

The first John Deere Gator rolls off the line in Virginia.

## Virginia facility produces first Gator

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — The John Deere Worldwide Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division recently celebrated the production of the first Gator utility vehicle at the company's newest facility here. John Deere built the \$30 million complex in response to the overwhelming success of its utility vehicle line. The 300,000-square-foot facility houses all Utility Vehicle Group operations — from engi-

neering, design and manufacturing to sales, marketing and distribution.

"Since the first Gator was designed in 1992, we have seen an explosion in the demand for these utility vehicles," said David Larson, general manager of the new facility. "This facility, dedicated to the Gator line, was a necessity."

When fully operational, the facility will employ approximately 300 people.

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## Dow, Carbide merger will not affect turf market

INDIANAPOLIS — The proposed merger between Dow Chemical and Union Carbide that is expected to close in the third quarter will not affect Dow's AgroSciences arm according to a company spokesperson.

"I don't think it will have a major impact," said Sue Breach, global media relations manager. "The whole point of the merger is to enhance the existing applications that we have."

The deal, which was announced last August, is intended to broaden Dow's geography and its product portfolio, said Breach.

— Staff report

## Ewing Irrigation opens three new branches

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Ewing Irrigation has opened two new branch locations in Texas and one in California.

In Texas, Tim O. Little will manage the company's Abilene branch and Billy Penton will manage the Amarillo branch. Ewing now has 14 locations in Texas. Billy Penton will manage the new Chico, Calif., branch.



## Higgins to focus on products, PTI Tour

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the economics of the product."

Since the PTI Tour was launched in February, the company has brought in nearly 200 superintendents to learn about PTI's POLYON fertilizer line.

"We have brought in roughly half non-users and half users to tell them about the product and we have an open forum to get feedback," said Higgins.

Higgins hopes to take that feedback right to the bank. PTI is tracking sales history of the superintendents that it has brought in 12 months prior to, and after their visits. So far the improvements in sales numbers have been significant said Higgins.

### NEW PRODUCTS

Higgins is also working to bring POLYON technology to the pesticide and insecticide markets.

PTI, in conjunction with Memphis, Tenn.-based TopPro Specialties, is work-

ing on a business plan for a polymer-coated acephate (Orthene) product.

"The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is concerned with chronic exposure. So if we polymer coat acephate and make a granular out of it, then the polymer takes away any exposure to the chemical," said Higgins.

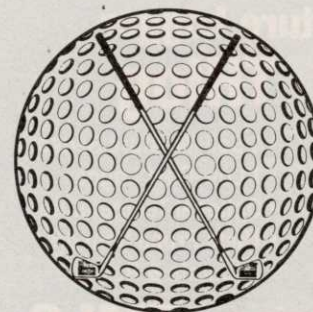
Initial studies show that the polymer-coated acephate product offers longer control, better activity and is odor-free. The product is also provides 17 percent nitrogen.

"We are in conversations right now with the EPA and since 90 percent of the active ingredients are registered we are going for a formulator exempt registration," said Higgins, who expects to have the product approved and ready by early 2001.

PTI is also talking with Bayer, Zeneca and Valent about the possible polymer applications with their individual product lines.

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