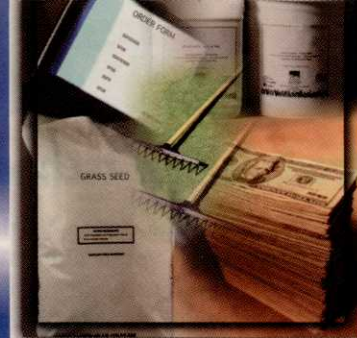


# SUPPLIER BUSINESS



## BRIEFS

### SPINDLER ENTERPRISES ACQUIRES BIOPRO PRODUCT LINE

LAKELAND, Fla. — Spindler Enterprises has purchased the BioPro line of fertilizers, micronutrients, biostimulants, soil amendments and pond bacteria from TerraBiotics. Company president Jim Spindler has been involved in the management of the BioPro line for more than six years. Spindler Enterprises specializes in the marketing of liquid turf, ornamental and sod growth products, bacteria for improving pond water quality and agronomic consulting services.

### JUNK JOINS SEED RESEARCH

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Nancy Junk has joined the Seed Research of Oregon sales staff as a regional sales manager. Based in St. Joseph, Mo., Junk comes to Seed Research with more than two decades of sales experience in the seed industry, having spent the past seven years as director of operations for Forage Genetics International (FGI). Junk started in the seed business in 1980 with Seed Corp. of America, a turfgrass company in Baltimore.

### MCDERMID HEADS TO PARKWAY

HOUSTON — Cameron McDermid, a 12-year veteran of the turf chemical and fertilizer industry, has joined the Parkway Research sales team as the central Texas territory manager. According to the company, Cameron is the first of several sales team expansions planned for this year, including southeast Florida and the Hilton Head Island area.

### GOWAN NAMES PETERSEN

YUMA, Ariz. — Martin Petersen has joined Gowan Co. as managing director. Petersen will focus on expanding Gowan's international business, working closely with Margarita Internacional. Over his 20-year career in the crop protection business, Petersen has worked for Helena Chemical and Bayer CropScience.

## Laskowski returns to Lastec, looks to expand niche

By ANDREW OVERBECK

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Jeff Laskowski has returned as CEO and president of Lastec, a company he co-founded with inventor Dan Tekulve in 1990. The two pioneered the concept of high-end rotary mowing with the introduction of the Articulator and received a patent for the mowing deck's drive system.

In 1998, Laskowski merged the \$5 million company with its parent firm Wood-Mizer, which makes portable saw mills, and then decided to leave and pursue other interests. After his father, Donald Laskowski, stepped down in early April, he decided to come back on board to once again run both companies.

According to Laskowski, he's got his hands full.

"The mower side of the business is profitable, but it has shrunk," he said. "The sawmill

side is in the red for the first two years in a 25-year history. I would say some of it has to do the economy, but they took their eye off the ball and they need some direction."

On the mower side, Laskowski will concentrate on reasserting Lastec's brand in the marketplace and rebuilding its dealer network.

"We created the niche. Nobody had articulated rotary decks before we did," he said. "We used to supply Toro and John Deere with decks and now everyone is in the game with different configurations and different types of drive systems."

"But Lastec presents the greatest opportunity for the corporation," Laskowski continued. "We got into this market in the worst possible economy in the early '90s and we thrived. The economy doesn't matter if you offer a viable solution to a problem that exists at a reasonable price."



Jeff Laskowski plans to reassert the Lastec brand and improve distribution.

Strengthening Lastec's dealer network will be key to the company's success.

"The distribution network has been neglected a bit," Laskowski said. "We have an effective way of powering decks at a reasonable cost. What we haven't done is

build a distributor network to take advantage of what we currently make and we haven't taken that advantage and put it in other niches. We can do four times more volume if we are better at building a distributor network and

Continued on next page

## Lesco numbers up, golf sales slip

CLEVELAND — Lesco's first quarter 2003 sales were up 1 percent to \$94.5 million with its lawn care business leading the way with a 4 percent sales gain. Golf sales, however, slipped 9 percent during the period.

Lawn care posted sales of \$77.7 million, up from \$74.7 million in 2002, while golf gross sales were \$17.8 million, down from \$19.6 million in 2002. Lesco officials blamed golf's sales decline on a late spring in the Northeast. Sales in the Northeast were down 40 percent and remained flat elsewhere across the country.

"Golf is having a tough time," said Lesco president and CEO Michael P. DiMino. "Every aspect of golf, not only our business — golf equipment, golf course construction, and rounds — is down. The weather in the Northeast did not help relative to that situation."

