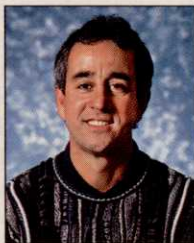




## BRIEFS

### DOW PROMOTES PRETZER

INDIANAPOLIS — Fred Pretzer, a senior sales specialist for Dow AgroSciences, has been promoted to technical accounts manager covering the Western United States. Based in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, Pretzer will be responsible for marketing, sales coordination and new product implementations. Pretzer has held various sales positions throughout his 23 years with the company.



Fred Pretzer

### BASF APPOINTS YORK

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — BASF has appointed Bob York as sales specialist for the turf and ornamental group based here. York will be responsible for all sales-related activities in northern New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. York has more than 12 years of experience in the turf products industry including stints with Syngenta and ProSource One.



Bob York

### TGT&SP NAMES VICKERS

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Michael Vickers has been appointed president of engineering—turf products, for Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products. In his new capacity, Vickers will be responsible for all turf and lawn care product engineering at all company facilities. He will be heading up an effort to implement common platforms, common parts and supplier relationships and coordinated engineering product management for all products.

### TURF-SEED LAUNCHES NEW SITE

HUBBARD, Ore. — Turf-Seed Inc., has launched a new business-to-business Web site dedicated to selling turf and forage seed products direct to distributors and commercial end users. The site, [www.turfsource.com](http://www.turfsource.com), offers a varied selection of products that are accompanied by the "Report of Seed Analysis."

## DiMino: Lesco must improve sales and distribution

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CLEVELAND — Four months after joining the company as chief operating officer, Michael DiMino has taken over the top spot as CEO of Lesco (GCN May 2002). In that short time, DiMino has grasped the major challenges facing the beleaguered fertilizer manufacturer, supplier and distributor and has implemented a multi-step plan to bring the \$500 million company back into the black. At press time, Lesco's stock had risen 25.7 percent from \$8.75 to \$11.00.

DiMino's strategy is simple: leverage the huge amount of capital that Lesco has invested in manufacturing facilities by improving the company's selling and distribution capabilities.

"The bottom line is almost anyone can get a lot of our molecules from almost anyone," DiMino said. "So it really comes down to technical expertise and delivery."

With that in mind, DiMino and his team

are revamping the company's distribution, sales force and point of sale system.

### HUB-AND-SPOKE DISTRIBUTION

In a move to beat local and regional distributors and formulators, DiMino said the company will dismantle part of its existing distribution network in favor of a hub-and-spoke system over the next 18 to 24 months.

"We have a national presence, but we are getting hammered by these little guys and we have to be able to deal with them," he said. "Instead of making product

at the factory and then storing it nearby and shipping it out when we need to, we are going to eliminate that step and bring inventory closer to the market."

Of the company's 16 distribution facilities, 10 to 12 will be relocated. In addition to improving customer service and product availability, DiMino expects the cycling of

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Michael DiMino

## Bayer AG one step closer to Aventis buyout

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BERLIN — After getting the go-ahead from European Union (E.U.) antitrust officials for its purchase of Aventis CropScience in mid-April, Bayer AG is now waiting for approval from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for final clearance on the buyout. According to Bayer spokesman Guenter Forneck, a decision by the FTC was expected sometime in May. At press time, further information was not available.

As part of its approval of the proposed 7.3 billion euro (\$6.4 billion) purchase of Aventis CropScience, the E.U. is forcing Bayer to divest several insecticides. According to Bayer, the divestiture of fipronil, ethoprole and acetamaprid (a new neonicitinoid) will lead to 600 million euros (\$522 million)

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## Fairway Golf Cars zeros in on adaptive car market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WAUKESHA, Wis. — A year after introducing the latest version of its Spirit adaptive golf car, Fairway Golf Cars has rolled out a full line of vehicles.

New president Cole Braun, who came on board in January, said the company is focusing on getting its sales force into action this year and aggressively attacking the golf market.

