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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Seed firms: Gov't cost us \$1M

BY MARK LESLIE

Not satisfied with the mere "regrets" of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a snafu that cost his company \$200,000, Sonny Pennington of Pennington Enterprises Inc. is on the verge of suing the USDA.

Pennington's Madison, Ga., firm is one of seven seed companies that absorbed a total \$1 million loss when 2 million pounds of tall fescue seed imported from Argentina were

found to contain a noxious weed, serrated tussock, and the seed was ordered recalled.

Pennington says he will decide by early August whether he would sue the government, but first he would seek an audience with Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter.

"We're attempting to go through Congress rather than lawyers," Pennington said. "Congressmen work cheaper than lawyers."

"My attorney says that to sue government it's going to cost \$200,000 in attorney fees. I can sue and possibly win \$250,000 and it will cost me \$200,000. That's if we sue for simply our loss. It appears that if we sue — and it appears we probably will have to — we'll sue for loss of reputation, loss of business."

An irate Greg Fennels of Olson Fennels Seed in Oregon, which also absorbed a
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A 40-acre pond plays a major role in the design and beauty of Rum River Hills Golf Club in Anoka, Minn., which was built for \$600,000 — a figure that included the moderate \$150,000 clubhouse in the background. People like retired farmer Wes Bulen and his partners in the Rum River

Hills venture are finding it is possible to fulfill their dreams — building a golf course — even when faced with today's high land and construction costs. For a look at the boom for builders, read the "Eureka!" stories below and their companion pieces on pages 19-21 inside.

Possible cure found for cricket

BY LARRY KIEFFER

After four years of testing in pastureland by researchers with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, "the most promising biological control agent for mole crickets we have ever had" is ready for field trials at 20 Florida golf courses.

"Everything looks extremely promising as far as finally having something we can brag about," said Bob Rehberg, chairman of the Florida Turfgrass Association's research awards committee.

What Rehberg and the FTGA are bragging about is a Uruguayan nematode that carries a bacterium "at least four times more virulent on the mole cricket than some of the other materials that have been pulled in from commercial organizations."

The microscopic nematode crawls in the mole cricket's mouth, infects it with the lethal bacteria, and then crawls out before the insect dies "within one to several days,"

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Eureka! Golf gold being mined

1989 is prime time for nation's builders

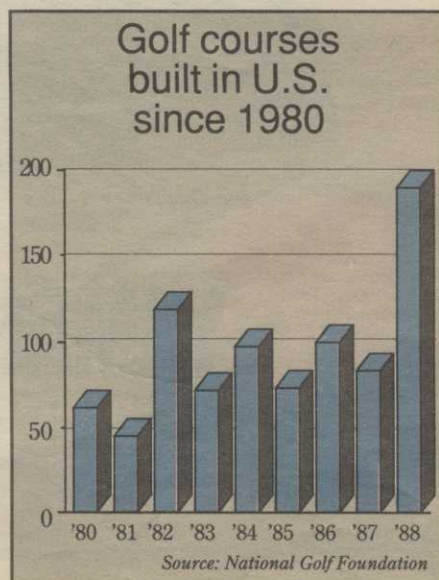
BY MARK LESLIE

This is the best of times for golf course builders.

A short while ago, Golf Course Builders Association Executive Director Don Rossi said, "There's no way to buy the land, build a golf course, and make money except to charge exorbitant fees — unless the land is given to you — because the cost of the land is so, so expensive."

Poof! Suddenly real-estate developers are giving the land away to golf course builders because the developers want a golf course to attract home buyers but don't want to get involved in something they're not expert in.

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Beware snags, but money can be found

BY KATHY BISSELL

Getting a golf course from dream to reality requires at least as many complex maneuvers as getting a team to the Super Bowl. It takes money, talent and time.

Because more people want to play golf, because research reports from groups such as the National Golf Foundation say we need more courses, and because people seem to think there's a lot of money to be made, many individuals and developers want to take the plunge into golf course development.

The difficulties are knowing how to get the funds to start and how to make a project
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