

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Royster-Clark Group acquires ProSource One

Royster-Clark Group signed a non-binding letter of intent with Agrilience LLC to acquire the assets of ProSource One and its parent company, Agro Distribution South. The businesses and assets acquired by Royster-Clark have been operated by Agrilience since their purchase from Terra Industries in 1999.

Bayer cracks \$10 billion in revenue

Pittsburgh-based Bayer reported a 13.6 percent increase in sales to \$10.1 billion for 2000. This is the first time the company achieved revenues exceeding \$10 billion. Earnings were also higher as after-tax profits rose 32 percent to \$202 million. Bayer also reported advances in the agriculture business segment. Demand was especially satisfactory for insecticides based on the active ingredient Imidacloprid and for seed treatment.

Syngenta reports increase

Syngenta reported that sales for 2000 grew 2 percent. First-half sales were up 7 percent, and second-half sales were down 4 percent.

Jacklin Seed opens Oregon facility

Jacklin Seed, a division of Simplot, has opened a 53,000-square-foot processing, warehouse and distribution facility in Albany, Ore. The operation, which includes two blenders and baggers, is more than four times larger than Jacklin's previous facility.

Bayer, Dow join forces

Bayer Professional Care and Dow Agro-Sciences have joined together to offer a rewards program — the Accolades Program. For more information, contact www.Bayer-ProCentral.com or call 800-842-8020.

Here Today, Consolidated Tomorrow

BUT SYNGENTA'S PULLIAM SAYS
MERGERS CAN BE GOOD

By Larry Aylward, Editor

You need a scorecard to keep up with all the mergers and acquisitions in the golf course chemical market. "Here today, consolidated tomorrow" would describe it well.

In the past two years, several small-, medium- and large-sized companies have merged with or acquired their counterparts. Some of the more notable deals included:

- Novartis Agribusiness and Zeneca Agrochemicals combining to form Syngenta.
- The Andersons acquiring Scotts Co.'s U.S. professional turf business.
- BASF purchasing the Cyanamid herbicide division of American Home Products.
- Simplot Turf & Horticulture buying Lange-Stegmann's professional products in the golf market.
- Dow Ag acquiring Rohm and Haas' agriculture chemical business.
- Aventis announcing it would spin off Aventis CropScience.

Who knows what mergers and acquisitions lie in the wings — if there are any companies left to comprise them. "It can't go on much longer be-



cause there aren't many of us left," said Keelan Pulliam, head of Syngenta's Professional Products Business Unit, with a laugh.

Of his own company, which has metamorphosed over the years, Pulliam says, "There's a lot of history and a lot of gray hair."

Why all the mixing and joining? Economics is the simple answer.

Raj Gupta, chairman and CEO of Philadelphia-based Rohm and Haas, said the decision to sell the company's agricultural chemicals business to Dow Ag was difficult but necessary. "It has become evident that the agricultural chemicals business will flourish more as part of a global firm with a stronger presence serving the agricultural markets," Gupta said.

For some superintendents, all the consolidation might be confusing — until they update their scorecards and grasp who is selling what. For the companies, customer service remains vital.

"What's important to the superintendent is the quality of products," Pulliam said. "It's also the service, information and technical support behind the products. It's about helping superintendents solve specific problems."

Jennifer Remsberg, residential market manager for Bayer Professional Products, said superintendents are more concerned about the fate of products, not the fate of companies. "This is a product-driven market," she added.

Still, superintendents should know that consolidation can be good, Pulliam said. "When mergers happen, the size of the businesses are much larger," he noted. "That allows us to spend the dollars we need on research and technology, which is critical to solving superintendents' problems."

Often, companies involved in mergers break away from their pharmaceutical and industrial parent companies, which can be positive, Pulliam said. They become stand-alone companies and focus their energies and dollars on one audience.

There are also concerns that consolidation will escalate prices. But Pulliam said, "There's plenty of competition [to keep prices in check.]"

What's next? Will Syngenta and Dow Ag unite to form Syndow?

"Mergers will continue," Pulliam says. "I'll let it go at that."

Houston, We Have a Problem

TEXAS COURSES HIT WITH OVERSEEDING WASHOUTS

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.

Much of the buzz at the South Texas GCSA's meeting in March concerned the unseasonably wet and cold winter that disrupted overseeding programs at many Houston-area courses.

