

Off The Fringe

Continued from page 17

cident we're introducing this first in golf. It's an excellent way to enter the market and demonstrate its safety and effectiveness. But before we do that, we have to prove that we can keep this product from doing unintended things.

Golfdom: How?

Harriman: First, by complying with extremely strict regulations that apply to all products enhanced by biotechnology. For example, moving even just one seed is regulated and has to be approved by USDA. We have regular federal and state inspections of our greenhouses, collaborators and field plots. Second, we're doing the most extensive testing that's ever been done on a turf-seed variety. We have more than 50 test sites at 20 of the nation's best universities. We've confirmed that the technology works, and we've seen no loss of color or performance. There's no phytotoxicity even at four times the recommended rate at fairway cut. It helps that bentgrass is already inherently resistant to glyphosate, but it does smoke the *Poa*.

Golfdom: Assuming you get approval and enter the market in 2003, how popular do you think this variety can be?

Harriman: It's still hard to say how quickly this technology will gain acceptance. Obviously, new construction and remodeling will be a big focus. Our research indicates that 90 percent of superintendents say they are "probably" or "definitely" interested in Roundup Ready varieties. More than half say they'd consider replacing their ryegrass with herbicide-resistant bent.

Golfdom: Speaking of which, what's pricing going to be like?

Harriman: It'll be higher than standard bents, but superintendents say they're willing to pay more. There could be some multi-year payment plans as well.

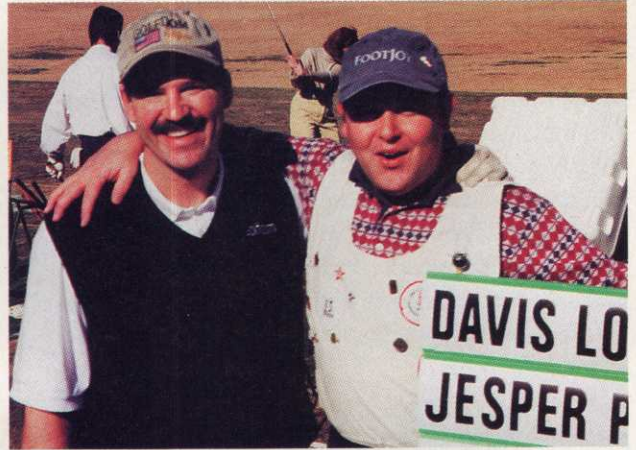
Golfdom: What's your final message to superintendents, owners and others who might be interested?

Harriman: You can break it down any way you want — dollars, environmental or aesthetics — but the most important thing is that it will simplify your life. In a couple of years, you'll be able to judge for yourself.

Editor's note: Roundup and Roundup Ready are registered trademarks of Monsanto.

What's Your Sign?

A confused "Signboy" latches on to *Golfdom's* Pat Jones. Matt Griesser, the star of several FootJoy commercials, mistook Jones for a Tour player after witnessing his power and grace (not!) on the range at the National Golf Course Owners Association's annual tournament earlier this year. Note that Jones' name is not on the leader board.



Can't Sugar-Coat This

Something got lost in translation in our January Real-Life Solutions piece about Novex fertilizer. We wrote that it was a sulfur-coated granular fertilizer, which it is not. A Lesco spokesperson offers the following explanation about how Novex works:

"The key to Novex is the AminoUreaFormaldehyde (AUF). Micronutrients and other soluble nutrient components are matrixed into the homogenous Novex granule. As the AUF is gradually released through microbial degradation, the soluble components become exposed to soil moisture and release. Therefore, Novex has multiple release mechanisms which are ultimately governed by the AUF. Novex is not a coated granule, so its release is not affected by attrition or mechanical damage."

Golfdom apologizes for the error.

Consolidation Caveats

Manufacturers and suppliers in the golf maintenance industry entered a merger-and-acquisition mode last year that had rarely been seen before. Among others, Novartis joined forces with Zeneca to form Syngenta, and Simplot expanded its portfolio with buyouts and strategic mergers

with other turf suppliers. Will the breathless pace of mergers continue this year?

According to industry experts, companies will take a short breather this year to digest what they've purchased. The lone exception could be e-commerce companies — but not

until those omnipresent Web sites start showing a profit.

Companies in 2001 will emphasize knowledge of their partners over growth, experts say. That advice extends to customers as well. Make sure you know who you're dealing with before you commit any money to a company, experts say. Otherwise, you could be left holding the bag.