

News

Straw fungus may make alcohol

A fungus found growing on cow dung may help turn straw and corn stalks into alcohol fuel. Donald Wicklow, a microbiologist with the USDA's Science and Education Administration in Peoria, Illinois, said the fungus makes straw more digestible by breaking down the lignin which binds the cellulose fibers together. When the lignin cement covering is removed, the cellulose inside is exposed and becomes available for digestion. Then, the enzymes in fermenters can change the cellulose to glucose sugar.

The fungus is called *Cyathus stercoreus*. At the USDA northern regional research center, the fungus digested 45 percent of the lignin in wheat straw and exposed 21 percent of the cellulose. One of the USDA's goals at its Northern Agricultural Energy Center in Peoria is to produce fuel alcohol from cellulose in plant stems. A fungus with the ability to digest lignin, particularly lignin in grasses, may be the breakthrough superintendents need to process alcohol fuel from clippings.



Excel sponsors optimistic day

In the photo above, two turf managers look over a piece of equipment at Optimistic Day, sponsored by Excel Industries, Inc., in Hesston, Kansas. Among the festivities were Excel plant tours, Hustler equipment demonstrations, a pig roast with all the trimmings, and a golf



PGA tour, Walt Disney join forces for junior golf

Construction is underway at the Walt Disney World Golf Resort on a new kind of junior golf course, which sponsoring PGA Tour commissioner Dean Berman sees as a "breakthrough in bringing the game to a wider audience of young players."

Pictured above, the PGA Tour Wee Links Golf Course is a low-maintenance prototype, designed by Lakeland, Florida golf course architect Ron Garl. The 6-hole,

1525-yard layout on 25 wooded acres of the Magnolia Course, will open in late summer. It has two par-3 and three par-4 holes, as well as one par-5. Tees and greens are going to be covered with an artificial turf called 'Mod Sod.' The porous turf requires no maintenance, but can be top-dressed.

Sand traps are small and flat and water hazards are small and only 24 inches deep so that balls may

be easily retrieved.

Clubs, golfballs and instruction will be available as part of the \$2.00 greens fee. The PGA Tour is funding the \$200,000 project on land donated by Walt World. Its designers hope it will be a prototype for courses across the country, which may help establish a kind of 'little league' program for young golfers.

tournament at Hesston Golf Park. Besides golf course superintendents, the 350 attending included state officials, school board officials, media and Excel employees. It was the first such outing for Excel, and produced a "very good reaction" according to Mark Foree, Advertising and Promotion Manager.

SAP disagrees with EPA's 2,4-D testing

The FIFRA Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) thinks that EPA should resolve controversy between two existing studies before they require additional oncogenity studies. And then if additional tests are required, SAP feels that they should be limited. In commenting on the EPA's proposed multigeneration study to establish no observed effect levels (NOELs) for the acid form of 2,4-D in one species, SAP said: "The panel is of the opinion that an additional multigeneration study to establish NOELs for the acid form of 2,4-D in one species is not warranted." They went on to say that SAP felt the existing study

was adequate. The panel did agree with the proposed testing requirements for acute toxicity, mutagenicity, and dermal absorption.

Public opposes Labor payment ban

More than 200 legislators, federal contractors, civil rights groups and clubs submitting comments to the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) called the proposed ban of federal contractor payments to selective admissions organizations "unnecessary, illegal, and unworkable", according to the National Club Association.

A common point of controversy concerns the OFCCP approach requiring that the contractor determine if employment advantage has been incurred by an employee whose membership fee has been paid in a selective admissions organization. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which must approve the final regulations, has recommended instead that the

rules absolutely prohibit payments to selective admissions groups.

Civil rights groups have taken the EEOC posture. The Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith claims, "... the EEOC position, in contrast recognizes... that the intent of the contractor to confer an advantage by paying the membership fee for an employee in a social club which discriminates against other employees makes the act of payment discriminatory even if no advantage results."

Taking the opposing view, the Conference of Private Organizations, an association of national fraternal, service and civic groups, asserts, "Cases based on denial of equal employment opportunity have traditionally dealt with clear allegations of discrimination directly applied by the employer in the work area. . . OFCCP, however, would now have us leap from such unambiguous and unquestioned cases to make a tenuous connection between membership policies of third-party private organizations and employment discrimination by an employer toward unknown employees. . ."