

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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PERIODICAL

Simplot, Budd make offer for ABT assets

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HENDERSON, Nev. — AgriBioTech (ABT) has reached an agreement in principle to sell its turfgrass seed assets and Professional Turfgrass Division to Kenneth Budd, former ABT president and chief operating officer, and Post Falls, Idaho-based J.R. Simplot for approximately \$65 million, plus assumption of liabilities. The two parties are also expected to assume ABT's obligations under contracts with its growers. The exact details of the Budd/Simplot deal were not disclosed.

For the past two months, Development Specialists Inc. (DSI) has been overseeing the reorganization of ABT and taking bids on the company's assets. DSI expects the deal to close by the end of June, but stresses that it must first be approved by the bankruptcy court and that competing bids may still be submitted by other parties.

Simplot has been aggressively expanding its reach in

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Irish golfers open new Stephen Kay links in New York

By JAY FINEGAN

UNION VALE, N.Y. — A little touch of Ireland has sprung up in New York's Hudson River Valley, thanks to the financial backing of 500 golfers of Irish descent and the talents of golf course architects Stephen Kay and Douglas Smith. The Links at Union Vale, just now opening, undoubtedly ranks as one of the most unusual golf course development projects in recent years.

The par-72, 18-hole, links-style layout is the brainchild of the Irish Golf Association (IGA), comprised of about 30 clubs clustered in the New York metropolitan area. "Much like bowling leagues, these are

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The 7th hole at The Links at Union Vale.

EcoAegis changes modern hydroseeding rules

By A. OVERBECK

NORTH OXFORD, Mass. — Growing turf on bunker, tee and green surrounds was once a job that was best suited to sod. That, however, is changing.

EcoAegis, a bonded hemlock fiber mulch and seed mixture, produced by Canadian Forest Products

(Canfor) of Vancouver, British Columbia, is becoming more widely used in steep sloped areas as a seeding agent and an erosion control device.

Hydrograss Technologies, based here, is the exclusive East Coast distributor of EcoAegis.

"We first used it on landfills. Engineers used it on 3-to-1 slopes in lieu of erosion blankets and had great success," said Robert Arello, president of Hydrograss Technologies.

EcoAegis combines hemlock fiber with a guar bonding agent creating a matrix cover that prevents erosion by absorbing the

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Manufacturers eye total course Global Positioning technology

By ANDREW OVERBECK

In today's information-crazed society, satellite-driven Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are becoming more widely used as the technology improves and costs come down. GPS systems are being used as navigational devices by back-road weary and, yes, even 300 courses in States have in-systems on golf age speedier players to pin-shot distances food and beverage revenues.



Not to be left out of the GPS revolution, large maintenance equipment manufacturers have teamed up with "clubhouse based" GPS companies to develop a total course solution that would bring the satellite technology to superintendents.

PARTNERSHIPS

John Deere acquired Boston-based Player Systems in

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Arnold Palmer (foreground) and M.G. Orender at the groundbreaking for The Golf Club of North Hampton.

Hampton Golf, Orender cater to beginners

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — M.G. Orender's new management firm, Hampton Golf, is moving ahead with its beginner-friendly club management philosophy.

"The concept is simple," said Orender. "The first club I was a pro at, we had sluggish business, so I started a junior program. We started with six kids and grew to 160 kids in about three years. In that time, our gross receipts doubled and that happened because when you get kids out there, you get the parents involved too. I learned that if the beginner is comfortable and is treated well, they won't go anywhere else."

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Simplot/ABT

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recent months, signing an exclusive distribution agreement for POLYON fertilizers with Sylacauga, Ala.-based Pursell Technologies, Inc., and agreeing to purchase Turf Partners, the distribution arm of Rancho Bernardo, Calif.-based Eco Soil Systems, Inc.

ABT brings a lot to the table, said Wayne Burk, senior vice president of Simplot Turf and Horticulture.

"We are looking for fits with our strategic growth plan," he said. "There are a few distribution businesses that we had an interest in and obviously from the seed side there are a number of varieties that have some real brand equity."

J.R. SIMPLOT ON THE MOVE

EARLY MARCH 2000 — SIGNS POLYON MARKETING AGREEMENT WITH PURSELL TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

LATE MARCH 2000 — AGREES TO PURCHASE TURF PARTNERS ASSETS FROM ECO SOIL SYSTEMS, INC.

MID-MAY 2000 — J.R. SIMPLOT/KENNETH BUDD PURCHASE BID ACCEPTED FOR ABT'S PROFESSIONAL TURFGRASS DIVISION.

DIVISIONS OF J.R. SIMPLOT

**JACKLIN SEED
BEST/APEX
MEDALIST AMERICA
JACKLIN GOLF**

If the deal goes through, Simplot would pick up such distributors as Las Vegas Fertilizer, Phoenix-based Garden West and Florence, Ky.-based George W. Hill. Also in the mix would be top varieties like Loft's L-93 bentgrass, Palmer ryegrass and Rebel tall fescue.

However, even if Budd/Simplot wins the bid they will conduct due diligence and could either submit a lower bid or decline.

For now, Burk remains cautiously optimistic.

"For example, Las Vegas Fertilizer is attractive to us because they were a big distributor of ours and they are a dominant player in that market," he said. "But their business is not what it was six to eight months ago, so there are some issues there. However, we are also in the process of acquiring Turf Partners, and if we can add a facility like Las Vegas Fertilizer to Turf Partners, it makes sense."

PRBA, seed company litigation presses on

By ANDREW OVERBECK

EUGENE, Ore. — The litigation between the Perennial Ryegrass Bargaining Association (PRBA) and Seed Research of Oregon (SRO) and Turf Seed, Inc. is slowly pressing forward here in the United States District Court.

The parties are still involved in depositions and the discovery of documents which are both scheduled to be wrapped up this

fall. "After that, if a settlement conference doesn't work, then we will go to court and that could happen this winter," said Jim Carnes, PRBA executive director.

At the crux of the conflict, the PRBA alleges that the two seed companies acted unlawfully when they announced on the eve of last year's harvest that they would pay contract growers a price for Tournament Quality perennial ryegrass seed that

was substantially less than the price set by the PRBA for the 1999 crop. SRO and Turf Seed, however, deny these charges and have challenged the legality of the PRBA and accused the organization of violating anti-trust laws.

"This is one of the most important litigations in agriculture," said Carnes. "Whichever side prevails, it will have an impact on U.S. agriculture."

Continued on next page



BSMOOTH **B**COMFORTABLE
BEFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**PO
BQUIET **B**EFFICIENT **B**S
BEFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**PO
BQUIET **B**SMOOTH **B**SLEE
BEFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**PO
BSMOOTH **B**COMFORTABLE
BEFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**PO
BQUIET **B**SMOOTH **B**SLEFK

THE NEW **B**SERIES
 LIGHTWEIGHTS



Official
Golf Course
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