

BRIEFS



ZIRKLE HEADS UP RAIN BIRD MARKETING

AZUSA, Calif. — Matthew A. Zirkle has been named marketing manager for the golf division of Rain Bird Sales, Inc. Zirkle will oversee the marketing and communications functions for the division. Prior to being named marketing manager, Zirkle served as new business development manager in Rain Bird Golf.



Matthew Zirkle

RIVERDALE NAMES SCHUTZMAN, PHIPPS

GLENWOOD, Ill. — Riverdale Chemical Co. has named Lendel Schutzman as regional sales manager. His responsibilities will include promoting product sales in the turf, vegetation management, forestry and aquatic industries. Mark Phipps has been named Northeast regional sales manager. In his new position, Phipps will be responsible for sales and technical support for Riverdale distributors located in the Northeast and the development of new distributors within his territory.

PEROTTI JOINS JACKLIN SEED

POST FALLS, Idaho — Larry Perotti has joined Jacklin Seed/Simplot Turf & Horticulture as technical service manager. Perotti is responsible for answering questions from Jacklin Seed customers on such subjects as grass species and variety selection, and growth characteristics. Additionally, he provides backup technical and sales services for Jacklin Golf's three outside sales representatives.

NELSON TO LEAD SCOTTS TURF BREEDING

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. has hired Dr. Eric K. Nelson to lead its turfgrass breeding efforts at the company's Oregon Field Station. As senior scientist and turfgrass breeder, Nelson will join Scotts' variety development group in its efforts to produce herbicide-resistant grasses and will conduct traditional plant breeding, drawing upon biotech-based gene sources. He will interact with scientists within Scotts and at universities across the country. Nelson most recently served as senior technical agronomist for JacklinGolf, where he provided agronomic assistance and technical communications for golf course architects, builders and superintendents.

J.R. Simplot set to expand deal, inject \$20 million into Eco Soil

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RANCHO BERNADO, Calif. — Building on November's marketing and distribution alliance, Eco Soil Systems, Inc. and J.R. Simplot Co. have strengthened their relationship by entering into a multi-faceted letter of intent. Under the agreement, Simplot would acquire \$20 million of a new series of Eco Soil preferred stock. Simplot would also agree to commence field trials of Eco Soil's proprietary products in agricultural markets. The deal also grants Simplot the option of acquiring an interest in Eco Soil's Turf Partners subsidiary during the spring of 2001, depending on Turf Partners 2000 financial performance.



Bill Adams

"Simplot is investing in the parent company," said Eco Soil President and Chief Executive Officer Bill Adams. "But they retain the option of converting that investment into Turf Partners or putting some additional money into the subsidiary to buy some level of shares. They have to make that decision in the next 12 months."

"We are interested in the BioJect and FreshPack products," said Hiromi Yanagisawa, senior vice president of marketing for J.R. Simplot. "But we need to look at it financially to see if it makes sense."

While a 12-month valuation period is unusual, Adams remains unfazed.

"Simplot is not sure whether they want to be fully invested in a distribution company," he said. "At this stage of the game it doesn't matter to us. We wanted to make sure they made a commitment to us since we had made a distribution commitment to them, and in addition, we have some technology that we wanted to shove into their agricultural markets and this was an easy way to do it."

Building a relationship with a vendor also makes a lot of sense to Adams.

"The working capital helps, but the bottom line is that we wanted to get closer to our major vendors because we have always presented ourselves as a value-added sales force," said Adams. "In the final analysis, it is all about positioning someone's product over someone else's. You have to have favorites and Simplot is one of them."

Concurrently, Eco Soil will be working to cut costs after losing \$11 million in the fourth quarter due to restructuring costs and operating losses in Mexico. While Eco Soil continues to expand its revenues — \$22 million in the fourth quarter — it faced overhead expenses of \$17 million in 1999. By streamlining operations and using the proceeds of the Simplot investment to retire debts, Eco Soil expects to trim 2001 costs to \$9 million.