"Last year we finalized the product and this year we need to get out there and educate the customers," said Braun. "We want to have a course per region put in a fleet of our cars when they open."

Fairway Golf Cars has eight salesmen in 20 states who are

targeting new golf courses and national accounts.

The company, which used to be a division of medical scooter maker Ortho-Kinetics, is now a completely separate entity. While they still share manufacturing space and purchase components from Ortho-Kinetics, Fairway Golf Cars has its own board of directors and its own investors.

"They developed the product and we can still draw on their talent and experience," said Braun.

Continued on next page



The Spirit weighs in at 330 pounds



The Single Rider 8000

### NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



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GreensGroomer WorldWide is ready with the GreensSlicer Spring Tine Rake that allows fast, efficient dethatching of tees, fairways, and greens. The unit attaches to the GreensGroomer and combs through the turf pulling up thatch and removing runners. The GreensSlicer consists of three rows of 28 tines spaced seven-eighths of an inch apart for complete coverage. Each row has infinite adjustment allowing the unit to be set at varying degrees of aggressiveness. For more information, contact 1-888-298-8852.

## FMC reorganizes specialty business

PHILADELPHIA — FMC Corp. has reorganized its specialty products business in order to prepare for growth over the next two years. The specialty products business, maker of Talstar, has joined efforts with FMC's agricultural products group to strengthen customer satisfaction and unify the company's branding.

Under the reorganization, Laurie Tieckelmann will oversee combined customer service functions for the two business units as customer service manager. In addition, Maureen Thompson has been named turf and ornamental sales manager and Kim Watson has been appointed global development manager.

"The changes we have made in our staffing structure will enable us to unlock the synergies among various FMC businesses," said Don Claus, director of FMC's specialty products business.



## YGC readies certified pre-owned program

PEACHTREE CITY, Ga. — In a move to reach a lower price point with its golf cars, Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) has opened a reconditioning facility here near its headquarters in Newnan to handle its new certified pre-owned vehicle program.

"If price is selling golf cars, we are telling our customers that we save them money in the price of maintenance and upkeep," said Jon Bammann, division manager of new business development and off fairway vehicles. "Our car has many of the same parts that come from our ATV line so they last a long time. Our certified pre-owned program takes advantage of that longevity."

The program, which was designed for the commodity buyer, involves a full factory reconditioning of the golf car.

"We will take it through a 50-step process, add a warranty and we will sell it directly or re-lease it to golf courses," Bammann said. "We see this as a new business opportunity because it gets us to a price point where we have never been before."

Ideally, the new program would roll out whole fleets of certified pre-owned cars, and with that in mind, YGC will start the program by reconditioning cars from its factory direct courses that are rolling over fleets.

— Andrew Overbeck

## DiMino tackles Lesco's challenges

Continued from page 25

distribution centers to reduce transportation costs dramatically.

The sales force has also been realigned to operate more efficiently. Lesco has combined its golf and lawn care operations to better serve all the people in a region and to eliminate idle salespeople. DiMino has also separated the sales and service departments so that individual roles are better defined.

"With sales and service overlapping we had people who enjoyed selling who were restocking shelves," said DiMino. "Now we there isn't any confusion about what they are supposed to be doing. The sales people can now concentrate on selling."

DiMino said the changes in distribution and sales will allow for same store growth of five to six percent this year.

### SHIFTING INTO REAL TIME

To better track sales from its distribution centers, Lesco has partnered with AT&T, Microsoft and IBM to improve its existing reporting system.

"Right now the stores are not in real time," DiMino said. "Fixing that will allow us to get a jump on replenishing stock, manufacturing product and forecasting sales growth."

Combining these new changes with organic growth like the expansion of its independent marketer program, which now has four members, DiMino said that going forward Lesco could approach eight to 10 percent growth in year-to-year same store sales.

According to DiMino, Lesco

is already seeing the benefits of the changes that have been implemented to date. While they have raised prices one to two percent to increase margins, the new CEO reported modest sales growth and lower than expected first quarter losses.

"We have seen a recovery towards profitability because of our efforts to concentrate on productivity and

efficiency," said DiMino.

