

BY JOHN WALSH

## With them in mind

A superintendent lets distributors know about his pesticide program ahead of time to ensure timely delivery and savings

Presently, Troy Golden might be a golf course superintendent, but he once was a sales representative distributing turf products to golf courses. That experience influences the way Golden purchases pesticides for the course he maintains, the public 18-hole Wilcox Springs Golf Course in Haslet, Texas.

The family-owned public course, which features common Bermudagrass on the fairways and Tifgreen (328) on the greens, has been open since 1968. Golden, who has been there for five years, has a staff of four during the winter and six during the summer. His maintenance budget, including labor, is \$450,000. Sans labor, it's \$313,000. Last year, Golden spent \$67,000 on pesticides and fertilizer (\$35,000 on pesticides alone). Generally, he says he has increased the pesticide budget about 3 percent every year for the past five years.

"More and more, I'm buying generic pesticides," he says. "Mainly thiophanate-methyl and chlorothalonil products."

Golden also buys and uses name brand products such as Barricade, Scimitar, Talstar, Daconil, TopChoice, Ceasefire, Merit, Mach 2, Eagle, Cleary's 3336 and Revolver.

### APPLICATIONS

As part of Golden's overall pesticide program, he uses Mach 2 (halofenozide) for grub control and Scimitar (lambda-cyhalothrin) for

cut worms and other common insects. He also uses Ceasefire (fipronil) for fire ant control.

"It's a must down here," he says about the fire-ant-control product. "It's about one-third of my pesticide budget. It's our biggest pest to battle, but we have good success with the products we use."

Golden applies Ceasefire wall-to-wall twice a year – once in the spring and once in the fall. He follows those applications with TopChoice (fipronil) as needed around tees and greens.

Golden applies Mach 2 in spring at the end of April or first of May. He says Mach 2 has good residual and one has several months to reap the benefit, but with Merit, one has to hit a shorter window. Then he sprays three products in rotation during the summer: Scimitar, Talstar (bifenthrin) and Insecticide III (chlorpyrifos).

"I try to rotate the different chemistries," he says.

Golden doesn't use a lot of insecticides

during the fall, but uses Talstar during that time for cutworms and chinch bugs.

Because Golden has a limited budget, he says he combines a preemergent herbicide with a granular quick-release fertilizer during the last week of February or the first week in March. He uses Team Pro (benefin and trifluralin) because it's cost effective – even though he doesn't get as long a residual that he would with Barricade or Ronstar – as a granular for weed control in the early spring to give him 60 days control. Then he applies Team Pro again, a split rate with fertilizer to give him residual control heading into the summer.

About that time, Golden also applies a 2,4-D and MSMA tank mix to control broadleaf weeds and dallisgrass through the summer. During the last week of August, he applies more fertilizer with pendimethalin, and that starts his fall preemergent program. About the first of November, he sprays Scimitar and Revolver (foramsulfuron). In the dead of winter, he applies Roundup (glyphosate) wall to wall sometimes.

In the fungicide realm, Golden uses Cleary's 3336 (thiophanate-methyl) and Daconil (chlorothalonil) for turf diseases, and Eagle (myclobutanil) for, more specifically, spring dead spot. In the spring, he uses Cleary's 3336 and rotates that every 30 days with Daconil through early summer. Then

**"You can save money by not putting a distributor in a bind in which he has to jump through hoops."**

– TROY GOLDEN

## PESTICIDES

Troy Golden's maintenance budget, including labor, is \$450,000.

Last year, Golden spent \$67,000 on pesticides and fertilizer.

Golden has increased his pesticide budget about 3 percent each year for the past five years.



Superintendent Troy Golden gives the two or three distributors he works with a copy of his pesticide program so they know what he needs and when he needs it.

he sprays Rubigan (fenarimol), once in August and once in September, for *Poa annua* control and Eagle for spring dead spot. During the winter, Golden applies Daconil or Cleary's 3336 on an as needed curative basis.

### **PURCHASING**

Before Golden purchases anything, he sets his agronomic program by the first of the year. Then he lets the two or three distribu-

tors he uses know what he'll need when throughout the year. He pays as he goes.

"I've been doing this same process for a while," he says. "You can lock in pricing. It's good because it's done and out of the way. It solves delivery problems and lets the distributors know where they stand. It helps build better relationships. I get better service because the distributors know what to give me ahead of time.

"When I talk to distributors in January

about the year, I'll give them a copy of what I'm doing so they know when to deliver the products," he adds. "I know a lot of guys don't do that because they don't like showing people their plan. A lot of guys will call and say, 'I need a preemergent herbicide in two weeks,' but they don't know what it takes to get the product there. You can save money by not putting the distributor in a bind in which he has to jump through hoops." **GCI**

BY JOHN WALSH

## The sooner the better

A superintendent in North Carolina takes advantage of ordering pesticides early

The gist of the familiar saying “the early bird gets the worm” can be related to ordering and purchasing pesticides. For some, ordering products late in the year for use the following year can save money and ease pressure on one’s budget.

