increased only slightly, from 25.4 million to 25.8 million.

• Studies in 2001 indicate an increase in the number of occasional golfers (one to three times a year) across all age groups compared to 2000.

• In 2001, the number of golfers (someone 18 or older who has played at least one round of regulation golf in the last 12 months) increased only slightly, from 25.4 million to 25.8 million.

• Studies in 2001 indicate an increase in the number of occasional golfers (one to three times a year) across all age groups compared to 2000.

The number of participants rose from 36 million in 2000 to 37.1 million in 2001, which meets the industry's objective of adding at least one million participants (defined as someone five or older who has played at least one round of regulation golf or used an alternative facility or golf range in the last 12 months) per year from 2000 to 2020. On the other hand, the number of golfers (someone 18 or older who has played at least one round of regulation golf in the last 12 months) increased only slightly, from 25.4 million to 25.8 million.

• Studies in 2001 indicate an increase in the number of occasional golfers (one to three times a year) across all age groups compared to 2000.
Roundup Ready control area aims to prevent contamination

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MADRAS, Ore. — The Scotts Co., Monsanto and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) have established an 11,000-acre control area for the production of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass to prevent against the danger of cross-pollination with conventional creeping bentgrass.

Four hundred acres of the genetically altered turfgrass will be planted this fall in Jefferson County, which is more than 110 miles away from the country’s primary bentgrass production region in Oregon’s Willamette Valley.

“We feel really good about the safeguards that have been put in place that will protect conventional production,” said ODA spokesman Bruce Pokarney. “One of the things that came out of the stewardship is to make sure that there are steps in place that will allow the control area as a setback, Rose is still pressing forward with his own plan to develop herbicide resistant turfgrass that is male sterile. Rose said sterility could be demonstrated as early as the end of this summer. From there, commercial production of the seed could occur within three years.

GMO turf moving closer to reality

Continued from page 1

being produced with Roundup Ready technology,” said Dr. Kevin Turner, director of seed research and production for Scotts. “It seemed like the most appropriate first project. The next step was deciding which species should be our target. Helping golf course superintendents take care of Poa annua in bentgrass was the obvious project to work on.”

Developing Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass, however, was relatively easy because it involved altering just one gene. Inserting drought tolerance or disease resistance will be more complicated and expensive because it will likely involve altering multiple genes.

“Biotechnology is in the Model-T phase,” said Harriman. “The Roundup Ready gene can be proved very quickly, but developing disease resistance is much harder and will take longer.”

Looking to the future, Harriman said developing disease, insect and drought resistant turfgrass is the ultimate goal.

“If we think about the stresses that lead to decline and how we can change that, the possibilities from a performance and aesthetic standpoint and a cost reduction standpoint are impressive,” he said.

While the goal of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass and other genetically altered varieties are to make the superintendent’s job easier, it will not replace agronomic knowledge.

“We will have dedicated seed cleaning plants and equipment, and will monitor the production fields,” Turner said. “We have a multifaceted plan to manage crossing are very, very low.” As a result of the concerns, however, Turner worked with the ODA to create the control area guidelines to insure against any contamination (see box).

“The performance bond is a good thing because it makes growers comply with all the stewardship requirements and quality specifications that need to be addressed.”

JOBS OVER SAFETY

Bill Rose, president of Tee-2-Green and primary detractor of the Roundup Ready control area, is still not satisfied with the stewardship measures. “I can easily predict disaster for open pollination,” Rose said. “As a result of this control area I expect to see genetically-altered turfgrass banned in the United States. My goal is to try to get it banned.”

While he views the ODA’s decision to allow the control area as a setback, Rose is still pressing forward with his own plan to develop herbicide resistant turfgrass that is male sterile. Rose said sterility could be demonstrated as early as the end of this summer. From there, commercial production of the seed could occur within three years.

Once approved, Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass will first be available as a fairway turfgrass variety. Data is still being collected on its ability to function on greens, but a greens-specific variety will be released in the next two to three years, said Harriman. The fairway variety can be sprayed with Roundup at 32-ounce per acre rates.

Wayne Horman, director of seed sales and marketing, estimates the initial market for Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass at 2,000 to 3,000 courses.

“I think we must be very careful in doing this and not jump the gun before all research and potential for a negative impact is determined,” Rose said. “I don’t think there is too large a risk and will have trouble finding other things to do in their pursuit of quality within budgets.”

— Tom Isack, president, CourseCo Inc.

IGM lawsuit

Continued from page 3

In the Battleground lawsuit, IGM has filed suit against the club for payment of $300,000 in maintenance fees that it has yet to receive. Club officials and lawyers for both sides declined to comment, but that case is headed for mediation and could be decided as early as the end of August.

As for the other New Jersey contracts IGM lost last year, maintenance at Glenwood CC in Old Bridge was taken over by Environmental Golf, and maintenance at Bear Brook GC in Newton was brought back in house by new owners Gale and Kistson.

“IGM has lost all its contracts. It lost because of maintenance contracts,” said Tom Isack, president, CourseCo Inc.

While he views the ODA’s decision to allow the control area as a setback, Rose is still pressing forward with his own plan to develop herbicide resistant turfgrass that is male sterile. Rose said sterility could be demonstrated as early as the end of this summer. From there, commercial production of the seed could occur within three years.