



BRIEFS

RAIN BIRD HIRES GRIFFEE

AZUSA, Calif. — Rain Bird has hired Glenn Griffiee as sales and marketing manager for the company's golf division. Griffiee will lead the domestic sales efforts and worldwide marketing programs. He joins Rain Bird following 11 years at Parker Hannifin Corp. Most recently, he oversaw the national marketing and distribution efforts for Parker Hannifin's seal group corporate division.



Glenn Griffiee

TOURTURF NAMES BURKE

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — TourTurf, the exclusive worldwide distributor of FieldTurf synthetic turf for commercial golf applications, has hired Tom Burke as director of operations for the Northeast region. Burke's responsibilities will include overseeing and executing all golf course turf sales and installations in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont and Maine. Before joining TourTurf, Burke had a 30-year career with IBM.



Tom Burke

CLEARY ADDS RIECK AND MCGRATH

DAYTON, N.J. — Brett Rieck, formerly of Helena Chemical, has joined Cleary Chemical as national sales manager. Rieck's turf and ornamental experience includes positions at Barefoot Grass and Hillenmeyer Nursery. Cleary Chemical also has added Mike McGrath as a sales representative for Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Indiana. McGrath formerly worked for Lesco.

VOPAK NOW UNIVAR

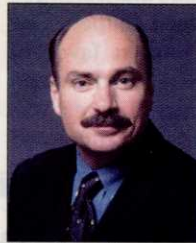
AUSTIN, Texas — Vopak USA, a distributor of turf and specialty agricultural products, has reorganized its chemical distribution organization to become an independent entity. The new company will operate under the name Univar USA Inc. John Bolanos, vice president of Univar's professional products and services business unit said the name change and the split off from the parent company, Royal Vopak, will allow Univar to focus on distribution.

Editorial Focus: Fungicides

New Bayer ES primes fungicide lineup

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MONTVALE, N.J. — Bayer AG's buyout of Aventis CropScience not only created a new number two chemical player in the golf and turf business, but also brought together two already impressive fungicide lineups.



Dan Carrothers

According to Dan Carrothers, head of newly-formed Bayer Environmental Science's U.S. green industry business, the combined product line boasts a product for virtually any disease any time of year. "In the short term, we now have one or more products that basically control any disease that a superintendent would face," said Carrothers. "In addition, we have products that use different modes of action and active ingredients, which is key to [fungicide] resistance. We now can offer Bayleton or Compass for anthracnose, Banol and Aliette for pythium and Bayleton and Chipco 26 GT for dollar spot."

But the depth and breadth of the lineup is not the only benefit. "We will be able to look at the full portfolio in terms of product mixtures and combinations," Carrothers continued. "Before, we were competitors so we didn't even think about it. We will look at new formulations and ready mix innovations

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Editorial Focus: Fungicides

BASF set to expand portfolio to fungicides

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — BASF Professional Turf is gearing up to roll out the first of several products for its new turfgrass fungicide line.

BASF is a major worldwide player in the fungicide market but it has never offered any fungicide products to the turfgrass industry. That is all set to change in 2003 with the expected release of Insignia, a broad spectrum strobilurin that offers 28-day control, and Emerald, a specialized product that offers dollar spot control. At press time, both new products were still awaiting approval from the Environmental Protection Agency.

BASF has built a dedicated manufacturing facility in Sparks, Ga., to handle the new fungicide line and plans on introducing more new products over the next several years. The company also has added 10 new sales representatives in the last two years to handle the new products.

Insignia has been in the works since 1996, and will compete with Syngenta's Heritage and Bayer ES' Compass, the



Henry Wetzel

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Laser caddie attacks rental market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GLOUCESTER, Mass. — After spending seven years helping U.K.-based PowaKaddy establish itself in the United States, Bill Bouzan has formed a new partnership and plans to develop a rental market for motorized caddies.

Bouzan has teamed up with Australian-based motorized caddie manufacturer Motorized Golf International and is the exclusive distributor for the company in the United States. Motorized Golf International USA (MGI) got started last year and has, to this point, been importing units from Australia and selling primarily to private users. This November MGI will open its own 6,500-square-foot manufacturing facility and warehouse here in Gloucester and will start pushing the motorized caddies for rental use.

"We are rolling out our pro rental program and are talking with golf course owners and management companies to

show them how motorized caddies can provide revenue from the walking golfer," said Bouzan.

According to Bouzan, the estimated size of the motorized caddie market is 15,000 units per year, 99 percent of which are sold for private use. Of the 16,000-plus courses in the country, he said roughly two-thirds are easily walkable and that of the 25 million golfers in the U.S., four million are hard-core walkers.

MGI's rental caddie, the Laser, sells for \$799. The self-propelled unit is made of powder-coated steel and is powered by a 31-amp 12-volt battery. It weighs 48 pounds with the battery on board and has wide wheels to prevent turf damage.

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NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



TURF TIGER APPLIES MATERIAL EVEN WHEN WET

The new Turf Tiger features a large 7,500-lb. capacity that topdresses sports turf and golf courses. It can be filled with sand, peat, compost and other bulk materials. The Turf Tiger spreads in a path from eight feet to 12 feet wide, depending on the material. Brush and other spinner attachments are also available. For more information, call 800-311-1323.

Lesco to sell Novex plant

CLEVELAND — In its second quarter report, Lesco reported that it will sell two fertilizer factories and liquidate discontinued inventory to trim costs.

While Lesco's total sales increased 1.4 percent and net income increased to \$9.6 million from \$7.5 million, golf sales and national account sales declined 4.3 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively, during the second quarter.

In order to cut costs, the company will sell its Novex plant in Disputanta, Va., and its blending plant in Stockton, Calif. Lesco plans to source the Novex product from the eventual buyer of the Virginia plant. New Lesco president and CEO Michael DiMino first identified Novex as an under-performing product line this spring (GCN June 2002). Out West, the company will source blended fertilizer from retained Lesco blending facilities or the eventual buyer of the Stockton plant. The expected annual pre-tax earnings benefit from selling the facilities is approximately \$3 million.

"The Novex plant capacity is far greater than we need for our customer demand," said DiMino. "We are looking for a buyer who can supply Novex to us and then use the remaining capacity in markets that are not competitive with Lesco's U.S. golf and professional lawn care markets."

On the product side, Lesco currently manages and carries inventory for over 22,000 stock keeping units (SKUs). The inventory markdown and liquidation will eliminate over 12,000 SKUs.

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Club Car meets new ISO standards

AUGUSTA, Ga. — After a comprehensive audit of the company's manufacturing systems and processes, Club Car has met the International Organization for Standardization's upgraded ISO 9001:2000 standard quality criteria.

ISO 9001:2000 is a quality assurance model used by companies that design, produce, inspect, test and service products.

"ISO 9001 certification assures our customers that quality is the result of a highly regimented, consistently applied process that drives continual improvement," said Gary Lewis, quality assurance manager for Club Car.

Under Lewis' direction, a 25-member

management team led Club Car through an eight-month process to evaluate hundreds of systems and processes prior to an independent audit conducted last month. As part of its preparations, the team rewrote the company's quality system manual, trained Club Car associates and conducted internal audits against the new standards.

"Throughout the entire development of a quality management system, our objective was to ensure continual improvement with an emphasis on customer satisfaction," said Lewis.

Club Car is among a small number of manufacturers that has converted to the

new standard. It is estimated that only five to 10 percent of U.S. companies have completed the upgrade process. All ISO-certified companies must upgrade to ISO 9001:2000 by Dec. 15, 2003.

Novozymes breaks ground on new HQ

ROANOKE, Va. — Novozymes Biologicals Inc. has broken ground here on a new 20,000-square-foot facility that will house the company's business operations and research and development laboratories. The company will relocate from its existing facility in Salem to the Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology in the fourth quarter of 2002.

"This expansion marks the beginning of an important new chapter for Novozymes as we continue to grow and introduce new products in the turf and ornamental markets," said company president Ted Melnik.

MGI's Laser caddie

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"At a course that has 30,000 rounds a year, up to 40 percent walk. This would provide an extra revenue stream for the owners,"

Bouzan said. "You don't get any profits from a \$2 pull cart. With six caddies rented at \$8 each 700 times a year, they pay for themselves."

While the numbers add up to Bouzan, he realizes that he faces an uphill battle.

