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More courses are spoon-feeding on efficacy is needed

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The business newspaper for the golf industry

**INSIDE**

**BASF packs specialty portfolio**

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — With the integration of its TopPro Specialties subsidiary, the pending approval to market fipronil insecticides and the expected registration of two new fungicides, BASF's professional turf and ornamental group is poised for rapid expansion.

The group also recently reorganized its upper management, sales force and customer service teams. Former TopPro president Stephen Briggs is the new director of BASF's Specialty Products Department (SPD) which includes the turf and ornamental group.

"When BASF acquired Microflora [TopPro's parent company] in 1998 they didn't have a specialty group so they kept it as a subsidiary in Memphis, Tenn.," said Briggs. "With the American Cyanamid acquisition in 2000, they now had two specialty groups that were going to the same or similar markets with similar customers. It was decided based on customer input and efficiency within the organization.

**Investors snag Western Golf**

New owners move company to Southern California, hand reins to longtime exec. Heath

**Carlson leads on county green standards**

By ANDREW OVERBECK

VENICE, Fla. — When superintendent Tom Carlson here at The Venice Golf and Country Club achieved Audubon certification, he wasted little time sharing the club's accomplishments with the surrounding community.

From giving Sarasota County water management and environmental officials tours of the course to making presentations at other area clubs during member-guest outings, Carlson has been busy spreading the word. However, his latest community effort will have a much broader impact: Carlson is part of an advisory committee that is creating future golf course development and management standards for Sarasota County.

"When I came to Venice Golf and Country Club I made it clear that I was not comfortable living up to standards. I wanted to set standards," said Carlson. "I hope these actions lead to sustainable community development."

**In spite of drought**

**Black Hills blooming**

By DEREK RICE

RAPID CITY, S.D. — In the shadow of the Black Hills in South Dakota, architect Ron Farris is putting the finishing touches on the Golf Club at Red Rock, nine holes of which should open this month, against Farris' advice.

"You'd love to have as much maturity as possible on a golf course," he said. "It's not perfect, but that's mostly because of the drought last year.

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Carlson to help draft development standards in Sarasota County

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its Development Services department to come up with golf course development standards because it was too time-consuming to handle approvals on a case-by-case basis.

"The Board of Commissioners asked for design and performance standards for golf course development because as it stands today, there is nothing that specifically addresses golf courses," said Dorothea Zysko, resources protection services manager for the county. "They felt it was more appropriate to look at courses in general and devise standards that would apply to all courses. This would also give developers an idea ahead of time of what the county expects of them."

The standards, which are still being formulated, will integrate the best management practices developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Water Management District and will cover requirements including site acreage, buffer zones, setbacks, open space, stormwater and drainage, water use, habitat management, and construction and post construction monitoring. Requiring courses to become members of an environmental program like Audubon International is also being considered.

Zysko decided to put together an advisory committee made up of interested parties to discuss the proposed standards. In addition to Carlson, members from Audubon International, the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, the GCSCA and two developers and engineering firms attended the first meeting in February. The committee aims to have final regulations in place by the end of May.

According to Zysko, Carlson was a natural choice for the committee because of the work he has done at Venice G&CC. "We felt there was a need for a more comprehensive approach to water use and conservation and habitat preservation. Tom has done quite a bit on his course, so we asked him to participate," she said.

Carlson, who came to the club two years ago, immediately pushed the members to become Audubon certified.

"This is the perfect course for it," he said. "We have wetlands, pinelands, uplands and oak hammock. It's a perfect mix of terrain and vegetation."

Carlson started by building a new maintenance facility from the ground up, putting in a state-of-the-art mixload station, a washwater system and fuel tanks. Then he went to work restoring habitat and wetland areas on the course.

"We have fresh-water wetlands, but they are disconnected and no longer flow naturally," he said. "We had upland palms that were moving into them, so we are working with the county to use a nearby lake to inundate them once a year to bring them back to their natural cycle."

"We also cleaned up the buffer zones and converted turf to natural areas to connect habitat and give wildlife cover," he added.

A new high-tech irrigation system helped reduce water use by 34 million gallons last year and using Polyon-coated slow-release pesticides has helped reduce chemical use.

Showcasing the course's environmental improvements has been an important step in the process, said Carlson.

"We had the county's Integrated Water Management officials over for a tour and they didn't realize that golf courses were working on mitigating environmental impacts. They had no idea. They didn't know Audubon International existed," he said.

Carlson is quick to admit that his situation at Venice G&CC allows him to spend the extra time on environmental projects. "I am fortunate here because I can spend time on this," he said. "I have a good staff and a great assistant that runs the course and frees up my time. Although I do get a lot of work done when people leave for the day."

He also said the development standards being discussed would likely make golf course construction more expensive, but it would do away with practices that have given the golf course industry a black eye.

"Yes, it will bring up the cost of construction," said Carlson. "But it will ensure that what is built is responsible. By having requirements right off the bat, it will select out those who don't want to be responsible."

**Having requirements right off the bat will select out those who don't want to be responsible.**

— Tom Carlson

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