



BRIEFS

E-Z-GO ADDS THREE TO SALES STAFF

AUGUSTA, Ga. — E-Z-GO Textron has added three new members to its sales team. Glen Bell, formerly with Farwest Equipment, will be the operations manager for the Northern California branch. Bruce Speirs will be the new sales representative for the Upper Midwest, having previously worked as a division manager for Puggleasa Co. In addition, Nathan Cobb, former sales manager for Simpson Norton Corp., will be the sales representative for New Mexico.

LANGLEY TO LEAVE RISE, RETIRE

WASHINGTON — After a 34-year career in the pesticide industry, the last six of which were spent as the manager of state government relations for RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), Fred Langley has announced that he will retire August 31. "Fred was an early leader in the development of RISE," said president Allen James. "He was among a small group of industry executives who saw the need for a national association. He helped make it happen."



ROYSTER-CLARK TO FINALIZE DEAL

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The Royster-Clark Group has signed a purchase contract with Agriliance to acquire the assets of Agro Distribution South and ProSource One, a retail professional products business serving the turf and ornamentals market. The transaction also involves approximately 140 Agro Distribution South retail centers. The final closing, which has been delayed since April 1, is scheduled for August 31. Until then, the businesses will be operated by Royster-Clark under the terms of a separate management services agreement. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

TORO ROLLS OUT WORKMAN 1100

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. has begun shipping its new Workman 1100 from its Tomah, Wis., manufacturing facility. The 1100 is the second of Toro's mid-duty vehicles and features a 12-hp Kohler engine.

PTI forging ahead with FarmLinks

Hurdzan, Fry course to be showcase for PTI, industry partners

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Pursell Technologies Inc. has broken ground on its FarmLinks golf course, which will be the crown jewel of the company's brand new 3,000-acre corporate campus.

The Hurdzan, Fry-designed course is being billed as a "living laboratory" and will serve a number of commercial and altruistic purposes.

The company will use it as a research and development facility for its products as well as a showcase for its products during its PTI Tour program for superintendents. The PTI Tour is an all-expenses-paid training program for superintendents. Visitors will now be able to stay in the on-site eight-suite lodge built for the tour.

"We hosted 750 superintendents last year. This year we are planning on 1,000," said company president and CEO David Pursell. "The program is working out better than I hoped. There are fewer surprises the

more you stay in front of your customer base, and that is what this program allows us to do."

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

PTI has also signed agreements with several industry suppliers. Toro Co. will be the major industry partner at FarmLinks and will be responsible for the maintenance equipment and irrigation systems. In addition, Simplot will provide fertilizer and seed for testing;



From left to right: Jimmy Pursell and his wife, Chris, and their children Chris Pursell Fleming and PTI president and CEO David Pursell.

Flowtronex will install pump stations; Club Car will use the course to test its cars; Chipco will provide chemicals; and Harrells will provide fertilizer.

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Deere to cut workforce by eight percent

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. has announced plans to cut its workforce in the United States by about eight percent, or 1,250 employees, achieving an after-tax savings of approximately \$90 million annually.

Approximately 2,500 administrative and managerial employees will be offered a voluntary early-retirement package. About half are expected to accept the offer. A one-time program expense, estimated to be \$140 million after-tax, will be charged in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2001, the company said.



"The special early retirement offer is part of an ongoing effort to run lean and enhance our efficiency, competitiveness and financial strength for future growth opportunities," said Robert W. Lane, chairman and CEO. "The durable nature of this improvement in our cost structure will benefit the company in all market conditions."

Deere & Co. is undertaking these efforts to offset earnings shortfalls. The company's net income for the first half of 2001 fell from \$242 million to \$184.2 million.

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Hunter's G870 rotor features easy access

Hunter Golf has introduced the G870, an electric, valve-in head rotor with easy access to all serviceable components. The design eliminates the need to dig or disturb the turf during routine maintenance. All sprinkler components can be pulled out for cleaning and maintenance while the rotor body remains in the ground.

The G870 also features a unitized valve unit that includes a snap ring, valve seal and rock screen. During maintenance, the crew can now pull out the unitized valve with a pair of needle-nosed pliers,



The G870's unitized valve allows for quick repairs

flush the valve piping and repair leaks caused by soil or water contamination. The procedure takes just minutes.

For more information, contact: 800-248-6561.

Ewing acquires seven locations from Simpson

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PHOENIX, Ariz. — In a move to protect its market position, Ewing Irrigation has purchased the Arizona and Las Vegas branches of Simpson Sprinkler Centers. The six Arizona locations and one Las Vegas location bring the company's branch total to 101.

