

# Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

## Business briefs

### Bayer acquires Aventis for \$4.9 billion and debt

Bayer AG agreed to buy Aventis CropScience from Aventis and Schering AG for about \$4.9 billion and nearly \$2 billion in debt. The deal will double Bayer's existing crop protection business. The company expects to close the deal in the first quarter of 2002. The new company will be called Bayer CropScience. The deal still depends on European Union anti-trust approval.

Bayer will not assume liability for Aventis CropScience's genetically modified corn, StarLink. StarLink, approved only as animal feed, became a subject of international controversy when it was proved that it had become mixed with corn intended for human use.

Bayer CropScience will be headed by Jochen Wulff, currently general manager of Bayer's Crop Protection Business Group. The company will have headquarters in Monheim, Germany. The company will also maintain Aventis CropScience's two principal sites in Lyons, France, and Frankfurt, Germany.

### Simplot acquires Eco Soil products; Becker acquires RhizUp

San Diego-based Simplot Partners acquired a group of products from Eco Soil Systems, including soil surfactants, wetting agents, spray dye indicators, foliar nutrients, biostimulants, spray adjuvants and tank cleaners. Some of the more than 40 products are:

- 6 Iron Plus (12-0-0), a liquid nitrogen fertilizer that contains 6 percent iron;
- Brilliance, which alleviates soil water repellency.
- Rely II, which is formulated to establish consistent water flow into and throughout the root zone; and
- Trident (4-0-1), which improves root

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## The Buzz on Feedback

SUPERINTENDENTS CAME AWAY FROM TURF PROGRAM IMPRESSED  
WITH JOHN DEERE'S GPS TECHNOLOGY AND HYBRID GREENS MOWER

By Larry Aylward, Editor

**T**here's green — as in John Deere green — roaming over the golf course. Look to the right, and you see Deere utility vehicles, fairway mowers and rough mowers. Look to the left, and you see Deere greens mowers, bunker rakes and aerators.

Welcome to Deere's annual Golf & Turf 2001 Feedback Program. For the past 10 years, Deere has invited superintendents from throughout the country to its headquarters in Moline, Ill., for a few days to test and review potential new equipment. In August, more than 400 superintendents came to Moline to see Deere's latest concepts.

Superintendents saw several new items, including a fairway mower with rotary cutting units, a diesel-powered triplex greens mower with an electric reel drive and Deere's global positioning system (GPS) technology.

Many superintendents examined the triplex greens mower with electric reel drive. The mower was quieter, lacking the whine usually associated with a hydraulic reel drive. "You can definitely hear a difference," one superintendent said.

Superintendents were intrigued by



JOHN DEERE/STEVE TRUSTY

**The greensmower with electric reel drive was a popular attraction.**

the mower because of its nonhydraulic reel drive, which eliminates the possibility of fluids leaks on greens.

Many superintendents were interested in Deere's GPS technology. Earlier this year, Deere announced it was shifting its GPS focus from golf cars to turf equipment. (The GPS is a government network of 24 satellites orbiting the earth that tracks the location of moving objects on the ground.)

"This is what I wanted to see," said Shelly Israelson, superintendent of Royal Palm Yacht & CC in Boca Raton, Fla., as he studied the GPS software on computers. "Soon we'll need a computer-science degree to work in this industry."

Israelson was joking, of course, and he's excited about the GPS's application to the industry.

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"It's only going to benefit superintendents and anybody that deals with having to keep records," Israelson said. "Architects and contractors are using the GPS technology. It makes sense for us to start using it."

Mark Schmidt, Deere's senior project manager, was attending his fourth Feedback program and said more superintendents are gaining an interest in GPS. Deere touted its GPS spray record-keeping system, and fleet and service management program.

The former provides superintendents with the capability to record spatial spray applications automatically so they can manage and assess performance of applied products — and use the data to prove compliance with environmental regulations. The system's technology allows for a sprayer to capture information about a particular application. The information

is transferred in real time to a base station where a superintendent can record and analyze it.

"The system allows superintendents to keep historical records of all the applications they've done," Schmidt said.

The fleet and service management program features a preventative-



JOHN DEERE/STEVE TRUSTY

**Superintendents are excited about the GPS spray record-keeping system.**

maintenance hour meter that can be programmed with service intervals. "When the machine logs 25 hours, you can program it to be ready for an oil change," Schmidt explained.

E. Charles Ulevich, director of golf course maintenance for Hayfields CC and Turf Valley Resort Conference Center in Ellicott City, Md., said the GPS would likely become a tool superintendents can't do without. Ulevich said he played golf at a course whose GPS system would shut down golf cars if they strayed 10 feet from the cart path.

