

# 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

Continued on page 4

## 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

Continued on page 24



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

Continued on page 14

## 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

Continued on page 32



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."

Continued on page 30



## Club Car picks up Dash Golf Cars

WOODCLIFF LAKE, N.J. — Club Car, Inc., a division of Ingersoll-Rand Co., has acquired Dash Golf Cars, Inc., based in Indio, Calif. Dash Golf Cars sells new, used and reconditioned golf cars and utility vehicles, and offers a line of customized vehicles designed for the personal golf car market. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Dash Golf Cars is the largest North American retail dealer for Club Car. The company has three retail outlets in Cali-

fornia, two in Palm Desert and one in Rancho Mirage. It conducts manufacturing and assembly operations in Indio.

"Dash Golf Cars provides us entry into the personal golf car market with a line of deluxe vehicles, selected models of which will be available to our Club Car dealer network," said Herbert L. Henkel, president and chief executive officer. "In addition, we gain retail presence in a strong regional market, which will enable us to develop and test innovative downstream product and service concepts."

## Lesco reports record first quarter sales

CLEVELAND — Lesco, Inc. reported record sales for the first quarter ended March 31.

Net sales for the first quarter of 2000 increased 19 percent to a record \$98.9 million, compared with net sales of \$83.1 million for the same period last year, reflecting growth in all major product categories. Lesco also reported a loss for the first quarter of \$1.2 million, or \$0.14 per diluted share, compared with a loss of \$ 1.8 million, or \$0.21 per di-

luted share, in the same period a year ago, a 33 percent improvement. Due to the seasonality of its business, the company typically reports a loss in the first three months of its fiscal year.

"We are also encouraged by the significant progress at Commercial Turf Products, and are optimistic that Lesco's 2000 results will continue to show improvement throughout the year," said William A. Foley, LESCO chairman, president and chief executive officer.

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## GPS systems on the way for superintendents

continued from page 1

August 1998 and launched John Deere Golf Technologies. Toro Co. made an equity investment in San Juan Capistrano, Calif.-based ProShot Golf in January 1999. Earlier this year, Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products announced that it is working with Sarasota, Fla.-based ParView Inc. to develop a maintenance-based GPS system.

The basic GPS system will track maintenance equipment on the golf course, allow superintendents to ensure that workers are performing assigned tasks and, when integrated with the golf car system, send workers to areas of the course that are not receiving much play.

"What we want to do is wrap our SkyLinks technology around the superintendent's duties," said Tom Meyers, marketing manager for John Deere Golf Technologies. "That will involve everything from preventative maintenance tracking to site specific management, precision spraying and mowing, accurate compliance with Environmental Protection Agency record keeping, detailed material analysis and application and inventory and cost control."



John Deere's Skylinks GPS system.

John Deere's DeereTrax system collects the GPS-generated data and assembles it in a useful management form. "The system is now being used in our construction equipment division and we are now looking at using it in golf," said Meyers.

The SkyLinks system for golf cars was launched earlier this year and is now in use on five golf courses.

Textron is working with ParView to integrate its Track-It maintenance and management software program with GPS and GIS to develop a total system management program.

"The solution is to give the superintendent a total course management system that allows the superintendent to monitor his product and equipment, but also to monitor the course itself in terms of spraying, course conditions and machinery breakdowns," said Peter Whurr, vice president of product management for Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products. "If the superintendent knows all of this straight off, he can take proactive action."

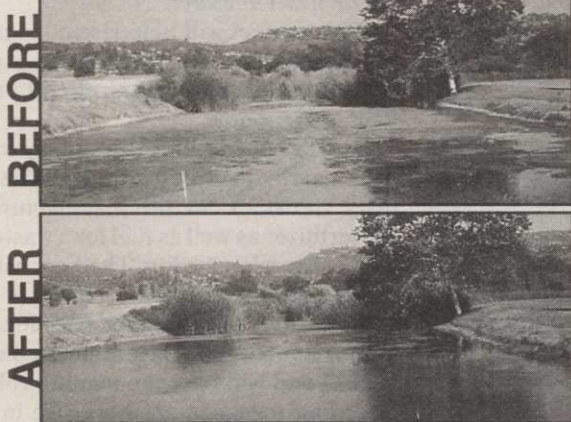
According to Whurr, the system could also build a history of maintenance practices at a specific course. "When a new superintendent comes in, he could pull up a history of the course that shows him

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## Profile snaps up Conwed Fibers

Buffalo Grove, Ill. — Profile Products LLC has purchased wood-based hydraulic mulch products manufacturer Conwed Fibers.

