

BRIEFS



STONE HIRES GEOSCIENTIST

RALEIGH, N.C. — Andrew Hiscock, a leading agrochemical scientist, has joined Stone Environmental, Inc. (SEI) as senior geoscientist. With his arrival, the company has opened a Southeast Regional Office here at 206 Langston Mill Court, Raleigh, N.C., 27606; phone-fax is 919-387-4704.



Andrew Hiscock

Hiscock will manage agrochemical monitoring studies, environmental site assessments, and hazardous materials remediation projects.

BARENBRUG HIRES SALES MANAGER

TANGENT, Ore. — Barenbrug USA has named John Farrell sales manager at its Garfield-Williamson Division's professional products division. In his new position, Farrell will handle sales to the professional turfgrass industry in Garfield-Williamson's Eastern region, while also fulfilling selected responsibilities nationally for Barenbrug USA. Farrell spent the last 10 years with Lofts Seed Co. as a golf turf specialist, serving golf course superintendents, architects and builders.

BEEBE TO COORDINATE JACKLIN PR

Brandie E. Beebe, a lifelong resident of Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, has joined Jacklin Seed Co. Beebe will be working in the Marketing Department, coordinating the advertising and public relations for Jacklin Seed Company and the newly formed division, JacklinGolf. Beebe, a 1994 graduate of the University of Idaho, received a bachelor of science degree in public relations.



Brandie Beebe

BILLMAN JOINS ZAJAC STAFF

ALBANY, Ore. — Michael Billman has joined Zajac Performance Seeds as warehouse supervisor for the company's office/warehouse here. The soon-to-be-completed facility is situated on a 33-acre site, and is equipped with advanced mixing equipment and an extensive truck-handling capability for prompt, efficient shipments. The warehouse will serve as the consolidation point for the company's proprietary turfgrasses and mixtures as well as for common grasses and forages.

Lesco acquires Pro-Lawn

CLEVELAND — Lesco, Inc. has signed an asset purchase agreement to acquire the Pro-Lawn Division of Agway, Inc. for an undisclosed amount of cash.

Pro-Lawn is the largest regional supplier of professional turf care products serving the golf course, landscape, commercial and lawn care market in the Northeast. The division markets fertilizer, turf seed, turf protection and other specialty products in 16 states to a broad array of customers. Annual sales revenue is approximately \$30 million.

Said William A. Foley, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Lesco: "We believe this move strengthens our position in the strategically important Northeastern U.S. market."

Lesco, Inc. now serves more than 90,000 customers nationwide and distributes its product through its Lesco Service Centers, Lesco Stores-on-Wheels, lawn care service representatives, telemarketing and catalog sales.



ACQUISITIONS

Flowtronex PSI, Amiad join forces

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Zebra mussels, fresh water clams, algae-infested water sources. Inspired by the golf industry's growing dependence on high quality filtration systems, pump station manufacturer Flowtronex PSI has forged a precedent-setting marketing agreement with filtration systems manufacturer Amiad Filtration Systems.

The agreement, which took effect Jan. 1, grants Flowtronex PSI world wide marketing rights to Amiad filters for the golf course industry. What that means, said Flowtronex PSI President Dave Brockway, is greater responsiveness to customer concerns.

"Until recently, we simply followed customer specifications when it came to pump station filtration," said Brockway. "But filtration emerged as a more crucial issue in the last few years due to mounting water-quality problems. Superinten-

Continued on page 60



KNOX TEAMS WITH PURSELL

PGA touring pro Kenny Knox has joined the Pursell Industries team as a special sales representative. The three-time tour winner will represent the Alabama-based fertilizer firm throughout 1996 in a variety of golf-related customer outreach activities, helping to showcase Pursell's Polyon fertilizer encapsulating technology. While playing in Tour events and at Pursell-sponsored activities, he will wear Polyon apparel and use a custom-designed Polyon golf bag.

COMMENTARY

While keeping an ear to the trade show floor

By HAL PHILLIPS

ORLANDO — The GCSAA show has traditionally been an effective platform from which companies introduce new products and technology. Though its secret weapon is still winding its way through the offices of the Environmental Protection Agency, Rhone-Poulenc made a big splash in Orlando with its new mole cricket control system, Chipco Choice. Experimental Use Permits have been



approved in six Southeastern states where, by all accounts, Choice has met with rave reviews. "Superintendents and

researchers are telling us they've never seen anything like it," said R-P's Andy Seckinger. The active ingredient in Choice, fipronil, attacks the mole cricket nervous system. However, according to R-P researchers, fipronil has minimal effect on mammalian nervous systems and, thus, might have broader applications in the pest-control market. Seckinger said Choice should be approved for superintendent use sometime this spring, hinting that it would have been okayed by now if Democrats and Republicans hadn't shut down the government three times since November.

