**COMMENTARY**

Is anyone listening to the battle cry for affordable golf?

While the tone of Golf 20/20’s first annual Golf Industry Report is upbeat, there are several disturbing trends that emerge from the data.

Two are not so surprising: new golf construction is down and rounds played numbers remain as flat as a two-by-four. No shocker there.

But there are more troubling statistics. Construction numbers are not only down, but, of the courses that opened, an increasingly smaller number of them are public access. The number of public courses opening still far outweighs private courses, but the trend is unerring just the same. When you combine those numbers with the fact that all of the 27 courses that closed permanently in 2001 were either daily-fee or municipal layouts, the alarm goes off.

I thought the industry was supposed to be focusing on providing more affordable, public-access golf—not less. At the conclusion of last year’s Golf 20/20 conference the message was clear: we need more affordable golf courses to grow the game of golf.

The American Society of Golf Course Architects and others have certainly pushed the message and put a plan into action to promote the need for more affordable golf, but clearly more needs to be done.

Watching ill-advised, high-end, country-club-for-a-day courses struggle in today’s market has likely poisoned the desire of any developer to build a lower-end public golf facility. If you can’t make money at $75 a round, how the heck can you make money charging $30 a round, right? Wrong.

Take a look at the front page of Golf Course News this month. Architect P.B. Dye just wrapped up work on a $1.5 million, 18-hole golf course in Indiana that offers outstanding golf for $38 a round including range balls and a golf car.

Sure, a number of things worked in his favor. He’s leasing the land, did the construction himself and largely used his own equipment. But the lesson here is the strategy he used. Dye built as high-quality a golf course as the market conditions could bear. Then he took a number of smart, cost-cutting measures to reduce the construction expenses even further. Where were the greens and they used only four truckloads of sod to lay one strip around all greens and some of the fairways?

The most brilliant cost-saving move involves the course’s bridges. Instead of building steel I-beam structures, they purchased tractor-trailer-tractor decks from a Cincinnati scrapyard for $58 an acre. With the steel and wood decking already in place, they saved a ton on materials and labor costs.

All of these steps do not detract from the beauty or playability of the golf course. The well designed course was meant to be rustic, and that’s all the golfing public wants.

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**GMO danger**  
Continued from previous page

sented at two hearings and count-
less other presentations.

To attempt once more to get an understanding of the two pro-
grams, I hereby make a compari-
son between a mule (male sterile)
and a stallion horse (open polli-
nating). Mules can do everything
the stallion can do, except repro-
duce. Conversely, the stallion
horse will breed all like horses,
spreading his genes wherever he
can find a willing mate. This "stal-
lion" cannot be fenced in.

This is the situation in
Jefferson County with its history
of bentgrass production, which
assures volunteer bentgrass
plants exist throughout the area.
These volunteers, plus the na-
tive bentgrasses will be recep-

**Plan in place**  
Continued from previous page

the U.S. Environmental Protec-
tion Agency to clear the use of
Roundup Pro on Roundup Ready
creeping bentgrass.

Both Scotts and Monsanto take
stewardship issues very seriously.
That commitment extends from
research to end-use on courses.

The professionalism of golf course
superintendents is one of the pri-
mary reasons our companies
chose creeping bentgrass to be
the first variety of grass devel-
oped through biotechnology. We
recognize that the turfgrass seed
industry is concerned with the
potential for cross-pollination,
seed scatter and seed mixing
among varieties. We are aggres-
sively addressing this by ensur-
ning that Roundup Ready creeping
bentgrass seed production is iso-
lated from the Willamette Valley
in western Oregon, where most of
the world's bentgrass seed is pro-
duced.

We asked the Oregon Depart-
ment of Agriculture (ODA) to es-
tablish a control area to keep the
production of creeping bentgrass
seed developed through biotech-
nology separate from conventional
creeping bentgrass. In July, the
ODA established an 11,000-acre
control area in Jefferson County,
100 miles to the east and on the
other side of the Cascade Moun-
tains, which will be a formidable
barrier to any pollen transfer to the
conventional seed production area.

The arid surroundings greatly
diminish the likelihood that any
bentgrass plants could survive
outside the control area. Finally,
our stewardship plan includes a
specified area for seed produc-
tion, dedicated combines, process-
ing equipment and extensive
monitoring.

Bob Harriman is vice president of bio-
technology at the Scotts Co. and Don
Suttner is regional technical develop-
ment manager at Monsanto.

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Granular Soil Fumigant

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turf. Basamid, the only granular soil fumigant on the market, is the quickest, most dependable way to achieve that result.
Basamid penetrates deep to sterilize the soil and quickly eliminate virtually all weeds, nematodes, grasses and soil diseases.

Plus, the nonrestrictive, granular formulation of Basamid requires no complicated application equipment or tarp, offering you
the flexibility to renovate a single green or all 18 fairways. You can even reseed and get your new turf off to a healthy, vigorous
start in as little as 10 to 12 days. Basamid makes traveling the road to perfection smoother than ever before.

To learn more about how you can start down the road to perfection with Basamid, visit www.turffacts.com
or call 1-800-545-9525.