

Verti-Cut firm in 'generic' battle

BY MARK LESLIE

What's in a name? To the original Verti-Cut mower manufacturers — Hahn Inc. of Evansville, Ind. — a lot. Without getting lawyers involved, Hahn is asking the other companies that are making and naming mowers Verti-Cut, Verticut or Verti-Kut to cease and desist.

Kent Hahn of Hahn said: "Verti-Cut has been a registered trademark of our company since the early '70s. It's a mowing machine with blades that cut vertically ... to thin out running-type turf, dethatch or prepare seed beds. Now Verti-Cut has seemed to become generic, and we don't want that to happen."

Hahn said he doesn't want to go to court to protect his rights. Rather, he said: "People in this industry are honest enough and good enough so that you don't have to get the law involved... Most of them don't know they're using a registered tradename; they think

Verti-Cut's generic... But we are going to protect our name."

Companies using that name include Brouwer Turf Equipment Limited and Ransomes, both of which make mowers called Verti-Cut; National Mower with its Verti-Kut; and Kubota with Verticut.

First on Hahn's list was Brouwer Turf Equipment Limited, a Ransomes subsidiary. Brouwer, which has manufactured Verti-Cut for nearly six years, responded by pulling all its Verti-Cut advertising and press releases and is in the midst of a new advertising cam-

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**— David Gould
patent engineer**

paign using the generic Vertical Mower, said Advertising Supervisor Lawrence Cooper.

"It's a nuisance," Cooper said. "Fortunately, we were in the middle of changing the advertising anyway, since Ransomes bought Cushman and us from Outboard Ma-

rine Corp."

Hahn hasn't contacted National Mower Vice President John Kinkead.

Kinkead said his firm checked the Verti-Cut name when it named its unit Verti-Kut. But, he said: "Ours is basically a heavier unit than theirs. Ours are PTO units, much bigger, with a 11 1/2-foot-wide cut. Theirs are 18-inch walk-behind units."

Hahn had also not contacted Kubota or Ransomes about renaming their mowers.

But patent engineer David Gould

of Bangor, Maine, warns, "If they don't police their trademark they'll lose it. Look at thermos and aspirin. Their owners slept on their trademark rights and lost them."

Gould said a product violates trademark rights if it even sounds like the protected name. Protecting the trademark just involves writing a letter to the offending company asking it to stop using the name or to attribute it to the trademark holder, he said.

NEWS

Park District takes over Golden Acres

The Schaumburg (Ill.) Park District has forcibly acquired the 205-acre Golden Acres Country Club from owners Curt and Phyllis Kotel.

Park officials maneuvered the \$15.5-million purchase largely because of proposed state legislation that would have given counties, rather than local park districts, first shot at condemning golf courses and therefore forcing their sale.

The purchase ensures Golden Acres will remain green space "forever," said park board President Marge A. Connelly.

Connelly said the district tried to negotiate with the Kotels to give Schaumburg Park District first dibs on the course, but the Kotels refused.

Park leaders are promising a variety of improvements at the course, which has been renamed Schaumburg Golf Club.

36-acre razed site faces transformation

G and R Contractors Inc., of Glenbeulah, Wis., plans to raze two buildings covering 36 acres in West Milwaukee and build a nine-hole golf course on the site.

The buildings of the former Babcock and Wilcox steel pipe and drilling equipment plant at S. 37th St. and W. Burnham Avenue have been condemned by the village.

McDermott International Inc., of New Orleans, the parent company of Babcock and Wilcox, will donate the site to an environmental group based in Washington, D.C. That group will then sell the property to G and R for \$750,000, according to a West Milwaukee spokesman.



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