Continued on next page

## Scotts and Monsanto resubmit RR bent petition

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. and Monsanto resubmitted their petition for Roundup Ready bentgrass to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) April 14. The companies originally submitted the petition in May 2002, but withdrew their application Oct. 3 after APHIS issued a "letter of deficiency" in September.

"We have not changed the petition," said John Bosser, senior specialist for environmental com-

munication for Scotts. "We just provided the additional year's worth of data that they asked for."

According to Bosser, the requested data supports the performance of the variety and how it behaves in terms of growing characteristics. Bosser also said that since 1998, some 40 percent of petitions to APHIS have been withdrawn at some point and then subsequently resubmitted and approved by the agency.

No timetable has been set for

APHIS approval or commercialization, but Scotts and Monsanto are moving ahead and plan to harvest their 400-acre test plot in Oregon in July.

"Once they complete their scientific review we will have seed available for commercialization," said Bosser.

As Scotts and Monsanto proceed with their approval process, Bill Rose's HybriGene is currently seeking an APHIS permit to grow its proprietary male-sterile glufosinate resistant creeping bentgrass outside in field trials (GCN March 2003).



## Deere & Co. posts 80 percent second quarter gain

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. announced May 13 a worldwide net income of \$256.9 million for the second quarter ended April 30, an increase of more than 80 percent over last year's second quarter net income of \$141.8 million. For the first six months, net income was \$324.9 million, more than triple last year's six-month net income of \$103.6 million.

Sales volumes were up across all three major equipment divisions. The Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division, which includes the golf and turf business, increased sales by 12 percent. Sales for the first six months increased 19 percent, compared with last year, when the division implemented deep production and ship-

ment cutbacks to reduce company and field inventories.

In other John Deere news, its Golf & Turf One Source division has been named the exclusive supplier of golf course maintenance equipment and financing to Evergreen Alliance Golf Limited (EAGL), a golf course management company servicing more than 40 courses around the country.

Through the agreement, John Deere Golf & Turf One Source will be supplying John Deere golf and turf maintenance equipment to the superintendents of each EAGL course, including all mowing, aeration and specialty turf products. John Deere will also provide exclusive financing to all EAGL courses.



## Utility vehicle choices abound

Continued from page 1

Yamaha product lines, the front end of the new vehicles sport an ATV-like flair.

"We are trying to match the family resemblance of Yamaha products, yet keep the identity of the utility vehicle," said product development manager Joel Cheek. "The same people that style our motorcycles and ATVs style golf cars and utility vehicles."

Behind the new look, the vehicle will feature two different suspensions, increased traction and ground clearance, heavy-duty bumpers and improved ergonomics and corrosion resistance.

According to Cheek, YGC's new factory played a large role in the development of the vehicle.

"Before the new factory the G21 was largely hand-assembled," he said. "With the new factory we can build down the line, which gives us flexibility and cuts production costs. The system enables us to build more customized vehicles. The first factory was one size fits all."

### E-Z-GO, JACOBSEN REVAMP LINES

Both E-Z-GO and Jacobsen are on the cusp of releasing new utility vehicles as well. On the E-Z-GO side they will be called the MPT 800, 1000 and 1200 (see GCN, Feb. 2003). On the Jacobsen side, they will be called the Hauler 800, 1000 and 1200. The 800 series will come in both electric (36V) and gas versions (9-hp), the 1000 has a 48V motor, and an 11-hp engine powers the 1200. The 1000 and 1200 models will have a polyethylene bed with inserts for tie downs and racks.

Jacobsen will also offer the Hauler 4800 with a 16-hp engine. "The 4800 has a stronger chassis, a locking rear differential, bucket seats, full suspension and high ground clearance," said Jacobsen

product manager Larry Jones.

The new vehicles will be introduced sometime this summer.

### GATOR SET FOR REDESIGN

John Deere's current Gator utility vehicle line was introduced in 1992 and is about to see its first major facelift, according to David Thorne, group brand marketing manager for utility vehicles.

"We would like to refresh the

expect more and more from the machine," he said. "The typical customer buys them and then finds more uses for them. The more experience the customer gets with the category, the more they look for attachments and things to help them work more effectively."

### KUBOTA TO ENTER THE FRAY

Kubota Tractor Corp. will enter the growing market segment this fall with its first utility vehicle.

"We will release the product at

our dealer meeting in October," said Kubota spokesperson Pat Carroll. "It will have a dump bed and will be powered by a diesel engine because that is what we do best."

