

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

Study shows pesticides break down quickly in turf

The results of a three-year study show that high levels of organic matter and microbial activity in turfgrass help pesticides degrade faster than when applied to bare soil.

Bruce Branham, associate professor of turf at the University of Illinois, conducted the study. His research focused on the dissipation of pesticides in turf settings vs. production agriculture, where chemicals are applied directly to the soil.

Branham says the half-life of many pesticides is dramatically reduced when the chemical is applied on dense, well-maintained turf.

Quebec bans non-farm pesticides

Quebec will ban the use of most non-farm pesticides by 2005. Quebec Environment Minister Andre Boisclair said the province will immediately move to ban the use of 30 highly noxious pesticides on public lands, including parks and schools. The ban will be extended to private and commercial lands by 2005, but pesticide use on agricultural land will not be affected.

NGCOA, NGF announce results of rounds study

The National Golf Course Owners Association and the National Golf Foundation recently released the results of their joint rounds played study. According to the results, 518 million rounds of golf were played in the United States at regulation facilities in 2001.

All 15,720 U.S. facilities were invited to participate in the survey and data was received from 2,426, a response rate of 15 percent with a +/- 2% margin of error.

"The new rounds report is good news for
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Weeks: 'We're a Specialty Company'

BAYER ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE BEGINS OPERATIONS

Josh Weeks has heard from superintendents, and he says their feedback regarding Bayer AG's acquisition of Aventis CropScience has been positive.

Bayer AG's long-awaited purchase of Aventis was finalized in early June. The deal led to the creation of Bayer CropScience, which is divided into three business groups — Bayer Environmental Science, Bayer Crop Protection and Bayer Bio Science. Weeks, who served as vice president of Aventis Environmental Science's Chipco Professional Products group, is the new head of the professional products unit for Bayer Environmental Science in North America, based in Montvale, N.J.

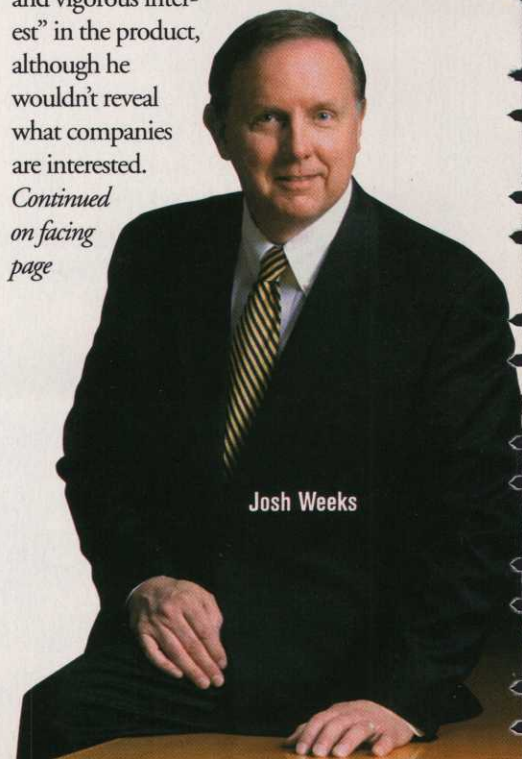
"I received phone calls from superintendents who just felt the need to say something," Weeks said. "In general, they asked what [the merger] means to them. What I said, and what we believe at Bayer, is that we're still structured in a focused way to serve the specialty markets. We're not an agricultural company providing products to the specialty markets. We're a specialty company serving [superintendents and others]."

Bayer Environmental Science offers a line of herbicides, insecticides, nematocides and plant growth regulators.

There's been much speculation to

what Bayer's acquisition of Aventis will mean to superintendents, especially regarding fipronil. As part of the deal, the Federal Trade Commission required that Bayer divest two active ingredients — fipronil and acetamiprid — over the next several months. But Bayer Environmental Science will have the chance to license back fipronil rights for turf segments. "This will allow for the potential for a co-exclusive arrangement between Bayer and the new company that purchases the product," Weeks says, adding there is "significant and vigorous interest" in the product, although he wouldn't reveal what companies are interested.

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page*



Josh Weeks

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our industry for several reasons," said Mike Hughes, NCGOA's executive director. "It establishes a baseline measure of total rounds based on a large and representative number of facilities, and is based on actual numbers reported by operators and not by consumer estimates and recollections. From this baseline, we will be able to reliably measure the overall effectiveness of our initiatives to grow the game."

EPA completes review

The EPA released its Revised Organophosphate Pesticide (OP) Cumulative Risk Assessment and decided that only two out of the 30 pesticides evaluated posed any risk to human health.