"In my 16 years in the business, this is by far the worst overseeding season I've ever seen," said George Cincotta, superintendent at Riverbend CC in Sugarland, Texas.

Cincotta says normal overseeding (with *Poa trivialis*) occurs in Houston between Oct. 1 and Nov. 1, when temperatures range between 70 degrees and 80 degrees. This year, temperatures dipped into the 50s most days this winter, and 2 to 3 inches of rain washed the seed into the collars.

"There will be a lot of collars in this area looking great," said Robert Bryan, superintendent at Windrose GC in Spring, Texas. "But there will be some thin spots on the greens."

Bryan said he has heard other superintendents question the need to overseed after their experience this year. "A lot of guys are saying, 'If it's going to be like this, why do it?'" he said. "It's easier to maintain bentgrass if this going to be the result."

Speaking of overseeding, here are 10 guidelines for overseeding your greens and tees, provided by David Kopec, professor of turfgrass management at the University of Arizona:

1. Stop nitrogen fertilization at 25 days before overseeding. Substitute or maintain potassium fertilization.

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Quotable

"I don't care if you have a hangover — just don't sound like it on the hotline."

— *Rhys Arthur, superintendent at Indian Spring CC in Silver Spring, Md., on guidelines for his employees when updating the "Course Condition Hotline"*

"On certain holes, they need it."

— *Greg Norman on Augusta National's plan to renovate several par 4s to make them more difficult. The Shark, by the way, missed the cut for The Masters. (Associated Press)*

"Every architect's dream is to do a project right on the beach. All you have to do is push it up and plant it, push it up and plant it ..."

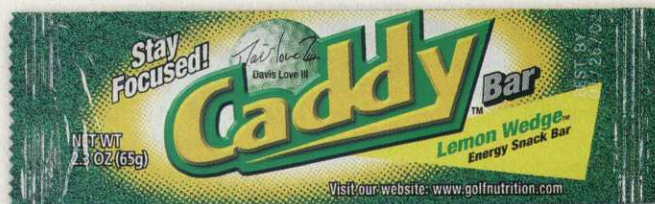
— *Architect Bill Love on getting back to basics in design.*

"I don't think it's a coincidence. This ball has made that much difference in my game."

— *Joe Durant, formerly ranked No. 208 on the PGA Tour and winner of two events this year, on using the new Titleist Pro V1 solid-core golf ball, which goes further and is easier to control. (USA Today)*

The Energizer

We don't want to insinuate anything, but maybe you should try a Davis Love III Caddy Bar to help you do your job. The Caddy Bar, manufactured by Phoenix-based Golf Nutrition, has 19 ingredients which are clinically proven (whoaa!) to help golfers improve their focus and concentration. We assume the bar can help superintendents, too.



The Caddy Bar, available in peanut butter and lemon wedge flavors, also contains lipoic acid and lutein, two nutrients important for nerve cell regeneration and energy recovery. So no more complaining about those 12-hour days. Now get to work!

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2. Seven days before you overseed, decrease irrigation. Apply two-thirds of the regular irrigation.

3. Five days before you overseed, raise the mowing height by 1/16-inch on greens and 1/4 inch on tees.

4. Three days before overseeding, raise mowing height another 1/16-inch.

5. Then, as you start overseeding, mow the greens 1/16 inch lower. Then mow again immediately 1/16 inch lower than the first cut. You should lightly scalp the greens to remove the upper leaf tissue, which is now farther apart on the stems as a result of the raised mowing heights.

6. Lightly verticut in a minimum of two directions. Repeat as necessary to remove leaf material and to minimize lateral stolon disruption.

