

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Bayer, Aventis negotiating

At press time, Aventis of Strasbourg, France, and Schering AG of Berlin Germany were continuing negotiations exclusively with Bayer AG about the sale of Aventis Crop-Science. Aventis holds a 76 percent interest in the crop protection and crop production business, while Schering holds 24 percent. The acquisition would be the largest in Bayer's history. The company wants to expand its crop protection business.

In other Bayer AG news, Paradigm Genetics and Bayer AG extended and expanded their commercial partnership for herbicide discovery and development for another five years. Under the new agreement, Paradigm will receive up to \$30 million including milestone payments, as well as success fees for all products that reach the market.

Canadian court upholds ban

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in June that municipalities have the right to ban the residential use of pesticides. The court dismissed the appeal of two Canadian lawn-care companies against the municipality of Hudson, Quebec, which was the first Canadian municipality to outlaw pesticides on lawns in 1991.

Royster-Clark buys Agrilience outlets

Arden Hills, Minn.-based Royster-Clark Group will close a deal with Agrilience to acquire its Agro Distribution South and ProSource One businesses.

BASF predicts stagnant income

BASF AG predicted it would not see any increase in its operating income in the second

Briefs continue on page 16

H-2B Far From Perfect

BUT U.S. LABOR FIRM

TRYING TO MAKE IT BETTER

By Ron Hall

The U.S. government's H-2B visa program allows employers who can't attract local labor to recruit and employ unskilled, seasonal foreign workers. The majority of these workers are recruited in Mexico and Latin America. Although the U.S. green industry has become increasingly dependent on these workers, the H-2B program is far from perfect.

Many first-time H2B laborers arrive at their U.S. employer's office with few job skills. They speak little or no English, are unfamiliar with turf equipment and have little experience with U.S. laws and customs.

"If we don't get our act together with this H-2B, it could be in big trouble," says Jeff West, who operates a Michigan-based labor solutions firm that places H2B workers in U.S. industries.

West's firm is improving H2B. After meeting with West, Guanajuato State in central Mexico, an industrial city of about 450,000 citizens, implemented worker training programs. West has met with officials in other Mexican states, too, and they're interested in developing similar programs.

West's program, taught by professional bilingual educators, requires worker candidates to attend two weeks of classroom and hands-on instruction. They receive lessons in conversational English and U.S. laws and customs, and learn how to operate and maintain commercial mowers, thanks in part to equipment donations from John Deere. The workers are tested at the end of the training sessions.

About 300 potential employees were trained by the state agency, and West believes they stand a better chance of becoming productive green

industry workers. Also, he feels they're less likely to go AWOL from their U.S. employers (become "illegal") to seek better pay in construction or other U.S. industries, one of H2B's not-so-secret dirty little secrets.

"If these men spend two weeks of their time here, eight hours a day and without getting paid, that tells me they're serious about wanting to work in the United States," West says.

West admits his motives for promoting the program aren't entirely altruistic. Through his labor contracting firm, GTO International in Whitmore Lake, Mich., he says he expects to place at least 100 of the trained laborers with U.S. green industry businesses.

Hall is editor of Athletic Turf, Golf-dom's sister publication.

Many first-time H2B laborers arrive at their U.S. employer's office with few job skills.

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 14

quarter. The company cited high raw material prices, weaker growth in Europe and no sign of an economic downturn easing in the United States as reasons for its forecast.

Uplink acquires XY Golf

Austin, Texas-based Uplink, a provider of GPS-based distance measurement, communications, and course management systems to the golf industry, acquired the product line and intellectual property of XY Golf, maker of handheld GPS systems in the golf market.

Dedman Sr. honored by SMU

Dallas-based Southern Methodist University renamed its 75-year-old School of Law in honor of law school alumnus and ClubCorp founder, Robert H. Dedman Sr., his wife, Nancy, also an SMU graduate; and their family. The Dedmans pledged \$20 million to endow the school, which will be known as the Dedman School of Law. Second-generation family members are ClubCorp president and CEO Robert Dedman Jr., also an alumnus, and his wife, Rachel Redecker Dedman.

Seed research awards Rutgers

Seed Research of Oregon awarded Rutgers University nearly \$250,000, representing royalties for 23 grass seed varieties in 2000. Seed Research of Oregon President Mike Robinson began working with Rutgers professor Reed Funk in 1978. Funk was instrumental in helping Seed Research of Oregon establish its breeding program and develop a wide assortment of grass seed, including SR 4200, a perennial ryegrass.

An Open Letter to the Wildlife



Dear Wildlife,

When are you going to take notice that we are not members of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program? Our acreage is a golfing sanctuary and therefore is subject to a high standard of etiquette, even from you. Therefore, I have the following advice for each of you:

Mr. Fox — You have beautiful fur and a wonderful little family, but I promise you we're not hiding anything under our newly changed hole plugs. So stop digging them up. Also, either rake the bunkers after you play in them or stay out.

Mrs. Deer — Your family is always a welcome sight strolling down the fairway (even if you are a high risk agent of disease). I must remind you, however, that if the greens are closed to members, they're closed to you, too. I was quite disturbed to find my No. 5 green, which had been submerged under water for 2.5 days, punctured with your hoof prints.

Mr. Hawk — We enjoy watching you soar effortlessly. You're polite and sit still when golfers putt. We also envy your hunting skills, but when will you realize that women golfers love baby bunnies — and don't like to find fur and guts spewed about the fairways. Please be more considerate.

Mr. Snapping Turtle — The sight of your menacing head peering out of the muck still makes the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. Although we don't discriminate against ugliness at our club, we do discriminate against turtles that rip up cart paths, bunkers and tees to deposit eggs. Knock it off.

Mrs. Crow — Please be advised that we have cut our pesticide use in an effort to be better stewards of our land — not to provide bigger, juicier grubs for your benefit. Respect our turf, or do the words "diazinon on a corn cob" ring a bell?

The last time your peers didn't heed our warning, we introduced them to a Border collie named Rocky, who has brought law and order to our course with minimal bloodshed.

As a sign of good faith, we have rewarded songbirds with wildflower patches, built an aquatic habitat for frogs and planted native grasses for rabbits to eat. It's now time for you to do something to show you appreciate our kindness. This is a golf course, not some shot-and-a-beer joint where you can carry on as you please.

If you feel you have been unjustly singled out, take note that separate letters have been sent to The Golfer and The Teen-age Vandal.

I hope this letter finds you in good health.

Yours in turf,
The Superintendent

This lighthearted look at environmentally friendly golf courses was written by Doug Vogel, superintendent at Packanack GC in Wayne, N.J.

Golfdom Rakes In Awards

Golfdom magazine is recipient of several recent editorial awards. The magazine placed second in the best trade magazine category in the Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards. *Golfdom* also placed second in the Magazine of the Year competition sponsored by Advanstar Communications, which publishes *Golfdom* and more than 100 other magazines.

In addition, *Golfdom* staff members were honored for their work. Frank H. Andorka, recently promoted to managing editor, received a Grand Gold award from Advanstar Communications for his story, "Winds of Change," which explored the industry's white image. Graphic designers Lisa Bodnar and Lisa Lehman received a Grand Gold for Best Cover. Editor Larry Aylward and Andorka re-

ceived first-place honors in the Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards and the Turf and Ornamental Communication Association (TOCA) awards. Aylward, Andorka, Bodnar, Lehman, publisher/editorial director Pat Jones and graphic designer Kim Traum also received merit awards for a total of 10 TOCA awards — more than any other magazine.