Based in Conover, N.C., Conwed Fibers has 35 years of experience producing high-quality products for the golf course, DOT highway, landfill, commercial and residential markets.

The acquisition includes Conwed manufacturing facilities and all products and brand names, such as Futerra erosion control blankets, Hydro Mulch products, home lawn products, tackifiers and nettings.

"The addition of Conwed complements our existing line of proprietary products," said Mark Lewry, president of Profile Products.

This addition builds on the company's August 1999 acquisition of the Terra-Mulch company, maker of cellulose mulches and amendments.



ACQUISITIONS



## GPS on the way

Continued from previous page

what has taken place over the last few years. That way he can hit the ground running," he said.

ParView's golf car system is in use on 70 golf courses and Whurr expects that the maintenance equipment GPS system will go into beta testing in the next few months.

Toro's Center for Advanced Turf Technology is working with ProShot's GPS technology to adapt it to maintenance applications.

"Toro is attempting to take the GPS technology and couple it with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and take it to another level and apply it to our own equipment," said Chip Engdahl, marketing manager for Toro's commercial division.

"One of the big ideas is precision turf maintenance and management. By coupling GPS, GIS and variable rate spraying technology you can be more precise on rates—tracking where, how much and when you put stuff down."

The ProShot system is being used on more than 150 courses nationwide and Engdahl said that maintenance related product testing is ongoing.

### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

GPS research and development has

been time-consuming. In addition to developing maintenance-specific systems, companies have to solve reliability, durability, cost and marketability issues.

"You can't simply apply the technology that is being used on golf cars to equipment," said Engdahl. "Data capture needs to be more precise, it needs to communicate more often and it needs to be more durable. A mower gets more abuse than a golf car because you have grass, water, pesticides and dirt going through the unit as opposed to driving over it."

Textron has been working with superintendents to determine what features and systems will be the most helpful.

"We want to make sure that the product we have is what the customer wants," said Whurr. "We can put all sorts of bells and whistles on this and show people how clever we are, but that doesn't necessarily mean that a superintendent will find it useful."

A GPS system for golf cars costs between \$100,000 and \$300,000 depending upon the number of features and cars

involved. While none of the companies have set prices for maintenance-only systems, a total course GPS system would work off the golf car price baseline.

Meanwhile, companies are still working on reducing costs.

"We have to make sure that this is something that courses can afford and find value in," said Meyers.



ProShot's GPS readout.

For communication alone, Bruce Williams, superintendent at Los Angeles Country Club, thinks GPS systems will be very useful on courses.

"This is a communication vehicle. Many courses didn't have radios 20 years ago; now we have radios, cell phones and two-way pagers for upward, downward and lateral communication," he said. "This is another way to stay in

touch. It is just as important to know where your staff is if you have four guys or 40 guys."

While Scott Cybulski, superintendent at Falmouth Country Club outside of Portland, Maine, thinks GPS may be a little overly sophisticated he too sees the po-

tential value.

"Marking out sprayed areas with GPS may be the most handy," he said. "Knowing area sizes and where valve boxes and irrigation heads are would be great. ... If I could do it, that is why I would do it."

### MARKET POTENTIAL

According to those in the industry the market potential is large.

"The industry is booming right now," said Nate Yoder, vice president of marketing for ParView. "We sold more systems in the last quarter than we had in the previous three years."

Of the nearly 17,000 golf courses in the U.S., Engdahl believes that every course will eventually be touched by GPS or GIS.

"At some point the technology will effect every course," he said. "GIS for irrigation, GPS for cars, and at some point it will be everywhere. The management of the golf course will be more unified because of these technologies."

According to Whurr, GPS systems will be well suited to the needs of course management companies. "The biggest concern from a management perspective is monitoring equipment and preventative maintenance," he said. "This would be a benefit to management companies because they'd know that they are getting the best out of their equipment." ↑

## Chlorophyll meter

Continued from page 31

management (IPM), soil and water quality and environmental monitoring. They currently have a prototype of the meter and are testing it with superintendents and turfgrass researchers this summer. Thurow plans to unveil the meter early next year.