EPA evaluated over 1,000 OP pesticide tolerances. The assessment was the first time the EPA has used a new method to assess the health risk of a class of pesticides.

FarmLinks taking shape

Construction is underway at FarmLinks, the 18-hole championship research and demonstration golf course being built by Pursell Technologies near Sylacauga, Ala. It's scheduled to open next spring.

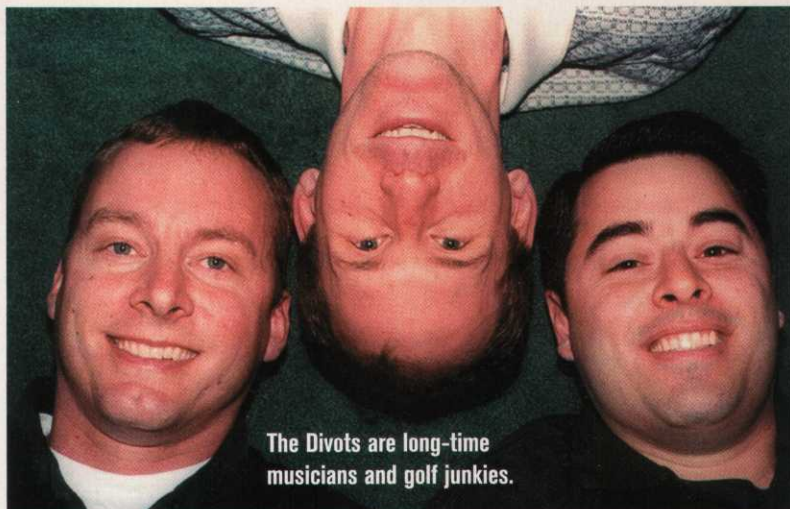
"The purpose for the course is education," explained David Pursell, CEO of Pursell Technologies. "We will be educating ourselves through research, and superintendents will learn from our demonstrations, product tests and new management techniques we develop."

Walden honored

E-Z-GO Textron recently honored Chairman Emeritus L.T. Walden's 40 years of service with a special award presentation on at the company's world headquarters in Augusta, Ga. Walden, who started as a car-body welder in 1962, was appointed president of the company in 1991. He served as president until 1999.

Dakota accredited as USGA lab

Grand Forks, N.D.-based Dakota Analytical was awarded accreditation to be a USGA certified laboratory from the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation.



The Divots are long-time musicians and golf junkies.

Divot Mix

MASSACHUSETTS ROCK BAND FOCUSES ON GOLF-RELATED TUNES

By James E. Guyette

It has a good beat and is easy to dance to. On its way to the top of the charts — or at least it may be displayed on a few more pro shop counters — is the debut release from The Divots on Stiff Shaft records.

Entitled *Golfsongs*, the nine-track compact disc contains ditties that, not surprisingly, are about the game of golf. Sold on the Internet at www.thedivots.com for \$12, the disc represents the lifelong dreams of the three Divot Brothers, sort of.

"I was sleep deprived," explains David Divot, a.k.a. David Bethune of Danvers, Mass. The birth of a son granted him enough wakeful nights to conjure up a series of humorous song titles that struck a responsive chord with friends Dan Divot and John Divot, a.k.a. Dan Lundergan and John Collins. Long-time musicians, the three are also known as "golf junkies" in their neck of the woods.

With Bethune's lyrics, the trio collaborated on the music to flesh out an entire golf-oriented CD project. Bearing a professional sound throughout (all three are veterans of other band projects), the players recorded the disc at — where else — Bad Lie Studios in San Mateo, Calif., and Shag Bag Studios of Danvers. "We wanted to do something that would have us

stand out from the norm," says Bethune. The Divots have succeeded.

Golfsongs is pleasant to the ear while covering a number of musical genres, ranging from the punk-like thrash aggression of *Crashing Golf Carts*, to the tender love ballad *Driver*, to the mournful country lament of *Tee Ball Three* ("... Nothing is set in stone when you're on the tee alone/Nothing is a lock when your ball hits a rock...").

The Divots, who hold respectable positions as educators and software engineers, have not given up their day jobs to pursue a world tour with the Rolling Stones. In fact, they haven't had any gigs at all. "No one has asked us to play out yet," Bethune reports.

Not to worry: The band recently launched a national (and Canadian) push for the CD. The Divots plan to play at several golf industry trade shows and expand the number of golf course pro shops stocking the disc. Radio airplay is starting to happen, and several golfing television productions have used the songs as background music or expressed interest in other approaches to the material.

The trio promises to create even more of a buzz with *Golfsongs*, as they plan on mailing additional press packets to media giants or anyone else remotely interested in a collection of funny golf songs. ■