

Golf in the gulf

The Gulf of Mexico oil spill is affecting more than just water, animals and beaches.

GCI's engineers working on the oil crisis in the gulf report in that components that make up wetting agents – ethylene oxide and propylene oxide – are being used to aid in the ongoing cleanup effort. Because of this, there has been some speculation about rising prices and supply shortages of popular wetting agents. However, Paul Garvin, Aquatrols director of manufacturing, believes wetting agent prices will remain steady.

“Many of the chemical plants that make the components in turf wetting agents also make dispersants and detergents,” Garvin says. “I believe that the demand for dispersants and detergents to aid the cleanup of the Gulf oil spill has helped to keep previously elevated costs in place, more so than directly increasing them.”

Garvin adds that while many chemical manufacturers saw a significant upturn in demand this past spring, as the economy started to rebound, which resulted in an increase in price. “The upward pressure on surfactant prices earlier this year was more a result of increased demand overall, as well as significant upward pressure on the components of ethylene oxide and propylene oxide, which are the building blocks of the surfactants we use in turf,” Garvin says. He points out that most of the major price increases came before the Gulf oil spill.

Garvin couldn't speculate on long-term cost or supply issues at this point in time.

This latest story, though, makes you realize how many people and industries the oil spill indirectly impacts.

Old embraces new

Here's an interesting anecdote of old-meets-new from our good friends at John Deere Golf.

Musselburgh Links, Musselburgh, Scotland, is officially recognized by Guinness World Records as the oldest playing golf course in the world. In fact, GCI's crack research department has uncovered dusty documentary evidence that shows the course was played as early as 1672, although Mary Queen of Scots is reputed to have played at Musselburgh more than a century prior.

So in an effort to improve playing conditions and make the centuries-old facility more eco-friendly, Musselburgh recently purchased John Deere Golf's newest technology – a 8000 E-Cut hybrid fairway mower and two 200 E-Cut walk greens mowers.

The turf pros at Musselburgh tell us their recent investment reflects not only their attention to quality of play, but also to their impact on the environment.

“We are trying to embrace hybrid technology across all of the council's machinery operations,” says Dougie Fox, East Lothian Council's amenity technician. “The decision to choose the hybrid mowers was made primarily to help reduce our carbon footprint, as well as cut fuel consumption and noise levels.”



“QUOTABLE

“We suited up in heavy leather jackets, gloves and masks. He had inch-and-a-half claws.”

Brian Chapin, superintendent at Dellwood Country Club, New City, N.Y., describing his team's efforts to rescue a great horned owl that had become entangled in the facility's driving range net in mid-July.

ROLL CALL

Superintendent **Gary Dalton** announced his retirement from San Diego Country Club.

Crystal Mountain Golf Course (Thompsonville, Mich.) Superintendent **Adam Ikamas** earned the Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) credential from the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America (GCSAA).

Marriott Golf named **Andy Ragsdale**, superintendent at The Ritz Carlton Golf Club, Orlando, Grande Lakes, Golf Grounds Manager of the Year.

Standard Golf has promoted **Steve Tyler** to its newly-created national sales manager position.

Dow AgroSciences announced **Mark Urbanowski** will lead the Turf & Ornamental team as the portfolio marketing leader; Patrick Bell will serve as the Turf & Ornamental product manager; **Kevin Sheaffer** joined the Southern Urban Pest Management district as a sales trainee responsible for the Turf & Ornamental territory previously managed by Bell; in the Western district, **Bruce Kidd**, sales representative, is retiring and **Evan Walden** will take over his role.

Trevor Thorley was named the president of Engage Agro USA.

PBI/Gordon added **Allen Baumstark** to the professional sales staff. His territory includes Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana.

Paul O'Connor, former assistant superintendent at Carnoustie Golf Links, has been appointed links superintendent for Trump International Golf Links, Scotland.

Jane Geddes, LPGA senior vice president of tournament operations, and **Morgan Gregory**, president of GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford, N.Y., will serve on The Environmental Institute for Golf board of trustees through Feb. 2014. GCSAA Secretary/Treasurer **Sanford G. Queen**, CGCS, manager of golf operations for the city of Overland Park, Kan., will serve through Feb. 2013.

Mr. Blue Sky

Besides prime playing weather, there's one more powerful reason why Foxchase Golf Club is lobbying Mother Nature for blue skies and sunshine.

GCI's advanced technical correspondent reports that, in late July, the Stevens, Pa., golf course became powered 100 percent by solar panels.

This move off the grid makes Foxchase the only golf course in the Keystone State – and perhaps the only, if not one of the few in the nation – powered solely by solar energy.

"Foxchase aims to stay in the forefront of the golf industry," says co-owner Steve Graybill. "Utilizing solar technology is a welcomed addition to both our course and the community."

The facility's system covers an acre of land and is composed of 1,320 solar panels. The system, which is wired underground, can be monitored anywhere in the world via the Internet. A display mounted in the pro shop provides the public with the amount of power being produced.

So how much sunshine will the Foxchase solar farm harvest? The system is expected to produce 360 mega watts of power per year, which according to our estimations, is about the same amount of juice necessary to power 30 homes.

As an added bonus, about half of the system's costs were offset by federal and state incentives. For example, Foxchase qualifies for accelerated depreciation available through incentive programs like the Renewable Energy Tax Credit and the Pennsylvania Sunshine Solar program, and there's an expected 5-year payback on the system. And, the system is expected to yield a positive cash flow of \$144,000 annually.

Lastly, the Foxchase solar system – which was installed by Advanced Solar Industries, New Holland, Pa. – will offset about 3,600 tons of carbon per year.

