

*Farewell happy fields. Where joy forever dwells:  
Hail horrors, hail Infernal world, and thou  
profoundest Hell. Receive thy new possessor: one  
who brings a mind not to be changed by place or  
time. The mind is its own place, and in itself can  
make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.*

John Milton from Paradise Lost

**T**ired of hearing about El Nino causing every problem except hair loss and bad breath? Me too. There have been a lot of lost paradises and unhappy fields this past winter as golf courses fell prey to marginal growing conditions overcast skies and record rainfall.

**The good news is...** February has been sunnier and drier in most areas of the state. The bad news is... wetter than normal conditions are forecast for spring, but who has been able to predict the weather lately? A record cold spell in March! Man it's tough trying to keep a golf

course looking perfect under these roller coaster conditions.

**The good news is...** we received a lot of information from the GCSAA, the USGA Green Section and the University of Florida to help explain the effects of these abnormal conditions on turf quality. The bad news is... some club officials take one glance at the facts and toss them aside calling them excuses instead of explanations. You can lead a person to the facts, but you can't make them think.

**The good news is...** some concerned golfers learned more about our business because of this situation. The bad news is... more superintendents will be put through unnecessary hell by shortsighted and hardheaded people who still "demand" instead of "understand."

**The good news is...** course conditions will improve with better weather. The bad news is... well usually there is no bad news for good weather conditions, unless it doesn't happen fast

enough for those impatient souls who expect perfection in everything and everyone except themselves.

There's more good and bad news than just the weather and its complications.

**The bad news is...** EPA is trying to take some short cuts in reviewing pesticides under the Food Quality Protection Act. That could lead to premature removal of uses from product labels. The good news is... manufacturers and end users are uniting in a grass roots campaign to keep Congress informed of the facts. Letter writing voters have influence.

**There's also bad news** looming for MSMA users as EPA and DEP get gung-ho about arsenic levels on golf courses. The good news is... naturally occurring background arsenic levels (it is a natural element, you know) are often higher than what EPA wants to legislate. Now that would be a neat trick if they can pull that one off.

Be assured there will lots of discussion on this issue before it's over. In the meantime watch what you do around your mix and load sites, folks. That's where samples keep coming back positive.

**And perhaps the best good news is...** the University of Florida has finally found a turf coordinator for IFAS. After two years of sifting through applications and resumes and conducting interviews, and then having to re-group after the first search process came up empty, the university named Dr. John Cisar from the IFAS Research and Education Center in Fort Lauderdale to head the turf program.

Dr. Cisar has probably been one of the most prolific researchers on turf-related projects in the state in recent years, focusing on the impacts of turf management procedures on the environment with lots of positive results for our industry.

You won't hear any bad news from me on this decision. The only negative was that the process took too long, but now that's old news not bad news. Good luck, Doc! We're with you 100 percent even if IFAS can't do anything about the weather.

After all this if your golfers still complain, just tell them I said, "To 'El' with it!"

## 'Hell' Niño and other Good News - Bad News

### Green Side Up



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