"We wanted to make sure we kept a pretty good stronghold in Arizona and Nevada," said Sherri Jones, marketing coordinator. The company now has 12 Arizona locations and four Nevada locations.

Ewing is the second largest distributor behind the newly formed John Deere Landscapes, which includes Century Rain Aid. Prior to the John Deere acquisition, Richton International, Century's parent company, went after Ewing's largest two markets by acquiring California-based Bay Irrigation and Turf Supply. It also purchased Simpson Sprinkler Centers' Texas locations. Ewing has a strong hold in both states with 48 locations in California and 18 in Texas.

Ewing, however, welcomes John

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Bayer has emerged as top suitor for Aventis CropScience

FRANKFURT, Germany — Aventis SA is proceeding with its plan to divest its agrochemicals division, Aventis CropScience. Aventis CropScience includes Aventis Environmental Sciences, which sells turf and ornamental products through its Chipco Professional Products Group.

Aventis has been shopping the division since early this year, and has been in talks with potential buyers, said company spokeswoman Gisela Vetter-Weirich. She said that the company has decided that a trade sale was the best option for unloading the business unit.

According to news reports over the last month, Bayer and BASF have emerged as potential suitors for the company, which is 76-percent owned by Aventis and 24-percent owned by German pharmaceuticals manufacturer Schering. However, at press time, both companies announced that they were in exclusive talks with Bayer. Previously, Dow and Dupont were also in the running.

Analysts insist that a deal with Bayer will draw scrutiny from regulators because both companies hold strong positions in insecticides. Additionally, Schering will have to approve the sale.

Vetter-Weirich said that Aventis intends to finalize the deal by the end of the year. Analysts predict that price for Aventis CropScience could exceed \$5 billion.

— Andrew Overbeck



FarmLinks

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"Toro will be the key corporate partner on this," Pursell said. "They saw the value in bringing end-users down here and we are giving them full autonomy to do what they want with equipment and irrigation." Toro will also be able to conduct research and demonstrate its products for superintendents.

According to Pursell, structuring these deals helped to defray the total cost of the project. "The golf course will cost around \$6 million," he said. "We are getting a lot of deals on things that would certainly add to the cost. Plus, we owned the land already, so we are getting an awful lot for that amount."

ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

FarmLinks will also serve as an environmental proving ground.

'We were able to put the holes where they fit best.'

— Dana Fry

For example, there will be environmental monitoring stations on the course that will track water quality and chemical leaching. These facilities will be the basis for educational programs for local schools, said Pursell.

Moreover, there will be different test sites for various turf varieties, and the layout will feature USGA, push-up, and California greens.

During the grow-in phase of construction, Pursell plans to test one application of PTI's controlled-release fertilizer against the traditional method of multiple, high-rate applications of soluble fertilizer.

"We want to measure both the environmental effects of nitrogen leaching and the economics of a single application of our product versus multiple applications of fertilizer," Pursell said.

ON THE COURSE

Landscapes Unlimited is already fully deployed at FarmLinks and is working on the rough shaping and clearing. The 18-hole course and First Tee course are due to be completed by spring 2003.

"We expect to have rough shaping done this summer," said Pursell. "There is a minimal amount of clearing and earthwork to be done because we designed the course with the land."

Dana Fry, of Hurdzan, Fry Golf Course Design said FarmLinks is one of the best sites the firm has ever had. "We were able to put the holes where they fit best," he said. "The course sits in a valley and plays into the foothills, so there is some good topography."

The layout will occupy 500

acres and will be what Pursell calls a "purist" course. "There is no O.B., the holes are spread out, and there are no houses," he said. "It will be just you, the cows, the corn and a little white ball."

OPEN FOR LIMITED PLAY

FarmLinks will be a daily-fee course but will only be open for limited public play in order to protect the layout's research and business mission. The course

will host less than 15,000 rounds a year, and will be managed by Birmingham-based Honours Golf.

"The objective of this course is not to make money on the business of golf. That is secondary," Pursell said. "It is a showcase for our products and those of other companies. And it is a learning opportunity for the whole industry in terms of the environment." ■

Clopyralid herbicide expands control

BURRRIDGE, Ill. — Riverdale has launched Millenium Ultra Plus, a broadleaf weed herbicide that offers expanded control capabilities. The product contains a combination of proven herbicides MSMA, 2,4-D and Dicamba along with a new broadleaf herbicide, Clopyralid.

"We've added Clopyralid, a

new ingredient that provides excellent control of clover and other more difficult broadleaf weeds," explained Roger Bechle, Riverdale's product manager. The product can control such weeds as clover, spurge, ground ivy, oxalis, plus nutsedge, goosegrass, crabgrass and other grassy weeds.



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