•••

There's nothing like a good ol' fashioned catfight, especially when it's played out between respected companies on a trade show floor. In Orlando, the best example pitted Rain Bird and Toro Irrigation in a battle over which company supplies irrigation systems to the *Golf Digest Top 100*. Rain Bird claims five of the top 10, prompting Toro to claim 75 of the top

Continued on page 62



NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Behold, the Water Hog, an Irish invention that removes surface water at a rate of 6,000 gallons per hour. Now manufactured in the U.S. by Star Transportation of Englewood, Colo., the ride-on Hog, powered with an 11-hp Honda engine, retails for \$11,500, while the Hog Jr., a lightweight, walk-behind model, goes for \$795. Both machines use the principal of sponge-covered, take-up drums which act as wheels. The sponges, which are non-invasive to the terrain, feed water to a drum which collects and stores the water, which is wheeled away and emptied. The ride-on model, as you can see, simply shoots the water away — up to 50 feet away. For more information on the Water Hog, call Star at 800-495-4429. For more new products, see page 66.

Fish-based fertilizer shows real promise

By JOHN SCHMITZ

Cold ocean waters off the Oregon coast are the principal source of a new organic fertilizer formulated to grow healthier greens, tees and fairways. So far, the product is showing good promise during testing at a nine-hole course on the Long Beach Peninsula in the state of Washington.

BioGro (9-3-5), which is made by fish feeds producer Bioproducts of Warrenton, Ore., consists mainly of the organic by-products of fish-processing plants along the Oregon coast. Rob Gould of Pacific Organics in Salem, Ore., who consulted with Bioproducts, said the natural, slow-release nutrients it contains actually serve to increase the health of soil microbes, which in turn leads to healthier grass plants.

There's certainly nothing new about

Continued on page 64

Kubota takes action against knock-offs

TORRENCE, Calif. — Kubota Corp. and two of its U.S. affiliates, Kubota Tractor Corp. and Kubota Manufacturing of America Corp., have filed an action with the International Trade Commission in Washington, D.C. to stop the importation, distribution and sale in the United States of "gray market" Kubota tractors designed for sale in the Japanese market.

These "gray market" tractors are materially different in several respects, including safety features, from comparable

Kubota tractors designed for sale in the United States. The importation, distribution and sale of the "gray market" Kubota tractors have caused and are likely to cause confusion in the marketplace, according to Richard Briggs, legal counsel for Kubota Tractor Corp. The ITC is expected to initiate its investigation of this matter early this month. The ITC action is expected to take about one year to conclude.

For further information, contact Briggs at 310-370-3370.

An ear to the floor...

Continued from page 59

100. Competition breeds this type of one-upsmanship, but it also breeds studied innovation; and no segment of the golf industry has benefited more from a spirited technological free-for-all than irrigation. Case in point: While celebrating the 20th anniversary of its computerized Maxi system this year, Rain Bird trotted out its Maxi for Windows Stratus, the company's second generation of Windows-based software designed for superintendents with little or no computer experience. Toro countered with TouchNet, an irrigation control system operated via fingers on a computer screen, as opposed to key strokes. Obviously, this innovation is also aimed at the technologically challenged superintendent.

In November, on the heels of Pursell Industries' alliance with J.R. Simplot and Vigoro Corp.'s recommitment to golf, I opined on the increasingly crowded, competitive fertilizer industry. This dog-eat-dog situation was highlighted in Orlando, where all players fought for the attention of superintendents while trotting out the market's new product-line must: slow-release technology. Vigoro jumped into the game with V-Cote, which joins The Scotts Company's Poly-S, Pursell's Polyon, and ESN from United Horticultural Supply. However, the prime-time players — which also include Milorganite, Lebanon Seaboard, Vicksburg Chemical and The Andersons — would be well advised to peer over their collective shoulder at Terra, golf's sleeping giant. Once an ag-only firm with \$3 billion in sales, Terra has set its considerable sights on golf by aggressively gobbling up distributorships in the Midwest and Southeast. While most of Terra's 400-plus distributors are primarily agricultural, the firm plans to convert them all into golf/ag dual outlets. Further, by its own admission, Terra products target the public-access market, i.e. the mid- to smaller-budget courses that now comprise two-thirds of the nation's golf course stock. Terra has developed a fairly complete line of chemical and, yes, fertilizer products, making the Sioux City, Iowa-based firm one to watch... One



