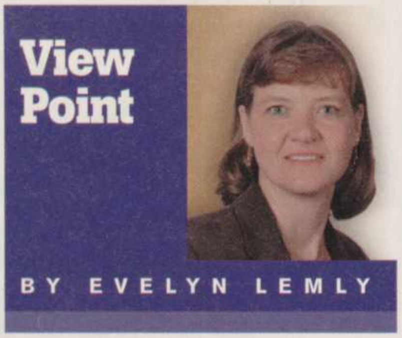
# The Pressure's On

## IN THIS DAY AND AGE OF BEING A SUPERINTENDENT AND A SUPPLIER, YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR OPTIONS

*Editor's note: Golfdom asked BASF's Lemly to provide her take on the current state of the industry. In the future, we'll provide other supplier-written articles on various topics*




BY EVELYN LEMLY

Feel like you're being pulled from all directions? No wonder. You're right in the middle of three potent trends in golf turf management: golfers' expectations, environmental issues and supplier consolidation. While these have been building for years, they're now converging to bring new challenges to all of us in this industry. Let's examine the trends that are shaping your business and ours.

### Expectations

Jim Snow, national director of the USGA Green Section, lays it out clearly: Golfers' expectations for course conditions are higher than ever before. With golf tournaments on prime-time television — including a cable channel that's devoted to golf — your golfers want their home courses to look as good as they see on television. This is the so-called "Augusta Syndrome."

You're the one caught in the middle. You have to deliver the results your course officials and golfers expect. But in today's uncertain economy, you may have fewer dollars available to do it.

### Environment

The EPA has long favored newer technologies that show improved environmental qualities, including those with less impact on nontarget species, shorter residuals, lower use rates and technologies that are less prone to off-site movement. As technology progresses, there's a potential that some standby "workhorse" products could leave the market.

At the same time, golfers look beyond the fairways and greens. Their expectations encompass the entire "experience" of playing golf. They value the beauty and environmental benefits of wildlife areas in the rough — the growing popularity of Audubon sanctuary areas is a testament to this. So you need to continue to solve tough turf problems while enhancing the native species and habitat areas of the landscape.

### Consolidation

You're not alone in feeling the pressure. It's so intense that some long-time pesticide suppliers have thrown in the towel. They've sold their agriculture-related divisions to concentrate on other technologies, such as pharmaceuticals.

Does this foreshadow further reductions in your product choices? No. In fact the odds are this will strengthen and expand the product lines available to you. For BASF and the companies that remain in this business, our survival depends on providing more focused and complete attention to your needs. To put it bluntly, there's no room in a consolidated industry for a part-time player.

This marketplace reality is why BASF boosted its commitment to the agriculture industry, in both crop and non-crop sectors. We see great promise in the agricultural business. Selling our pharmaceutical holdings provided more capital to commit to the specialty agricultural markets. As a result, we're making acquisitions and funding research — including development of an entirely new class of fungicides for turf — that capitalize on our global resources in plant technology.

### The bottom line

While new course development appears to have peaked, the decade of the 1990s saw a sharp increase in course construction to more than 400 per year, up from about 150 per year in the mid-1980s, according to Jim O'Hara, vice president of research of the National Golf Foundation.

From turf suppliers' standpoint, that's attractive because it means many more superintendents and course acres. But because of the three trends I've described, the pressure is on for us to provide you with innovative, environmentally friendly and effective products.

From the superintendent's standpoint, while these trends bring challenges, they also give you the opportunity to clarify which companies are committed to earning your business — the ones taking visible, bold steps to provide the people, services and technology you need to solve your problems.

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*Lemly is director of the BASF Specialty Products Department.*