"It's phenomenal," he added.

Ulevich said he would use the system for record keeping of pesticides and fertilizers. Ulevich, who oversees 54 holes and 60 employees, would also use GPS to track maintenance vehicles.

"But tracking maintenance vehicles might keep you in the office too much," he added. "[GPS] is another tool that makes our lives easier, but it also has the potential to make you lazy."

Ulevich is also concerned about price and says cost will be the driving factor on whether GPS is widely used in the industry. "Like all technology, though, it will get cheaper in the future," he predicted.

## Quotable

**"Everybody from every walk of life has been affected by this in some way or another. You almost feel guilty trying to return to some normalcy. ... But you have to try to return to some sort of normal activity."**

— Charlie Fultz, superintendent of Country Club of Culpeper (Va.), on the aftermath of Sept. 11

**"We don't call it beer. We call it aiming juice."**

— Vicky, our new favorite beverage cart girl from Woodland Hills GC in Eagle, Neb.

**"We thoroughly enjoy listening to our guests talk, not about their golf games, but about the deer they saw across the fairway, the alligators they saw along the lakes or even the even raccoon that was snooping around their carts looking for goodies."**

— Gary Meyers, manager of sports turf and golf course maintenance at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

## November In Turfgrass Trends:

**REMOTE DIAGNOSIS:** Extension agents and other experts examining problem turf have only so many hours in a day and sometimes it's not possible to see a site firsthand. The remote diagnosis work being done at the University of Georgia promises to relieve the overworked specialists and speed diagnosis for problems that commonly beset turfgrass.

**DISEASE STUDY:** Even though the

weather did not cooperate (it was unusually cold this year in Central Pennsylvania), Penn State's Wakar Uddin gathered good data for his disease study and the effect of Insignia application on turfgrass. Let's just say the results are more interesting that Penn State's football season so far.

For more information, visit [www.landscapemanagement.net](http://www.landscapemanagement.net).

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mass and depth in addition to overall plant vitality and visual quality.

Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed. On Sept. 7, NASDAQ halted trading of Eco Soil.

In related news, Ames, Iowa-based Becker Underwood, manufacturer and marketer of Rhizobium inoculants, seed coatings, specialty colorants and other bio-agronomic products, acquired the RhizUp brand of inoculants from Eco Soil Systems.

### **Textron expects loss; signs contract with Meadowbrook**

Textron Inc., parent of Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products, cited the U.S. economic slowdown and the impact of the Sept. 11 terror attacks when it announced it would post a third-quarter loss of about 25 cents a share. The company said it plans to curtail production throughout many of its businesses and will cut 2,500 jobs.

In other company news, Augusta, Ga.-based Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products signed a five-year contract with Meadowbrook Golf and Meadowbrook's subsidiary International Golf Maintenance to be the exclusive provider of golf cars, turf equipment and specialty vehicles at all of Meadowbrook's U.S. facilities.

Meadowbrook Golf is a Florida-based management company that owns, leases, manages or maintains more than 100 golf facilities throughout the United States.

### **Deere completes Century purchase**

Moline, Ill.-based Deere & Co. completed its previously announced purchase of Richton International, parent company of Century Supply.

### **Dow Ag acquires rights to MACH 2**

Indianapolis-based Dow AgroSciences LLC completed acquisition of the outstanding shares of RohMid LLC and its MACH 2 (halofenozide) turf insecticide from BASF.

Last June, Dow AgroSciences acquired a 50 percent interest in RohMid when it purchased Rohm and Haas Company's agricultural chemicals business.

## Industry Players Offer Aid, Condolences After Attack

**S**everal golf course maintenance industry companies and courses were quick to support the nationwide relief effort following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania.

Shortly after the tragedy, Standard Golf announced it was donating profits from the sales of its U.S. golf flags and red, white and blue Royaline flagsticks to the American Red Cross Disaster Fund. The offer is good through Nov. 25.

"Immediately after the terrorist attack, golf courses across the country began showing their patriotism by flying our U.S. golf flags with our red, white and blue flagsticks on their greens," said John Kelly, Standard Golf's marketing director.

Textron and John Deere also offered their support. Textron donated \$100,000 to the American Red Cross fund and equipment.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their loved ones," said Gregory Hyland, chairman and CEO of Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products. "In America, it's no longer business as usual. The business community has rallied to a higher cause."