last fertilizer note: Scotts now lists its common stock on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol SMG, chosen to represent the Scotts/Miracle-Gro merger. According to President and CEO Theodore Host, this is another step in Scotts continued growth. Since the company went public in January 1992, sales have gone from \$413.6 million to \$732.8 million in fiscal '95.

After 20 years with Tee-2-Green/Turf Seed, Dr. Bill Meyer is leaving the Hubbard, Ore.-based firm to head up the prestigious Turfgrass Breeding Program at Rutgers University. Turf Seed honcho Bill Rose expressed remorse at losing such a respected name in the seed business, but it appears Meyer has left the company with a stable of promising new bentgrasses, now being tested at sites all across the country. Testing in Oregon has been washed out, literally, by the well publicized flooding. Will this affect pricing come fall? "We don't see any problems," explained Mike Robinson of Seed Research. "The problem is mostly along the riverbanks, and we don't grow a lot of seed there." Robinson did say there will be a shortage of ryegrass seed this year, meaning higher prices. Excessive demand, reduced acreage and chemical damage could reduce the total yields as much as 20 percent, he said. "Also," Robinson added, "because it was so wet, we had a serious slug outbreak in the younger fields." Field burning used to take care of the slugs, but that practice has been banned. The only remaining control is slug bait pellets, which were largely washed away by heavy rains, Robinson said. Then there's the wheat issue: "Wheat prices are high, and wheat can be grown on ryegrass fields," he explained. "If it's \$5 per bushel, the growers might plant wheat instead. With wheat, costs are lower, you don't have to spot spray and you can sell it on the futures market."

It appears the Golf Car Manufacturers Association, a trade group representing the interests of industry buggy-makers, has fallen into a state of inaction as Club Car has stopped reporting its quarterly sales numbers. In terms of the industry's major players, that leaves only Yamaha and E-Z-GO to compare figures. "And there isn't much point in that," said one industry source. Liability and emission issues will more than likely bind the three major manufacturers together in some form, but the association has lost a major *raison d'etre*.

Rohm & Haas, makers of Dimension pre-emergent herbicide, have taken a gamble by cutting recommended application rates when the product is applied to fertilizer. If the weather is good this year, they'll likely come out smelling like a rose as performance will probably not dip commensurate with the application rate. This will also place pressure on competitors to follow suit by similarly cutting application rates, and profits. However, if the weather is bad — producing conditions more favorable to disease — the lower rate could backfire on Rohm & Haas. Key to applying pre-emergent herbicide to fertilizer is pellet size: The smaller the pellet, the more evenly the chemical is spread. With a lower application rate, it's even more vital that superintendents seek out the smaller pellet.

Stay tuned.

INSIDE INFORMATION

Do your competitors know something you don't?

Subscribe to the

Golf Course News Development Letter

and find out.

Who reads the Golf Course News Development Letter?

- 37% are suppliers
- 24% are builders
- 20% are course architects
- and almost 50% are owners and/or presidents of their firms

Why do they read the Golf Course News Development Letter?

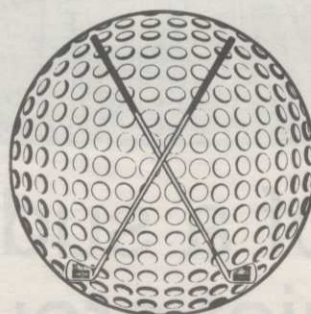
- it tracks golf course projects planned or under consideration across the nation
- it provides names and telephone numbers of the key contact people associated with each project

Just \$195 for a year's subscription — 24 issues a year!

Don't be left behind. Contact Editor Peter Blais at 207/846-0600.

Formost Construction Co.

Serving the nation for over 30 years.



IRRIGATION SPECIALISTS

"Doing One Thing Well"

STATE LIC. #267960

P.O. BOX 559

TEMECULA, CALIFORNIA 92593

(909) 698-7270

FAX (909) 698-6170