Dan Dinelli, superintendent at North Shores Country Club, in Northbrook, Ill., will be using the meter in a compost study that he is doing this summer.

"We are working with compost and the dynamics of nitrogen," he said. "We are doing a weekly analysis of different plots that have different rates of compost."

Dinelli will be using the chlorophyll meter as an early-warning signal to see what changes the plant is going through. As a result, Dinelli hopes to correlate the compost/nitrogen study with the chlorophyll meter to see if the tool can be used for nitrogen assessment.

"Stress can be caused by a lack of fertility and nitrogen," he said. "This won't tell you what the problems are, but it clues you in to dig deeper. You have to open the IPM tool box, get soil cores and send in samples. The point is to get as early a jump [on stress issues] as possible."

Through this summer's research Thurow hopes to gain some insight into how the meter can be used.

"We will be trying to develop general guidelines to get people through the learning curve faster and correlate it with fertility conditions," he said.

Initially, Thurow said, the meter would be used by higher-end courses or more innovative superintendents. The final price has not been set, but it will likely cost around \$2,000.

Dinelli thinks the tool could have a universal use to back up fertilization practices.

"The tool could help us justify what we do from an environmental perspective," he said. "It could help reduce nitrogen applications or justify the ones we do." ↑

## PGC launches site

DENVER — Professional Golf Commerce has launched its web site ([www.pgcgolf.com](http://www.pgcgolf.com)), an online, one-stop-shop that directly links PGA golf professionals and golf course superintendents with golf and golf-related manufacturers, distributors and merchandisers.

First previewed as a demonstration at the 1999 PGA Merchandise Show in Las Vegas, the site currently hosts products from more than 40 vendors and is available to buyers and sellers all over the world.



## Flowtronex

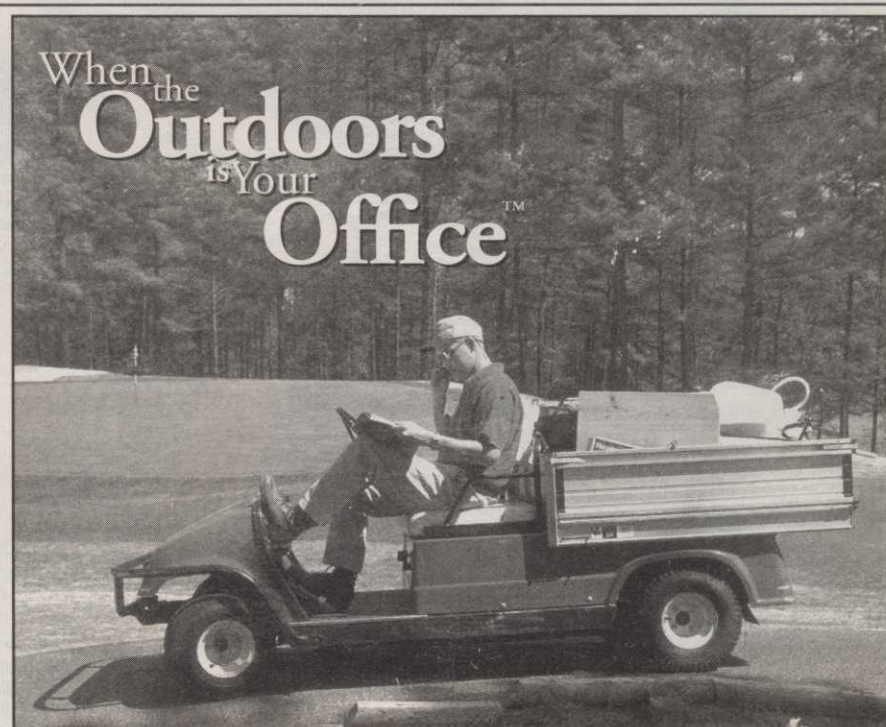
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Turf Feeding Systems, however, will provide technical expertise and support to customers.

Three models of the Nutrifeed system are available and they cost between \$8,000 and \$12,000.

The 1000 is suited to small courses and has a single head for the control of one nutrient at a time. The 2000 is for medium sized courses and has two heads and a 60 gallon-per-minute capacity. The 3000 is for large courses and has three heads and can provide three separate nutrients at once.

All Nutrifeed systems will be fully integrated into the pump system's controls. ↑



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