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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

16 A CHRISTMAS present dream

18 HERBICIDES fight clover menace

23 DEVELOPMENT future is cloudy

Type	Open		Under Construction	
	1990 YTD 3rd Qtr.	1989 Year-end	1990 YTD 3rd Qtr.	1989 Year-end
Daily Fee	112	156	291	218
Municipal	28	35	75	63
Private	53	99	191	177
Undecided			4	5
Totals	193	290	561	463

Source: NGF

News

- Turf research laboratory planned 3
- Full-service lab promised 4
- Pala Mesa team captures crown 4
- VP Quayle gets Fazio green 5
- Coeur d'Alene green runs into problem 5
- SIUE project hits economic snag 6
- Latshaw will not join Oakmont 7

Departments

Comment

- Golf communities a solution 8

Letters

- Farmers Marketing gets NuMex credit 9

Super Focus

- Different strokes in Alaska's 24-hour light 10

Association News

- Rossi, Love, Gallaghers honored 11

Government Update

- Mount Snow wins 1st Vermont go-ahead 13

New Courses

- Ross Society gives stamp of approval 14-15

Business News

- Deere consolidating lawn, grounds outfits 25

On the Move

- Miller takes charge at Pebble Beach 26

New Literature

- Keystone details wall construction 27

New Products

- New equipment hits the marketplace 28

On the Green

- Colling down bentgrass in hot South 30

Golf Summit 90:

Industry must give ground on environment

BY MARK LESLIE

The golf industry must do some "serious soul-searching" about the magnitude of its projects and undertake research to disclaim "pseudo-scientists" if it is to continue to thrive, according to government and industry officials.

Speaking at Golf Summit 90 in Palm Springs, Calif., experts from the Environmental Protection Agency, Golf

Course Superintendents Association of America, United States Golf Association and American Society of Golf Course Architects agreed obstacles to golf development will get tougher and laws harsher.

The obstacles include golfers' demand for green and low-cut courses; misinformed environmentalists and the lack of scientific information on pesti-

cide and fertilizer use; an upcoming re-registration of List A pesticides; tightening wetlands regulations; and localized anti-development sentiment.

"But you shouldn't see the environment as a roadblock....," said EPA Associate Administrator Lewis S.W. Crampton. "A pleasant environment is a very important part of enjoying the game."

Continued on page 22

Californians vote no

BY PETER BLAIS

California voters last month turned a major thumbs down on two ballot questions that would have banned many of the pesticides used on golf courses.

"We're obviously pleased that our efforts were successful," said Raymond Davies, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Southern California which united with other regional California superintendent associations to fight the Big Green and

CAREFUL initiatives.

"But we know the issue isn't dead. This is just the first inning in a long ball game. Now we'll just have to wait and see what type of initiative or other tactic the environmentalists come up with next time."

Sixty-four percent of the electorate voted against Big Green, which would have banned up to 80 percent of common pesticides.

Continued on page 13

First Partners Club a 'go'

BY MARK LESLIE

Construction is about to begin on the first link in an international chain of exclusive golf and meeting facilities called The Partners Clubs.

International Golf Management, Inc., has reached agreement in principle with the board

Continued on page 19



A golfer drives from the back tee of the 6th hole at Boulder Ridge Country Club in Lake in the Hills, Ill. Bob Lohmann and Fuzzy Zoeller designed the 18-hole course at the private residential golf community. For more on new courses, see pages 14-15.

Americans share knowledge in Europe

BY VERN PUTNEY

Golf Course Europe drew many of the leading names in the American golf industry to Paris in late November to discuss the state of the game in Europe, considered among the most fertile

breeding grounds for new golf course development in the world.

"Golf has its roots in Europe, but now is a universal sport," said Dan Maples, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

"(In the United States) growth has lagged behind the growing number of golfers, a situation also probably true in Europe. That's our challenge — finding the sites, financing and talented people

Continued on page 20

Summit

Continued from page 1

If you muck it up some way by doing something stupid out there, not only are the environment and game going to suffer, you're going to get a community mad at you. And at least with the degree of activism we see starting to develop around hazardous waste sites, for example, you'll find that as these activists start to network together... it will be more and more difficult to develop good projects.

"So it is more important that you get yourselves organized, develop a code of practice and standards and stick to it."

Crampton said laws affecting pesticides and other chemicals are

dealt with in Washington, D.C., and added: "Most of the chemical companies are part of that dialogue, and so should you be, too. If you are, there will be a lot less pseudo-science introduced into the equation and a lot more realistic-looking costs and benefits of a particular product."

He said, "There are friends of the game of golf at EPA. But you have to be willing to get yourself organized to develop a relationship. Otherwise, you can fight history and go through the same kinds of problems the chemical, steel and other industries went through before they realized they had to get with the program."

USGA Green Section National Director James Snow and GCSAA President Gerald Faubel agreed golfers should be taught that "brown is beautiful."

