

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

Briefs continue on page 18

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

There'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.

Continued on page 16

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 14

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

Several 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
Continued on page 20



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

In 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.

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