

SUPPLIER BUSINESS



BRIEFS

RAIN BIRD PROMOTES TWO

AZUSA, Calif. — Rain Bird has promoted Steve Sakurai and Derek Moffitt within the company's Golf Division. Sakurai has been named golf structural development manager and Moffitt has assumed responsibilities as Southwest golf sales manager. In his new role, Sakurai will develop support programs and training outlines for key sales, service, distribution and company functions. He will also be responsible for leading Rain Bird's wireless rotor project. Moffitt will be responsible for product sales growth and development in the Southwest.

CLUB CAR NAMES HAMILTON

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Club Car has named David Hamilton vice president of sales for its Golf Americas group. Hamilton, who joined Club Car in 1988, was formerly director of sales for the Southeast. In his current position, Hamilton is responsible for golf car sales in Club Car's direct and distribution channels in the U.S., Canada and Latin America.

HARER MOVES UP AT SRO

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Seed Research of Oregon has promoted Scott Harer to sales manager. Harer has been a regional sales manager for the past three years. He brings 11 years of seed sales experience to his new duties.

DEERE BRINGS IN TRUTTMAN

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — David Truttmann has been named national golf sales manager for irrigation, landscape and nursery products at John Deere Landscapes. As national sales manager, Truttmann will oversee John Deere One Source sales, including golf course irrigation equipment, chemicals, fertilizers, seed, sod, and nursery stock and other landscape supplies. Prior to joining the company, Truttmann was director of golf development for Landscapes Unlimited in Lincoln, Neb.

CEBECO ADDS DE HART

HALSEY, Ore. — Cebeco International Seeds, Inc. has added Denise De Hart to its turf seed sales and marketing program. De Hart previously worked for the former Roberts Seed Co.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Lastec refocuses on engineering, rolls out 3377T

By ANDREW OVERBECK

INDIANAPOLIS — With competition increasing, articulating mower manufacturer Lastec has spent the last two years refocusing efforts on research and development and product design on both existing and future models.

"We have done a lot in the last two years, and there is more to do," said senior engineering manager Mark Bland. "We have a new hinge pin design, a new self-cleaning radiator and have developed retrofit kits for older models."

Many of the new design features and tweaks in the articulating mower design can be found on the company's latest mower, the entry-level 3377T. The new zero-turn model is designed for courses with less severe undulations and features four mowing decks, a 77-inch width of cut and a 33-hp air-cooled Kubota turbo engine. A new patent-pending, self-cleaning radiator

with reversing fans also makes its debut on the mower. The 3377T will cost approximately \$18,000 and go into production this fall.

"We made this a simple design with a commonality of parts so it will be easy to fix," said Bland. "For example, the pulley bearings are the same as the spindle bearings so you can keep fewer parts in stock."

The development cycle for the 3377T marks a renewed focus on quality control and product design.

"The 3377T is a mature product," Bland said. "Five years ago the company probably would have released it last fall. We have done more testing and I am confident that we have gotten all the bugs worked out."

According to Bland, service intervals used to be every 100 hours of service, but intervals now extend to once every season.

"The new technology in the 3377T will eventually find its way into the



Lastec's new 3377T has several new features that will be integrated into existing models.

other models," said Bland. In addition to the 3377T Lastec makes the 3696 and 3682 riding mowers and a

full range of pull-behind and front deck mowing units.

Continued on next page

Monsanto's business plan unchanged following spin-off

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ST. LOUIS — Following its Aug. 14 spin-off from drug-maker Pharmacia Corp., Monsanto Co. officials said the company's business plan would remain unchanged.

Monsanto, maker of Roundup herbicides and provider of agriculture biotechnology, will now function as a 100-percent publicly-traded company.

"In terms of our overall business, we have been managed as an independent company since the initial IPO in October 2000," said

company spokesman Mark Buckingham. "Our business is focused on integrated solutions built around our Roundup family of herbicides, Roundup Ready traits and seeds and genomics. We are going to keep following that model."

The company spends \$500 million annually on research and development for seeds and biotech and needs its genomics business to succeed in order to remain profitable. While 75 percent of the soybeans and 34 percent of the corn

Continued on next page

John Deere, Toro report strong 3Q growth

Deere doubles last year's profits

MOLINE, Ill. — Citing increased sales overseas and higher commercial and consumer equipment sales, Deere & Co. reported worldwide net income of \$147.6 million for the third quarter ended July 31, more than double last year's \$71.8 million.

Increased sales for both periods were mainly due to higher overseas sales of agricultural equipment, primarily in Europe, higher commercial and consumer equipment sales and the impact of acquisitions less divestitures.

Based on the market conditions, net equipment sales for the fourth quarter are currently forecast to be up 8 to 10 percent from the same period last year.

Toro posts higher net earnings

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. has reported net earnings of \$21.9 million on net sales of \$375.6 million for its fiscal third quarter ended Aug. 2. In the comparable fiscal 2001 period, the company reported net earnings of \$16.9 million on net sales of \$329.7 million.

Due to new equipment and irrigation products, professional sales were up six percent for the quarter. In both grounds and golf, Toro reported that customers are ordering closer to retail demand reflecting their concerns about inventory. As a direct result of this "just in time" ordering strategy, sales were behind retail levels for most products.