Carroll said the vehicle will be geared to both the golf

and commercial markets.

### TORO TO ROLL OUT E-WORKMAN

With electric utility vehicles making up an increasing portion of the marketplace, Toro will be adding a mid-duty E-Workman powered by a 48V system early next year.

"I think there is a trend to electric vehicles," said Neil Borenstein, senior marketing manager. "It is our first electric utility vehicle. One of the customer demands is for quiet operation so they don't have to stop for play. The other issue is emissions. We work hard to make sure our products fit our customer's needs, so we are always in touch with customers to make sure we develop the correct products."

### CLUB CAR EXTENDS THE 272

One of this spring's new offerings is Club Car's Carryall 272XL, which offers an extended six-foot cargo bed.

"This car builds off the success of the Carryall 472 which had seating capacity for four," said Ben McElmurray, regional sales manager for Club Car. "Customers liked that vehicle but wanted one with two-passenger capacity and a six-foot bed."

The 272 XL is powered by a 400 cc, 13-hp Kawasaki engine and can carry 1,300 pounds. It also offers higher ground clear-

manager Brett Linden. "Our accessories fit on it as well, so it is a good part of our product mix."

The GT642 is powered by a 20-hp Honda engine, offers four-wheel-drive, and can haul 1,400 pounds. The GT422 is a two-wheel-drive vehicle powered by an 18-hp Honda engine.

### POLARIS FILLS OUT LINE

Polaris entered the utility vehicle market with a big splash last

year with two high-powered models. Polaris rounded out the model line this year with the introduction of the UTV 1500 2x4 that

is equipped with an 18-hp engine and has a 1,250-pound payload capacity.

Polaris' Tony Wixio feels the 2x4 will be more applicable for golf course use.

"This fills in the low end of the line and takes the price leader point out to golf courses," said Wixio. "It is an economic 2x4 suited toward a golf course application."

Utility vehicles are a hot product category in the golf market as of late. New entrants and new products continue to abound and rumors of new players, such as Honda, entering the market are plentiful. With competition among manufacturers at an all time high, one thing is for sure: superintendents have plenty of utility vehicles to choose from. ■



Lesco's new Ground Tamer GT642 rolled out this spring



Jacobsen's new Hauler 800 is due out later this summer.

While Thorne would not discuss the specifics of the new product line, he said the vehicles will offer more in terms of attachments and creature comforts.

"Customers are beginning to

## Laskowski to lead Lastec

Continued from previous page

supporting it."

Laskowski also plans to push zero-turn mowers (ZTRs) in the golf market.

"Golf doesn't go with ZTRs under the false pretense that they are just yard equipment," he said. "But if we can prove to them they can cut twice as fast and give them better looking turf, I believe we will get that business. Articulation combined with the maneuverability of a ZTR creates another niche."

Lastec already markets the 3377, 3682 and 3696 ZTRs in addition to its original line of out front and pull-behind articulating decks. Laskowski said the company is working on a 72-inch articulating ZTR and a 10-foot wide articulating ZTR to round out the lineup. ■

## Lesco's 1Q golf sales drop

Continued from previous page

But the Northeast will come back as it gets warmer."

DiMino said the company is not counting on sales growth in golf in 2003. Expected growth in golf is projected to be less than 2 percent.

The mixed news is on the whole good for Lesco, which sees its lowest sales volume in the first quarter and has historically generated net losses. The company's net loss was \$5.7 million, as compared to the 2002 net loss of \$13.7 million.

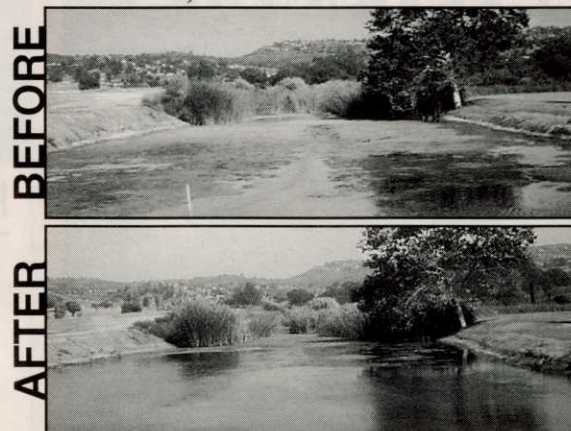
"The first quarter represents 18 percent of total volume from a selling perspective," said DiMino. ■

— Andrew Overbeck

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