Declaring that golfers' demand for green golf courses is putting "the gun to the head of superintendents," Snow said: "They are being told: 'Produce a top-notch golf course all the time or risk losing your job.' An insurance policy is pesticides... Certainly some are using pesticides to give golfers what they are demanding."

"So in the long run we have to educate and change golfers' expectations. We need to install a philosophy among golfers where

they will request a reduction in pesticide use in conjunction with a willingness to accept a few weeds and brown areas on their courses."

He said the USGA plans to educate golfers through the mail, on-site visits, seminars and meetings, publications, and a video.

Speaking for superintendents whom USGA President C. Grant Spaeth described as "the vital ingredient, the delivery system," Faubel said the GCSAA is seeking a first-class, worldwide education for superintendents and is working cooperatively with Congress, EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"We are developing communica-

tion tools for our total industry. We have just developed a new video naming all the positive aspects of golf courses in a community," he said.

"We have to live in harmony with nature and not command it through our design and maintenance practices," Snow said.

Snow added that the cutting heights of greens "is getting ridiculous. It is placing extraordinary stress and requiring more inputs of water, pesticides and other attention on grass than is necessary."

On the other hand, he said a low cut on fairways actually reduces water and pesticide water use.

Faubel said, "We have to change our cultural techniques in maintaining our golf courses. The golfer must understand they will receive the kind of playing condition they demand."

Crampton said the EPA will continue to closely monitor concentrations of pesticides and fertilizers in ground water and surface water at levels exceeding national standards; set maximum concentration levels for chemicals, nitrates and other pollutants in ground and surface water; regulate, through registration permits, use of pesticides in certain settings; set standards for applicators; and deal with loss of wetlands through dredging, filling, ground water pumping and draining activities.

The wetlands issue, he said, "will continue to be fraught with uncertainty, because it is so highly charged locally. Most wetlands issues never get elevated to the EPA in Washington. This adds a major element of inconsistency to the picture that you have to face in developing new courses."

In respect to pesticides and nitrates, Crampton spoke of EPA's ground water survey at Cape Cod, Mass., and its national survey of pesticides in drinking water wells.

While the Cape Cod study found that use of chemicals on golf courses causes little or no ground water contamination, the national survey discovered some well pollution.

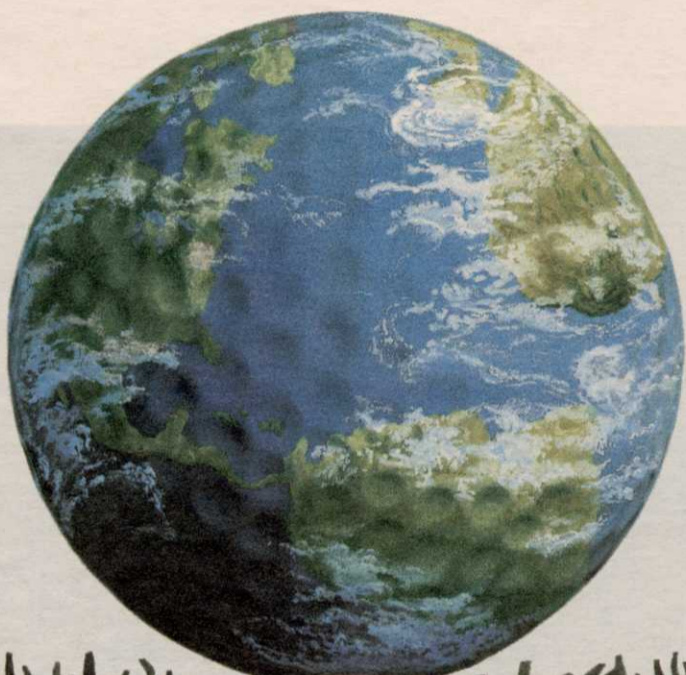
He said the EPA estimates that 10 percent of the nation's community drinking water wells and 4 percent of rural drinking water wells have detectable residues of at least one pesticide, but less than 1 percent are at levels of health concern. More than half the nation's wells contain nitrates, with about 1.2 percent of community wells and 2.4 percent of private wells showing detection above maximum contaminant levels, he said.

"The big surprise was that the most frequently detected pesticide in the survey was a breakdown product of DCPA (Dacthal)... The potential significance for the golf industry is that approximately 75 percent of Dacthal's use is on turf," Crampton said.

While most wells pose no health risks, "at the same time the findings underscore the need to be more diligent in order to avoid more serious problems in the future," he said.

Crampton said because EPA will focus on re-registration of all List A pesticides, "more chemicals are

Continued on page 23



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Course development forecast cloudy

BY PETER BLAIS

Tracking golf course development is the centerpiece of National Golf Foundation programs and concerns the entire golf industry, according to a panel of experts assembled at last month's Golf Summit '90 in Palm Springs, Calif.

"Golf course development affects everyone (in the industry) either directly or indirectly in our pocket-books. A lot of our future economic well-being is dependent on golf course development," said Richard Norton, vice president/general manager of National Golf Foundation Consulting.