"When you consolidate all the busi-

Continued on page 62

AgriBioTech files Chapter 11; asset sale to follow

HENDERSON, Nev. — Citing low seed prices, high expenses and slow collections, AgriBioTech (ABT) has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The full-service turfgrass seed company has been struggling to integrate the 34 companies that it has bought over the last four years.



According to ABT's second-quarter report released Feb. 22, "The company has incurred significant operating and net losses since inception and has been unable to generate sufficient cash flow from operating activities to meet projected debt service and other obligations as they become due."

ABT reported a net loss of \$19.5 million for the second quarter ended Dec. 31, 1999, and posted losses of \$49.8 million in fiscal year 1999. The company's second-quarter sales were \$52 million compared to \$75.9 million in the same period last year, a decrease of 31.6 percent. As of Feb. 11, the company had outstanding debts of \$68.9 million. The NASDAQ National Mar-

Continued on page 66

Redexim to distribute Carraro tractors

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PITTSTON, Pa. — Redexim Charterhouse has entered into an exclusive marketing and distribution pact with Padova, Italy-based tractor manufacturer Antonio Carraro. Redexim Charterhouse has had a distribution agreement in Europe with Carraro since August 1999.

"The success of the European joint venture led us to roll out U.S. operations," said Philip Threadgold, executive vice president of Redexim Charterhouse. "Carraro was looking to get into the U.S. market and we offered the distribution."

The tractors will be distributed in



Carraro's TTR 440 in action.

the United States through Redexim Charterhouse's network of 47 distributors. Replacement parts will be stocked at the company's new warehouse facility in Pittston.

Continued on page 66

Golfsat plans to be one-stop online source for supers

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEW ORLEANS — Looking to fill the Internet gap that exists in the golf course maintenance industry, Golfsat has launched its website (www.golfsat.com) and industry portal to golf course superintendents.

Golfsat Chief Executive Officer Mike Scott equates the site's unveiling to the Oklahoma land rush.

"Everyone is running to the Internet and is not sure where they are going," said Scott. "The Internet has embraced this industry. There are a lot of manufacturer and distributor websites. But by and large there has not been a formation of e-commerce or a virtual community for superintendents. That is what we are creating at Golfsat."

Scott aims to get superintendents online, create a high-speed industry network and design and develop industry-specific software and content.



Mike Scott

CONTENT

Registered Golfsat users can use the Golfsat search engine to locate information on turfgrasses and cultivars, diseases and insects, biological and chemical

Continued on page 68

Golf Course News STOCK REPORT (2/24)*

Company	Symbol	Stock Price	%Change 1/1/00	%Change 1/14/00	P/E	52-week Range	Proj. 5-yr Earn. Growth
Astrazeneca	AZN	33.25	-20.36	-18.90	22.83	31-48.94	10.30%
Deere & Co.	DE	38.25	-9.73	-20.31	38.14	32-47.5	9.20%
Dow Chemical Co.	DOW	106.375	-19.79	-23.68	18.16	90-141.5	8.60%
Family Golf Centers	FGCI	1.125	-20.00	-26.47	N/A	0.72-10.125	25%
Golf Trust of Amer.	GTA	18	6.27	6.64	14.17	14.5-25.75	8.80%
Ingersoll-Rand	IR	36.08	-34.47	-32.52	10.01	35-73.82	12%
Lesco Inc.	LSCO	16	-5.88	7.53	11.76	12.25-19.5	15%
Nat'l Golf Prop.	TEE	20.88	5.72	-2.32	18.1	18.38-27.75	N/A
Toro Co.	TTC	32.88	-11.88	-9.61	12.38	28.5-39.5	12.5%
Textron Inc.	TXT	60.88	-20.61	-11.74	4.04	57-98	14.3%

*DATA PROVIDED BY VALUE TREND LINKS, LINKS FUND UP 11.48% IN '00, WWW.GOLFMUTUALFUND.COM