

News

EQUIPMENT

Weed-Eater patents ruled invalid

Nylon-line trimmer patents claimed by Weed-Eater, Inc. have been ruled invalid by a Federal judge. A suit by Weed-Eater against Toro and K&S Industries had contended that the other companies had usurped its patents for the rotary head trimmers. Toro and K&S claimed that Weed Eater had obtained the patents from the U.S. Patent Office by fraud.

U.S. District Court Judge George Templar stated that the patents obtained by Weed-Eater do not cover new developments but information that was known already in the business. Templar, who heard the case for more than a month and a half, concluded that the improvements Weed-Eater had made on the lawn trimmers were not sufficiently unique from several earlier trimmers to warrant a patent.

FERTILIZER

Brew feeds the land in experiment

Southern Turf Nurseries, Inc. of Tifton, Ga. has combined efforts with Anheuser-Busch, Inc. to grow turf adjacent to Anheuser-Busch's Jacksonville, Fla. brewery by utilizing liquid brewery waste, rich in nutrients. The turf is being grown on a 300-acre site about one mile north and adjacent to the brewery on property owned by Anheuser-Busch.

John Mueller, brewery plant manager, says that since starting on May 11, the project has substantially reduced loadings sent to the Jacksonville sewage treatment plant. About one million gallons of almost three million daily gallons of liquid wastes are being diverted to the turf farm.

Director of Environmental Engineering and Resources of Anheuser-Busch, Robert R. Imsande, says from that a conservation standpoint, the Jacksonville turf farm has twin benefits. "First, it would require substantial energy to make the amount of fertilizer for turf growth which we are providing from an existing source. This energy is now

NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION BOX SCORE					
January-August 1979		REGULATION COURSES	EXECUTIVE COURSES	PAR 3 COURSES	TOTAL
OPENED FOR PLAY	New	35	4	5	62
	Additions	14	4	0	
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	New	43	5	2	82
	Additions	31	0	1	
PROSPECTIVE	New	37	6	2	76
	Additions	26	2	3	

free for other uses. Second, since brewery waste streams are over 95 percent water, we are practicing water conservation. This water is going directly back to the ground rather than requiring energy intensive treatment at municipal waste treatment facilities."

It makes good sense, Imsande says, to put the brew's natural ingredients—hops, malt, rice, yeast, and corn—back into the ground where they can replenish the soil.

INDUSTRY

Toro buys Barefoot Grass

The Toro Company has entered the lawn care business industry with its acquisition of Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc., located in Columbus, Ohio. David McLaughlin, Toro chairman, and Marvin Williams, Barefoot Grass chairman, said the companies have signed a letter of intent for Toro to acquire Barefoot Grass as of August 3, for an undisclosed amount.

Barefoot Grass was started as a subsidiary of O.M. Scott and Sons, but has operated independently since 1975. Sales this year are expected to be approximately \$3 million. They currently operate in 12 metropolitan areas with primary emphasis in Ohio.

FINANCE

Colgate drops funding for most pro golf

Colgate-Palmolive Company will not renew its sponsorship of several professional golf and tennis tournaments where the contracts are presently expiring. The decisions were based on a detailed analysis of the company's involvement with sports programs, initiated by Keith Crane, president, shortly after his election as chief

executive officer in January of this year. "We have evaluated the tournaments as corporate business investments," Crane said, "just as we do with any operation of the company. We have also assessed their value, individually and collectively, to Colgate's overall corporate image."

Colgate will maintain its sponsorship of the Colgate-Dinah Shore Winners Circle, but will drop the Colgate Triple Crown, the Colgate European Open, and the Colgate Far East Open, all women's golf events.

The company will not renew the Colgate-Hall of Fame Golf Classic for men. They have also discontinued sponsorship of the World Match Play Championship, a British event, and the British PGA Championship.

GOVERNMENT

OSHA calls hand weeding unsafe

A California landscaping crew, assigned to pull weeds along a highway in San Diego, was cited by OSHA for using unsafe handtools, when it was discovered that they carried mattocks in their belts and occasionally drew them to wipe out the tougher weeds. Fortunately, the company decided to fight it out in court, rather than pay the \$125 fine.

Testimony for OSHA included doctors who reasoned that stooping over to pull weeds could cause back injury. Dr. Ira Monosson correctly testified that in order to use the mattock-type tool, one would have to assume a stooped position in excess of 90 degrees, unless one was working up a hillside. Dr. Monosson also testified that the tool itself would not cause a back injury. It was the use of it in a stooped position that did.

While it is humorous that such a suit be filed against the lowly mattock, reading between the lines

of the case would leave on to think that working in a stooped position, pulling weeds by hand, could be an unsafe work habit.

A doctor who had collected medical data on farm workers performing stooped labor testified that it could damage ligaments, vertebra, and intervertebral discs. Hernia and slipped discs could result. However, the difference in severity could not be ascertained until two people, one using a mattock in a stooped position and the other stooping and pulling weeds by hand, died and autopsies were performed.

While it is not within this reporter's capabilities to judge such a case, as medical training is limited, it is a fact that pulling weeds by hand is a rough job. It does lead one to wonder though, if there has been any medical research on whether pushing buttons causes crooked fingers?

FERTILIZER

Penn. sludge fertilizer hindered by cadmium

Development of a sludge-fertilizer industry in Pennsylvania has been hindered by cadmium's dangerous potential in the food chain. Dr. Dale Baker, professor of soil chemistry at University Park, has defined a worthwhile goal as no more than 20 to 50 parts per million of cadmium in sludge fertilizer. He described 50 ppm of cadmium as equal to 50 pounds in 500 tons.

The metal remains in the plow layer. Sludge applied to Penn State test plots at 10 dry tons per acre for seven years increased soil test levels of cadmium from less than one-half pound per acre to five pounds per acre. For land application of sewage sludge in Pennsylvania, a municipality or hauler must obtain a permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources.