

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.

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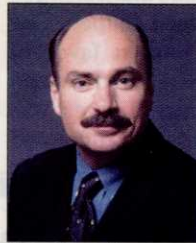
AUSTIN, Texas — Vopak USA, a distributor of turf and specialty agricultural products, has reorganized its chemical distribution organization to become an independent entity. The new company will operate under the name Univar USA Inc. John Bolanos, vice president of Univar's professional products and 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

Continued on next page

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

Continued on next page

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.

Continued on next page

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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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Lesco to sell plants

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Approximately 6,500 of the remaining SKUs are replacement parts for lawncare equipment.

"We have implemented a new product lifecycle program that requires the progressive markdown and liquidation of discontinued SKUs over predetermined timelines. This process will convert these discontinued items to cash as effectively as possible and eliminate the annual carrying costs of discontinued inventory, including taxes, insurance, storage, handling and interest," said DiMino.

While Lesco planned for the decreased sales in national accounts DiMino is working to change the golf sales results.

"Second quarter golf sales were disappointing and there are no excuses. We are changing the structure of the golf sales team and we expect better results in the coming periods," he said.

Despite the downturn in golf sales DiMino said Lesco is on track to meet its full-year growth and expects sales growth to increase four percent. ■

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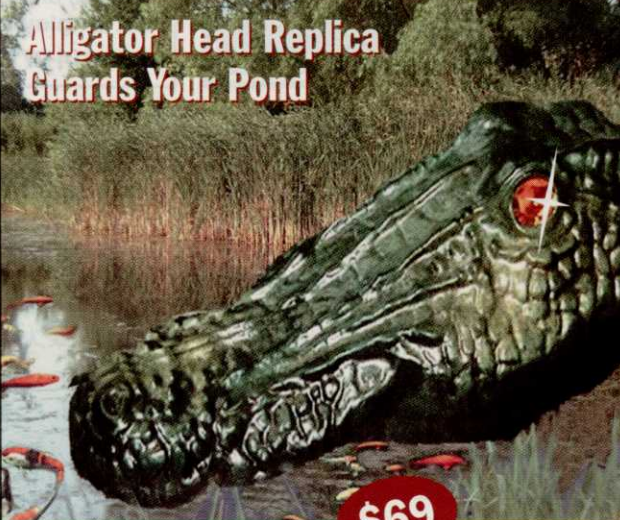


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