However, Lesco still faces several challenges, the most pressing of which is saving its underperforming Novex specialty fertilizer brand.

"It is a great product, but it is expensive to make," admitted DiMino. "On a return on invested capital basis, it is not in the sweet spot at all. Novex by itself will probably not be a \$20 to \$25 million product line."

Lesco will be mixing it with its PolyPlus fertilizer to create 10- to 60-percent blends, giving its regular fertilizer the slow-release qualities of Novex. The move is expected to offset production costs while also improving PolyPlus profits.

Lesco is also watching external issues such as golf sales, which have remained flat because resort courses are still facing low levels of play. Sales from national accounts also dropped nearly five percent during the first quarter as large accounts like American Golf are in financial trouble.

"We are going to be a little more careful about the customers we are choosing," said DiMino. "We are not going to chase unprofitable business." ■

*'Novex is a great product, but it is expensive to make.'*

— Michael DiMino

## \$31 million Yamaha facility to improve productivity

Continued from page 1

stand-alone, high-tech manufacturing facility has many in the ultra-competitive golf car and utility vehicle industry wondering what the company has up its sleeve.

The concept is simple, according to Horlak. "We aim to decrease costs, improve quality and reliability and add manufacturing flexibility," he said.

"Number one was cost and flow improvements," Horlak continued. "We really focused on productivity improvements because we need a low-overhead, low-cost facility."

Workers from the old factory competed with other applicants for the 100 spots in the new factory. Horlak said the low number of employees was made possible by automation, training and product simplification. "We will reduce the number of man hours per vehicle by 50 percent as a result," he said.

Quality and reliability were two other target areas.

"We have installed new welding stations with a new tooling scheme that reduces the number of transfers and increases the amount of robotic welding on the frame," said Horlak.

In addition to the 17 robotic welding stations, Yamaha also invested \$5 million in a multi-step frame coating system that includes immersion cleaning, immersion corrosion protection and powder coating.

"The cars have gotten even better," said Horlak. "The frame has more corrosion protection and better integrity through robotic welding. If we can deliver a better car, in a better manner at the same or better cost, we are going to start beating them [the competition]."

In addition to these investments and product improvements, Horlak said the factory will have greater flexibility to handle custom batches and options and produce vehicles on a just-in-time

schedule for dealers.

### EXPLORING OTHER MARKETS

The new factory, however, was not just built to handle products for the golf market. YGC has created a new off-fairway vehicles division to



The production line at YGC's factory just weeks before the grand opening

Photo: Andrew Overbeck

handle the development of new products for the company.

"We want to maintain existing customers, build our business and expand into the utility vehicle market," said Bammann. "That's why we have expanded into off-fairway vehicles and looked at it as a separate business. We are looking at where we can grow the business from a commercial, recreational and industrial standpoint." ■

## Bayer

Continued from page 25

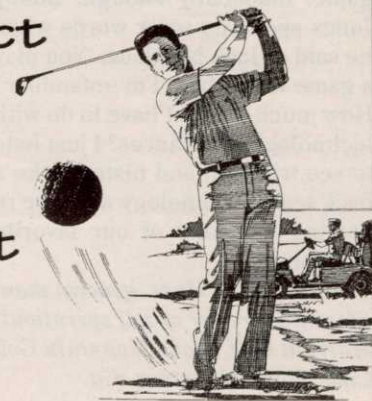
in lost sales.

"It was to be expected that insecticides [would be divested] as Bayer already has a strong position in this segment," said Forneck. "Bayer maintains two neonicotinoids — imidacloprid and thiacloprid." He added that Bayer's primary motivation in purchasing Aventis CropScience, especially in the U.S. market, was gaining access to its strong herbicide product line and biotechnology research.

Once the deal goes through, Bayer will be the second ranked agrochemical manufacturer behind Syngenta AG. However, the company's first quarter operating profit dropped 46 percent to 493 million euros (\$442 million), and Bayer officials warned that 2002 was going to be a tough year. ■

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