Michael Haq, golf course superintendent at the private 18-hole Brier Creek Country Club in Raleigh, N.C., does just that. Haq, who has been at Brier Creek for two years, has a maintenance budget of just more than \$1 million, including labor. His chemical budget, not including fertilizer, is \$65,000.

“We are owned by Toll Brothers so cash

flow isn’t a huge issue, and we can take advantage of early orders,” he says.

Haq makes bulk purchases in November and December, the majority of which are fungicides and plant growth regulators. He doesn’t purchase a lot of insecticides and buys herbicides and insecticides as needed. He treats the entire golf course twice a year, then focuses on the four acres of greens during the year.

“We’re not in a real high disease-pressure area,” he says.

The course features A-1 and A-4 bentgrass greens, Bermudagrass tees and fairways, zo-

ysiagrass bunker faces and tall fescue rough.

### PURCHASING VALUE

Purchasing many of his fungicides early before a new year begins saves Haq a considerable amount of money. The total value of his early order purchase was \$22,000 this past year. The biggest chunk outside that savings is the \$20,000 of Rubigan he purchases.

When purchasing pesticides, Haq works with just a couple distributors.

“We have a couple of national accounts, and we bid to them,” he says. “This year, we got everything from one distributor, but last



Second assistant Jon Stephens, left, and third assistant Brian Brister in the chemical room at Brier Creek Country Club in Raleigh, N.C. Photo: Brier Creek Country Club



From left, senior assistant Rob Knott, golf course superintendent Michael Haq and golf professional Mark Johnson. Photo: Brier Creek Country Club

Michael Haq's chemical budget, not including fertilizer, is \$65,000 a year.

The total value of Haq's early order purchase was \$22,000 this past year.

Ninety-five percent of Haq's chemical budget is for spring dead spot, greens and preemergent herbicides.

year, I split the purchase 50/50 between the two."

The products he uses – other than what he orders through the early order program – are common and in stock so he has no problem ordering those right before he needs to apply them.

"I can get them in a day or two," he says. "There are a lot of distributors looking for a bite out of the same pie."

But the key to being effective with an early order program is knowing how much one is going to use during the year, Haq says.

"It's worse if you order too much rather than too little," he says. "In most environments, being overbudget is more of a cardinal sin than having an underconditioned golf course. For us, it's easy to predict what we will use each year: 95 percent of the chemical budget is for spring dead spot, greens and preemergent herbicides."

#### PROGRAM SPECIFICS

Haq is on a preventive program and hasn't seen much disease lately on his greens, but

pythium volutum is his primary concern. On the Bermudagrass, he sprays the fairways, tees and approaches in the fall with Rubigan (fenarimol) for spring dead spot because there's a lot of it.

"I'm not sure why, but N.C. State is doing research on that subject," he says.

In the spring, Haq sprays Insignia (pyraclostrobin) for pythium volutum. In the middle of June, he applies a Chipco Signature (fosetyl) and Daconil Ultrex (chlorothalonil) mix, and another application during the third week of June if disease pressure remains. At the end of June, he applies Chipco 26GT (iprodione) and Daconil Ultrex. The first week of July, he applies Clearly's 3336 (thiophanate-methyl) and Banol (propamocarb), and, depending on disease pressure, might make another application in the middle of July. At the end of July, he applies another Signature/Daconil mix. During the first week of August, he applies 26GT and Subdue Maxx (mefenoxam). In middle of August, he applies Signature and Daconil Ultrex and then monitors the weather. If it's hot, he'll apply

Clearly's 3336 and Daconil Ultrex.

"By September, I won't make any preventive applications," Haq says.

In the middle of October or early November, he applies Signature again.

Haq says he doesn't apply many pesticides throughout the winter because he doesn't have snow mold problems.

In the insecticide realm, Haq will make two applications of a generic Bifenthrin Pro a year for cut worms when aerifying in March and September.

"We have trees but not many," he says, explaining one reason why insect pests aren't much of a problem. "We're almost immune to fall armyworms."

Regarding herbicides, Haq sprays Ronstar (oxadiazon) and Roundup (glyphosate) in February as a preemergent for summer weeds. All other herbicide applications depend on the time of year. Nutsedge is a problem, and Haq applies Certainty (sulfosulfuron) for that. However, he doesn't have a huge broadleaf weed problem but will use Speed Zone (carfentrazone-ethyl) when needed. **GCI**