Bayer ES to retain Chipco product line

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MONTVALE, N.J. — Bayer ES has reached an agreement with regulatory officials and BASF AG on the divestiture of its key insecticide active ingredient fipronil. The deal includes back-licenses that allow Bayer ES to continue to market fipronil products, including the Chipco Choice line, to the turf and ornamental markets worldwide.

The divestiture of fipronil and other fungicides was required by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and European Commission as part of Bayer CropScience’s acquisition of Aventis CropScience. The planned divestiture was announced in late October and negotiations between Bayer ES and BASF finally wrapped up after the European Commission approved the deal March 24.

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Municipal golf under siege

By DEREK RICE

NATICK, Mass. — In March, the executive-length Sassamon Trace Golf Course became the focal point of an election for town selectman when a candidate proposed closing or selling the course, which was projected to lose $300,000 in its fiscal year ending June 30.

While this case took place on a small scale — an executive course in a small town — it illustrates the challenges facing municipalities across the country. In a down economy, towns and cities look to improve their fiscal bottom line. And with course revenues and rounds played numbers either flat or falling nationwide (see story below), municipal golf courses can be seen as good targets for cutting costs.

“It’s the towns, cities and golf courses that lose out,” said Pat Berger, business manager for Boston-based Sterling Golf Management, which operates Sassamon Trace.

The town of Natick also considered terminating its agreement and European Commission approved the town’s finance committee has approved the course’s $400,000 budget, which will carry operations through December, or until the Sterling contract runs out. At press time, the budget still needed to be approved at an April town meeting. Beyond December, the course’s future is uncertain. Before that time, the town will consider whether to renew the contract.

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Editorial Focus: Putting Green Management

Morrison’ Stimpeter study reveals optimum speed

By ANDREW OVERBECK

FRANKFORT, Mich. — The Stimpeter has never been a superintendent’s best friend, but here at Crystal Downs Country Club, Mike Morris has changed all that. After an exhaustive two-year study that included Stimping two greens twice a day, collecting weather data, recording cultural practices and surveying members, Morris has determined the optimum green speed for the 1933 Crystal Downs.

“We never had a problem with green speed before,” said Morris. “But the issue arose at the club after we had a course come in up the street that had A4 bentgrass greens that were fast as lightning. All of a sudden it became a problem.”

“The greens committee wanted to know two things: What is the most appropriate green speed for our golf course, and what is the best friend, but here at Crystal Downs Country Club, Mike Morris has changed all that. After an exhaustive two-year study that included Stimping two greens twice a day, collecting weather data, recording cultural practices and surveying members, Morris has determined the optimum green speed for the 1933 Crystal Downs.”

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