"This will be an education effort," he said. "The baby-boomers are the biggest walkers and they are starting to pick up these units. If I lowered the average age of my customers from 57 to 55, I would not be able to supply the demand in the market." ■



The Laser power caddie

Rain Bird rolls out renovation financing

AZUSA, Calif. — Rain Bird has introduced Rain Bird Financial Solutions to help golf courses finance irrigation renovations.

The new program, run by Bankgroup Financial Services, offers customers flexible payment options and terms, may include all hard and soft costs and requires

no real estate collateral.

"We recognize the importance of financing for renovation projects," said Chris Fay, Rain Bird's golf division director. "Our financial solutions program is designed to make the process easier for golf courses that want to invest in their long-term viability."

BASF expands fungicide portfolio

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other two strobilurins currently on the market.

"The main distinctive feature is that Insignia offers significant suppression of dollar spot and will be the first in this class of chemistry to be registered for control of bentgrass dead spot," said Henry Wetzel, biology product leader. "Overall, if you compare it to others, we are closer to Heritage because we provide up to 28 days of control and Compass is a 14- to 21-day product."

Wetzel expects the product to have strong applications in the northern U.S. for snow mold protection and in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest for control of brown patch. "It will be used as far south as

bentgrass can be grown," he added.

Insignia is intended for use as a preventive fungicide and should be applied several weeks before disease outbreak. "If a course has a full-blown disease outbreak it should go with a contact type product and then follow up with Insignia."

Since strobilurins attack the same site in a fungus, a key concern is resistance management.

"There is documented resistance with pythium, anthracnose and gray leaf spot," said Wetzel. "Therefore we would not want courses to use this product for more than one-third of its applications for any disease."

That is where Emerald comes in, said fungicide marketing manager Greg Thompson.

"We are trying to make new products and chemistries we think will help with resistance issues," he said. "We have products like Insignia that offer better efficacy

and better broad spectrum controls and we have products like Emerald that offer the specialized dollar spot control. We have other products in the pipeline that offer other modes of action that will further help manage against resistance issues."

END-USER FEEDBACK

While both products are awaiting registration, BASF has turned to superintendents like Fred Biggers at the 45-hole Wintergreen Resort in Wintergreen, Va., for feedback.

Biggers has tried both products over the last two years on the newest nine holes at the facility that opened in 1998. The layout is all bentgrass and is situated

in a very hot and humid environment.

"I used Insignia as part of my preventive program for tees, greens and fairways," said Biggers. "It is very similar to Heritage and we have applied it every two weeks and seen very little if any pythium or brown patch. It is better than Heritage on dollar spot."

Biggers has been testing Emerald in a separate area and has had 28-day control of dollar spot.

"We had a par-3 fairway that was infested with dollar spot. We got it under control with Emerald and gave it a light fertilization and it is perfect now," said Biggers. "Emerald would make a good tank mix with Insignia." ■

Bayer's fungicides

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that add value to the market."

One of the potential product combinations is Compass and Chipco 26 GT to provide resistance management, broad-spectrum control and full dollar spot control.

AN EXPANDED NEW PRODUCT PIPELINE

Bringing the two companies together also has resulted in a stronger new product pipeline.

"In addition to three new insecticides and two new herbicides, we have four new fungicides in development right now," said Carrothers. "This is where we really benefit the superintendent. I don't think they care if we are bigger, but they do care when we can bring new technology to them on an ongoing basis."

While he couldn't go into specifics about the new fungicides, Carrothers said they included different active ingredients and more choices to combat resistance. The new products are approximately three to five years away from production.

Research and development efforts will

also be doubled.

"If a company today is serious about bringing new technology to market they need to be spending on research and development," Carrothers said. "The combined company will have the needed level of investment in research and development to bring forward new technology. That is primarily what is driving these acquisitions and mergers because it is extremely expensive over the long-term to fill the pipeline."

As the merging process continues, Bayer ES will be sorting out its sales force, technical support and distribution channels.

"What won't change is superintendents will continue to have continued access to some of the most trained and experienced sales representatives and field development people that are available today," said Carrothers. "This is an extremely competitive business and the fact that we are bigger in no way changes the fact that we have capable competitors. Look at Syngenta and the portfolio they bring. The superintendent does not have to do business with us unless we are bringing the service and technical support that helps them solve problems." ■

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