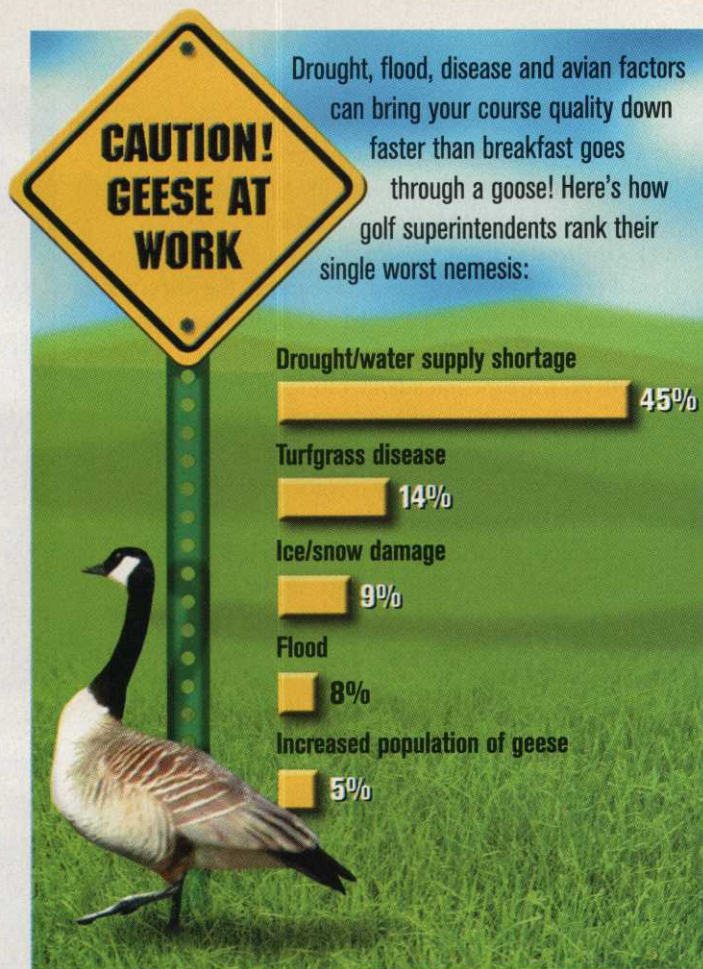
7. Do the same on tees, recognizing that different mowing heights will be used.

8. Overseed in three directions.

9. Topdress in two directions. Apply a total of about 3/16 to 1/4 inch of sand. Roll the turf with a weighted roller.

10. Irrigate three to four times a day, checking for germination and emergence.

Kopec asks superintendents to remember the key to spring transition is to avoid heavy verticutting before overseeding.



SOURCE: GCSAA, ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY



Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews www.golfcoursejob.com

(All sites are preceded by <http://> unless otherwise noted)

Even in today's constricting economy, superintendents face the challenge of finding good employees. Here is a site, started by industry veterans, that will help you solve the problem:

www.golfcoursejob.com – Founded by superintendents Sam Hocutt and Clayton Hoyt, this site is as easy to navigate as it is useful. It allows superintendents and students to submit their résumés for a \$5 fee, payable by personal check, money order or cashier's check.

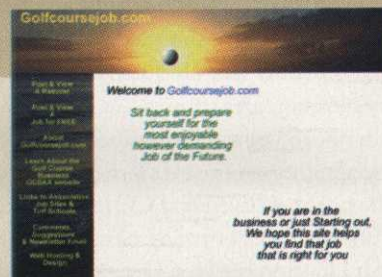
For that fee, superintendents receive individual Web sites with professional-looking résumés. A site remains active for a year with one free update. After a year, another \$5 keeps the site active. Users also receive their own Web addresses, which they can e-mail to prospective employers.

The site recently added a new benefit

for superintendents (no students allowed) who have lost their jobs: It waives the \$5 fee. It's a nice gesture that shows a healthy sensitivity fueled by the founders' intimate understanding of the profession. You can tell they know what being fired is like.

The job listings are extensive and informative. Unlike other golf job sites I've visited, this one strictly deals with the course maintenance side of the business (at least so far). You won't find any banquet manager or pro shop jobs here. (I'm partial to the superintendent's job at the Sandals Resort in Jamaica. The ad says they will pay your expenses to come interview – I'm there!)

The site also offers Web design and hosting services for individuals and clubs interesting in creating Web sites. www.golfcoursejob.com is one of the most comprehensive job sites I've seen, and it helps both sides of the employ-



ment equation make the connections so vital to job searches.

Editor's note and shameless plug: You can now purchase selected golf photos online from *Golfdom's* chief photo editor, Mike Klemme. Visit www.mikeklemme.com to purchase a framed Klemme shot projected on to canvas or sports.artselect.com/ to buy a print. Now, Mike, what about that *Golfdom* editor discount?

Golfdom's associate editor Frank H. Andorka Jr. currently compiles *Scanning the Web*, but has applied for the Jamaica job despite having no turfgrass management experience. You can reach him at fandorka@advanstar.com with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.