



**Amazone Ltd has joined BIGGA as a Golden Key Sponsor and joined the Association and Rhône Poulenc as co-sponsor of the Environment Award it initiated two years ago.**

In recent years the name Amazone would lead you to think less about the great South American river and more about Amazone Ltd, the company which conceived the Amazone Golf Environment competition two years ago and ran it with conspicuous success.

Amazone has now joined forces with BIGGA and Rhône Poulenc to give the competition a further boost under the new name of the BIGGA Environmental Award in association with Amazone and Rhône Poulenc. Amazone has also become a BIGGA Golden Key sponsor.

# A GROWING FORCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Amazone Ltd was formed in 1983 to market the products of Amazone, one of Germany's best known and largest agricultural engineering companies. With a history of over 100 years Amazone is the market leader in Europe for its fertiliser broadcasters, a piece of equipment which has been developed and refined since the 1950s.

The product range now includes Amazone seed drills, sprayers, power harrows, and ground care equipment, the latter of which is handled through a separate division – Amazone Ground Care – which was launched in

1989 to market the Amazone Groundkeeper flail type mower as well as the fertiliser spreading, seeding, cultivating and spreading machinery.

The philosophy of the company is based on innovation and of the need to provide equipment which is environmentally friendly. The reasoning is simple – Amazone equipment is designed to apply materials such as agrochemicals and nitrate fertilisers and these have to be applied with great accuracy to ensure that their effect is optimised and that there is no ecological danger involved.





One "first" Amazone introduced was the boundary spreading discs for its fertiliser broadcasters which prevent fertiliser landing in hedgerows and streams – the arrival of which superseded the European Union ruling covering boundary spreading.

Amazone's commitment to develop precision application equipment is best demonstrated by the development of the Global Positioning Satellite system (GPS) with Massey Ferguson. It was for this work that Amazone was awarded a Gold Medal at this year's SIMA show in Paris. With this system an application map is produced using yield information gathered from the combine and nutrient information from soil samples. With this information it is possible to assess the varying nutrient requirements of different areas within a field and assign different application rates to them. Having done this the information is then entered into the computer controlling the spreader. As the tractor moves across the field its precise position is plotted by satellite and the spreader is automatically adjusted to vary the application rate according to the field position.

The company philosophy was easily transferred to the Ground Care Division as golf courses are prime areas of potential ecological interest and prompted the company to launch its environmental competition. This was a positive attempt by Amazone Ltd Managing Director Rod Baker to promote more interest in golf course conservation and environmental work.

"Amazone Ltd has always been particularly concerned with promoting the responsible use of machinery and input and the Golf Environment competition was designed to highlight the benefits that golf courses can bring to the natural environment, in a climate in which they too often tend to receive negative comment from both press and public who perceive destruction of natural habitats and intensive use of inputs," explained Rod.



"The fact is that the opposite is more often the case. Golf courses cover large tracts of land with often only a small area that is actually 'in play'. The remainder contains areas of natural terrain that can, and often do, provide habitats for a huge range of bird, insect, animal and plant species.

"Many greenkeepers have become concerned with these areas and actively manage them to encourage species diversity. The BIGGA Environmental Award in association with Amazone and Rhone Poulenc seeks to both enliven this interest and also promote work that is being done to improve the public image of the industry as well as the interests of the club management and membership," he said.

"We know that many greenkeepers face ignorance within their own working environment and often have to battle to protect species or particularly rich areas or to raise the cash to invest in areas with low environmental value.

"By achieving recognition of the good work that is done we hope to both encourage greenkeepers in this area of their work and also to help provide increased support for their efforts from club management and members."

Having launched the competition in '95 the link with BIGGA and Rhone Poulenc has given the competition wider industry recognition and

helped to increase its stature and importance and give it an added educational dimension.

The expansion of the UK company has been fairly dramatic during the last 14 years. Turnover has gone from less than half a million to approaching £12 million and staff and facilities have been increased to keep pace. There are now two centres with the administration at Saltash in Cornwall and the machine sales, parts and services based at Harworth near Doncaster.

As a measure of the company's success the Harworth premises have already seen three phases of expansion so that today machine stocks can be stored under cover and the overall facility includes latest state-of-the-art parts storage and retrieval systems as well as a magnificent new training school. The latter has been provided to give in-house training for both dealers and their staff as well as end users. The school offers the ideal environment to demonstrate how machines work and the technical aspects of their design and operation.

Harworth is also the base for Amazone's Ground Care operations which produces machinery for grass maintenance, scarifying, power coring seeding, cultivations, sand and fertiliser spreading and leaf and litter collection plus specialist machines for maintaining artificial sports surfaces.

