

NATURAL VERSUS ARTIFICIAL TURF

At Harrogate Week the ESA - European Seed Association - launched what is probably the most up to date comparison available for natural versus artificial turf for sports and leisure applications, claim the Association.

The report, entitled *Why choose natural turf?*, is designed as a discussion document for decision makers who are considering buying and installing a new sports pitch. It presents in clear factual detail why ESA believes natural turf to be the best long term solution for the industry. The full report is available on the ESA website, www.euroseeds.org.

In its report, ESA also shows how the dedicated research and development of grass seed breeders has ensured a healthy future for natural turf. Over the past decade, great strides have been made in the development of natural grass solutions that can tackle pitch problems such as shade, air circulation and persistency in almost every situation, however extreme the conditions.

"The evidence in favour of natural turf is clear it's better for the environment, healthier and safer for players, the most cost effective alternative to install and maintain, and the majority of football players and even spectators prefer it," stated ESA member Stephen Alderton.

ICE MAN COMETH



An eighth architect has now joined Swan Practice, International Golf Course Architects based in Essex. Snorri Vilhjalmsón, an Icelander, who recently graduated from the EIGCA accredited Masters programme in Edinburgh, has taken up a role at the company.

Vilhjalmsón, with a degree in Computer Science to complement his design qualification, brings to SGD an expertise in Autocad processing of drawings and documentation, with 3D capability. He will work alongside the seven other designers in the Swan team.

"I think this to be a great opportunity to put into practice what I have learned on my Masters Programme and to gain some real experience. I am excited to find that I am to be part of one of Europe's leading practices and am looking forward to my time at Swan Golf Designs," said Snorri.

SOUTH COAST GEAR UP FOR SEMINAR

The South Coast Section is busy preparing itself for what will no doubt be another hugely successful Seminar. Entitled 'Managing Expectations and Sustainable Golf' the Seminar will be held on Thursday March 2 at Canford Magna Golf Club.

Morning presentations will be made by Euan Grant, Old Course St Andrews; Alistair Beggs, STRI; Laurence Pithe, Crown Golf; and Paul Worster, Minchinhampton Golf Club. After lunch a presentation will be taken by Kate Entwistle, The Turf Disease Centre, while Sami Collins and Ken Richardson, from BIGGA HQ, will be providing an

update on everything BIGGA. They will also taking your questions. The day will be rounded off by the 2006 BIGGA Chairman, Richard Whyman.

The cost of the day is £15 for members and £20 for non members. For more information and to book contact Alex McCombie - 10 St Michaels Close, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset BH15 4QT or Tel: 01202 661106; Mob: 07966 386232. You can also download a schedule for the Seminar from the events page on the BIGGA Website - www.bigga.org.uk.

JOHNSON TAKES THE REIGNS FROM MCKEE

After 37 years of dedicated service to John Deere, Alec McKee has retired. He has been replaced as Managing Director of John Deere Limited by Richard Johnson.

After gaining an NDA from Harper Adams Agricultural College in 1967, and an NDAgrE from Writtle College of Agriculture in 1968, Alec worked for four years with a John Deere distributor in Zambia. He joined John Deere Limited in 1972 as a trainee territory manager, becoming business management adviser, credit manager and commercial manager. He was subsequently appointed general sales manager in 1991 and managing director in 1993.

Richard Johnson will take over responsibility for directing the activities of the UK and Ireland branch, including both the agricultural and commercial & consumer equipment (C&CE) divisions. Richard joined John Deere Limited in 1988 as a sales trainee after graduating from Harper Adams with an HND in Agricultural Engineering. He

then became a C&CE Territory Manager, firstly for Scotland and Ireland, and then for the east and north west of England.

"Alec's broad business experience will be greatly missed. While wishing Alec a happy and healthy retirement, we also welcome Richard to his new role. Richard brings strong commercial and leadership skills to this position, and we look forward to having him as part of John Deere's European management team," commented James A. Israel, Deere & Company's Vice-President.



Richard Johnson, left, has taken over as MD from the retired Alec McKee

ELSWORTH MOVES UP THE RANKS

Syngenta has named Simon Elsworth as its new Business Manager for professional products in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. Simon will focus exclusively on turf and ornamental markets in the region.

In his new position, he will be responsible for actively growing Syngenta's market share in the UK and Ireland. He will oversee the regional introduction of proven Syngenta products and will foster relationships with key industry associations, organisations and customers. Before assuming his

new role, Simon served as campaign team manager for Syngenta UK. He has worked for Syngenta in several sales and marketing positions throughout the United Kingdom.

"Simon's appointment is a clear signal of Syngenta's commitment to the turf and ornamental markets in the United Kingdom and Ireland. This move reiterates our commitment to growing the Syngenta presence in the turf management industry globally," stated Jose Milan, Global Business Manager.