Textron's OmniQuip and E-Z-GO  
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**John Kelly's company, Standard Golf, is donating profits from sales of its U.S. golf flags and flagsticks to the American Red Cross.**



## Keep Fertilizer in Check

**I**n light of Sept. 11, it's prudent for those who have ammonium nitrate fertilizers in stock to report the amounts and location to authorities. It's possible that these inventories could be stolen and used as potential bomb materials.

Local distributors may be asked to pick up your existing supplies and store them so that the number of locations will be reduced to fewer and more secure warehouses.

Please pay attention to any shipments and deliveries you have pending. While there is no need for panic, we are in a heightened state of awareness and this is just one small way we can do something to eliminate easy access to potentially dangerous materials.

In a related matter, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) received an inquiry from the U.S. Department of Commerce

about the impact on the pesticide industry of the terrorist attacks and from EPA as to industry security measures against such possible attacks. In late September, an EPA Pesticide/ Chemical Safety Advisory was issued and sent to all pesticide registrants.

The advisory notes that the Office of Pesticide Programs is coordinating with other EPA program areas to encourage pesticide industry groups and facilities to review all security measures during this "heightened state of national alert."

EPA urges pesticide industry members to review the agency's chemical safety alert, "Chemical Accident Prevention: Site Security," posted at [www.epa.gov/swercepp/p-small.htm#alerts](http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/p-small.htm#alerts).

— Joel D. Jackson, *Golfdom* contributing editor and CGCS

### Maryland Tornado Damages NTEP

**T**he tornado that killed two University of Maryland students in College Park, Md., Sept. 24, also caused an estimated \$41 million damage to the government's largest agricultural research facility in Beltsville, Md. The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) is headquartered at the facility.

Kevin Morris, NTEP executive director, says



KEVIN MORRIS

about 100,000 square feet of greenhouses at the sprawling agricultural research facility were badly damaged.

"We came out of it pretty well, considering," Morris said.

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loaned \$1 million worth of light construction and transportation equipment to the New York City Fire Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Cushman offered 12 Tru-trucks to the New York City Police Department.

Deere created the "John Deere Special Fund for America" to provide the company's employees, retirees, dealers and customers the opportunity to send monetary aid supporting recovery efforts and affected families. The John Deere Foundation launched the fund with a \$250,000 contribution.

"These tragic events have caused great sorrow in our company and throughout the world," said Robert W. Lane, Deere's chairman and CEO.

John Deere equipment is also involved in the recovery efforts. The company's manufacturing operations and dealers donated and delivered Gator utility vehicles, skid steer loaders, tractors and construction equipment for use at the sites where the hijacked jets crashed.

The National Golf Course Owners Association also responded with a relief effort initiative, On Course America — Golf Unites for Disaster Relief. Participating U.S. golf courses across the United States donated proceeds from rounds of golf played during Oct. 19 to 21 to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

NGCOA developed the program in response to the desire of its membership to assist the relief efforts in some way. "The NGCOA was overwhelmed by the response from our members to this tragic event," said Mike Hughes, NGCOA executive director.



## Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews [www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/RefCalculators1.html#AGRI-WATER](http://www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/RefCalculators1.html#AGRI-WATER)

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

**M**aintained by the University of California at Irvine, the site operates from the school's science library. Believe me, it shows. It has more calculators than the freshman class at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

You want to know the pH of your water? No problem. The amount of water your soil can hold? It's here. Want to find out how much erosion you can expect around your pond banks after a particularly bad storm? There's a calculator to help you. The amount of information this site provides you is unbelievable.

Since this issue of *Golfdom* focuses on irrigation, I focused my attention on the site's water calculators. It allows you to cal-

culate the pipe size you'll need for your irrigation system (a useful calculation, whether you're installing a new one or renovating an old one), evapotranspiration rates and other water-related questions.

The calculator that held my attention the longest was the Penman calculator for water use by grass. You enter elements like the amount of sunshine, air temperature, humidity and windspeed into the appropriate fields. (It also gives you options. For example, if you don't know the amount of sunshine on a given day, you can enter the time of year instead.) Then you hit the "Calculate" button. In an instant, the site tells you how many inches of water the grass will use on that day under the weather con-

ditions you entered. It's quick, easy to navigate and will help you use your irrigation system more efficiently.

I realize that no scientific equation will ever adequately capture the nuances of golf course management, but [www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/RefCalculators1.html#AGRI-WATER](http://www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/RefCalculators1.html#AGRI-WATER) gives you tools that will help you do your job more effectively.

*Golfdom's managing editor Frank H. Andorka Jr. compiles Scanning the Web and needs a calculator to add one plus one. You can reach him at [fandorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fandorka@advanstar.com) with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.*