Progress and Trends

While not as prolific as the glory days of the 1960s, new course development has been very strong the last four years. More than 300 courses are expected to open in 1990 alone.

Summit

Continued from page 22

likely to be restricted because of potential to contaminate ground water. We may lose popular pesticides through special review."

He said 2,4-D is in "a tenuous situation."

The agency proposed new applicator certification and training regulations in early November and the golf industry had 120 days to present comments to the agency. The final rule will be written some time in 1991, he said.

Also next year, the EPA's agricultural chemicals and ground water strategy will be released. States will develop management plans that will have to be tailored to local ecological and soil conditions, he said.

"Pesticides will be banned in areas that are vulnerable to contamination. If states don't have those plans, pesticides won't be able to be used there," Crampton said. But he added that the research agenda the GCSAA and USGA are coordinating is crucial because it is "tailor-made" to this approach.

Regarding wetlands, Crampton said, "The law is pretty clear... If wetlands are involved you can go elsewhere to build your development unless you can prove that another site is impossible, that environmental problems will be mitigated and you will not harm the existing ecosystem."

Delays in permitting can be skirted if a site's wetlands are considered early in a project.

Yet, with all the discussion about the environment, the very lack of public knowledge may be the biggest stumbling block to golf development, Crampton inferred.

"The decision to allow a golf course to be built in a community is an emotional one. It is not scientific... Increasingly, environmental problems are being given to stop courses from being built," he said. "Developers and course architects are going to have to get in at the front end, dialogue with the community, and make the sale based on the facility's environmental benefits, and other benefits the facility can bring.

"This requires your developing a

'A fairly healthy inventory in the pipeline means a pretty healthy situation near term.'

— NGF VP Richard Norton

"A fairly healthy inventory in the pipeline means a pretty healthy situation in the near term," Norton said. "But many have been in the pipeline for months or years and may not reflect the uncertainties of today's economy. Some may drop out, although the near term looks pretty good."

The upswing in new course development has been driven by a strong public demand to play golf, investors recognizing the game's profit potential, and the existence of more and better experienced management companies to run new courses properly, Norton said.

New courses continue largely dependent on residential real es-

tate with about 50 percent of new courses being associated with new subdivisions, Norton said. That means new development is vulnerable to the predicted recession. But there are mitigating factors, Norton said.

First, in a recession, the strong survive. Many golf course developers are "well-financed, well-connected and will continue to use golf as vital element to sell real estate," Norton said.

More importantly, he added, golf is being viewed by private and community developers as a stand-alone unit that can be profitable. That makes them less susceptible to a downturn in the real estate market.

Herbicides

Continued from page 18

dients clopyralid and triclopyr — "really blasts" clover. But he added, "I caution wall-to-wall application of Confront on bentgrass until we study it for another year."

Neal added that grounds crews should keep a constant eye out for thin or damaged turf and exposed soil.

"Divots, places where skunks or golf cars have dug up the turf — these are places where clover can germinate and re-establish," he said. "Clover seed remains viable in soil for at least 10 years and probably longer. If it gets a foothold in an exposed spot it can then creep out and re-infest the turf."

Neal disagreed that lower nitrogen fertilization was a root of the clover problem. Courses he is familiar with have reduced nitrogen applications "but only to the range of optimum fertility for bentgrass," he said. "If it reduced the vigor of bentgrass, you'd have a bigger problem with poa annua."

The future

While PBI Gordon's Carrell said most non-phenoxy products "are not an economically feasible option right now," other experts say scientists are concentrating their research on non-phenoxy, post-emergence products.

"There are a number of products that can replace 2,4-D but are a lot more expensive," said Dow Elanco Product Marketing Manager David Maurer.

"Our research and development people are looking primarily at triclopyr and others in that same line of chemistry, with very low rates of application," he said.

Maurer said, "This is true of most companies. Society is telling us they don't want pounds and pounds of chemicals going out."

He said that, typically, it costs \$40 million to \$60 million and takes eight to 10 years to develop a new product from the laboratory to the marketplace.

"In today's environment we have to do a battery of environmental impact and toxicology studies, and it takes years," he said.

NGF studies show parts of the United States have too many golf courses. Far more have too few. With Baby Boomers lining up to enter the golf market, the limiting factor for golf is not demand, Norton said. It's supply.

"If Boomers act like their parents, there's a lot of potential demand for courses out there," the NGF official said.

Existing courses will help satisfy a potential demand the NGF says could almost double from 474 million rounds annually in 1990 to 884 million by the year 2000. But with existing facilities at 85-90 percent of desired capacity, there isn't much

room there to meet increased demand, Norton said.

That means new courses are needed. But they can't be placed anywhere. They must be built "where they're needed, at the right price, at the right investment and for the right fee," Norton said.

While there is a need for new facilities, Norton said there are four main factors constraining golf course expansion — global and domestic economies, upward cost pressures, profitability and financing.

New construction is affected by external economic factors. For

Continued on page 24

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