Soil Air resolves patent dispute

CROMWELL, Conn. — Soil Air Technology has resolved its litigation with East Syracuse, N.Y.-based SubAir concerning proprietary and patented subsurface soil aeration and conditioning technology. A consent judgment has been entered in the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York declaring that David Potts and Soil Air own all rights, title and interest in United States Letters

Patent No. 6,018,909, which was issued on Feb. 1, 2000.

"This legal judgment reinforces the fact that our patented technology is, and always has been, the intellectual property of Dave Potts and Soil Air," said Ed Guider, CEO of Soil Air.

SubAir had alleged that Potts, who used to head SubAir, misappropriated its intellectual property (GCN May 2000) when he left the company

Continued on next page

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



POLARIS EXPANDS UTILITY VEHICLE LINE WITH UTV 1500

The UTV 1500 2x4 is powered by an 18-hp V-twin, air-cooled 4-cycle engine and can carry a payload of up to 1,250 pounds and tow up to 1,000 pounds. The 1500 also features 4-wheel hydraulic disc brakes and front MacPherson struts. The vehicle will be available in early 2003 and will retail for \$6,299. For more information, contact: 763-542-0500.

Monsanto standing on its own

Continued from previous page

grown in the United States is Roundup Ready, Monsanto is facing costly approval delays in Latin America, Europe and India.

In addition, Roundup sales have decreased since the product went off patent last year. The company's stock price has halved over the past year and it had to borrow \$150 million from Pharmacia Aug. 13 to

cover operating expenses.

"To maintain success in the next year or two, we need to manage the Roundup business successfully and continue to grow that business and maintain our market share," said Buckingham.

ROUNDUP QUICKPRO

Developing new Roundup formulations, Buckingham added, will be the key to this effort.

Richard Morris, Monsanto's marketing manager for industrial, turf and ornamental, is working on several new formulations and test marketed Roundup QuickPro this year.

"QuickPro is a new glyphosate formulation that provides quicker visual symptoms," he said.

Instead of waiting from seven to 21 days to see the impact of Roundup, users of the new dry formulation will be able to see visual symptoms in 24 to 48 hours.

Since it is patent-pending, Morris would not divulge what changes were made to the formulation.

"Quite a bit of research and product development went into this compound," said Morris. "We needed to ensure that we maintained the complete control that everyone has become accustomed to with Roundup Pro in addition to providing quicker symptoms."

Roundup QuickPro has already been approved by the Environmen-

tal Protection Agency and will be available in wide release in 2003.

Morris said other new Roundup formulations are in the works.

"We have a lot of Roundup products in research. We are continuously looking for new formulations that improve performance and make it easier to handle," he said.

According to Morris, the company's relationship with the Scotts Co. in the development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass will play a big part in retaining market share.

"This is an exciting time for this [Roundup Ready] technology to come into the marketplace," he said. "In the agriculture markets they have had biotech traits for six or seven years and independent researchers are now documenting how much input reduction is taking place. Those benefits are being evaluated in the golf marketplace as well." ■

Plan To Take A Drive. All Roads Lead to...



The Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show December 9-12, 2002

Greater Columbus Convention Center • Columbus, Ohio

Sponsored By:

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation
The Ohio State University
Ohio State University Extension
Ohio Agricultural Research
& Development Center

OLCA
LAWN CARE ASSOCIATION

2002 Conference & Show Highlights

- Expanded Educational Program
- Discounted Group Rates
- Exciting New Social Events
- Doorprizes and Contests
- CEU and Re-Certification Credits
- And More

Ohio Sports
Turfgrass
Managers Association

OTF • PO Box 3388 • Zanesville, OH USA 43702 • 888-683-3445 • Fax: 740-452-2552 • www.OhioTurfgrass.org

Lastec's 3377T

Continued from previous page

There are more changes to come at Lastec, both in product testing and manufacturing.

The company is building a test track at its engineering headquarters in Indianapolis that will do accelerated life testing and impact load testing. Lastec's manufacturing facility in Lizton also received an upgrade as plant manager Dave Bayless improved efficiency and implemented lean manufacturing practices. Production on the new line began in late August.

FULL NEW PRODUCT PIPELINE

While Lastec is currently in the middle of a model year update, Bland did hint that new products were on the way. The company currently only makes models for mowing roughs – whether or not Lastec will expand to making a fairway model remains to be seen.

In the meantime, Bland is confident that recent measures to shore up product and design quality will keep Lastec ahead of its larger competitors in the niche articulating mower market.

"If we continue to focus on listening to the customers and improving products, it will be tough to keep up with us," he said. "The goal in a niche market is to stay ahead of the pack." ■

Soil Air lawsuit

Continued from previous page

to start Soil Air with other investors.

Both companies manufacture subsurface piping that adds air or removes water from the root zone of golf course greens to enhance root health. At issue in the lawsuit was which company had rights to the technology that measures pressure differentials and soil-gas concentrations to optimize turfgrass growing conditions. Potts maintained that he had developed the gas-soil analysis device before being hired by SubAir. ■

— Andrew Overbeck