

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."