

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

FTC approves Bayer acquisition

In May, the Federal Trade Commission approved Bayer AG's acquisition of Aventis CropScience subject to certain conditions. Clearance had already been given by the European Commission in April.

The FTC's approval is conditional upon the divestment or outlicensing of a number of products marketed in the United States, including the insecticide fipronil. The global business in fipronil for agricultural uses must be divested. Bayer may market the product for nonagricultural uses through a co-exclusive license, except in Europe. The FTC also requires that Bayer divest the insecticide acetamiprid in Europe and North America.

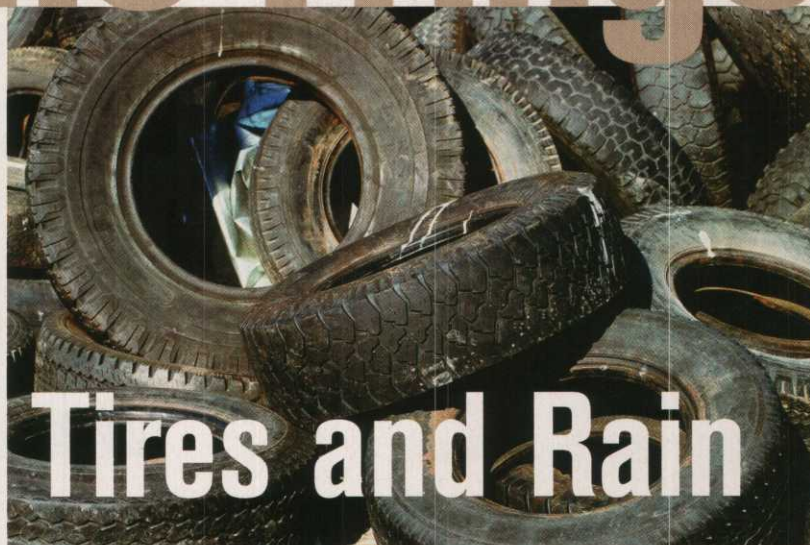
"We're glad that closing — the actual transfer of the business — can now take place soon," said Jochen Wulff, designated Management Board Chairman of Bayer CropScience. "The important thing now is to quickly and efficiently integrate the ACS operations with Bayer's crop protection business and to foster employee and customer awareness of our new corporate identity as Bayer CropScience."

MicroBio assumes Becker Underwood name

Becker Underwood says the Canada and United Kingdom-based MicroBio Group, which it acquired in 2000, has assumed the Becker Underwood name and its global brand-positioning program. "We've been working to function as a singular global company since the acquisition took place," said Becker Underwood President Peter Innes.

Yamaha opens new plant

Yamaha Golf-Car Co. opened its new state-of-the-art golf car and utility vehicle manu-
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Tires and Rain

EYEWIRE

INVENTOR HOPED 'IRRIGATION SYSTEM' WOULD TAKE THE INDUSTRY BY STORM, BUT SO FAR HIS IDEA IS A WASHOUT

By Bruce Allar

You know the old saying, "Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door." Well, Bob Hendershot of

Sarasota, Fla., built what he thought was a better "rain trap," and the golf world beat a path to the exits, he says.

"We've kind of given up on it," Hendershot says of his Rain Trap System, patented seven years ago. "It's an excellent idea, but the resistance is too strong. Nobody wants to be the first [to try it]."

"The first," in this case, means a superintendent who's willing to place old tires under his golf course's fairways and roughs. Henderson's Rain Trap System features used tires cut in half-bagel style that are laid flat-side down in rows 15 inches under the grass surface where they capture and retain rainwater — or excess irrigation — that's normally lost to plants as it percolates deeper into the soil. The water that pools in those bi-

sected Goodyears, according to Hendershot, represents nearly five days of additional water supply within capillary distance of grass roots.

The water trapped in the tires is above the water table and can't run underground. The water is close to the surface so it's available to the soil and the grass roots that pull moisture from the tires through capillary action. The water level in the tires goes down as it's drawn up to the roots between rains.

Hendershot claims the Rain Trap System can save an average-size golf course of 150 acres about 60 million gallons of pumped water a year.

A proponent of the Rain Trap, Stuart A. Hoenig, a professor in the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at the University of Arizona, says the cost of tire-trapping a golf course would be about \$4,500 an acre.

"I tried the Rain Trap System on campus in a grassy area and it cut water use by 50 percent to 60 per-

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cent,” he says, noting that no golf courses in the area have tried the system despite the fact that it’s a region short on water.

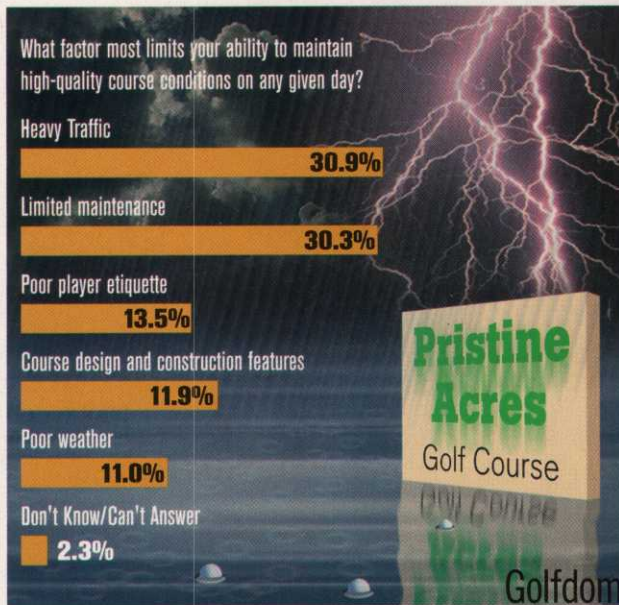
Hendershot says he’s placed test sites in Texas, California, South Carolina and Canada with positive results. He has interested a few designers in the concept, only to hear the brakes squeal on the project as soon as public officials or owners hear that used tires might be under the turf. “We just can’t get people to put tires in a golf course,” he says.

According to Hoenig, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Interior and several states have approved old tires for uses in and out of water. Problems with leached contamination from tires, he says, appear to be limited to those that have been pulled from landfills

where they pick up pollutants. Hoenig would like to see the Arizona state legislature pressure the golf industry to reduce water consumption, forcing ideas like Rain Trap to get more serious consideration.

More than 1 million tires would be re-used on an average golf course, according to Hendershot. That would be another blessing because about 250 million tires are scrapped each year in the United States, with 60 percent of them winding up in stockpiles or landfills.

Another expected benefit from Rain Trap: less fertilizer and pesticide use. Each half-tire holds a half-gallon of water, and some chemicals would be with the water, allowing less to be lost to ground water. Theoretically, applications could be cut back, saving money and reducing the environmental



SOURCE: GCSAA
ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY

impact. It all sounds good on paper, but try getting it in the ground. Try selling it to golf course developers who have a hard time visualizing used tires planted under their pristine fairways — and explaining the procedure to meticulous golfers. The 72-year-old Hen-

dershot says he’s grown weary of spinning his wheels with Rain Trap.

“I’ve almost gone broke trying to do this,” he says. “I can’t afford the expense anymore.”

Allar is a free-lance writer from Floyds Knobs, Ind.

Quotable

“It seems like every new golf book I read, somebody’s walking around a course in the fog and they bump into Walter Hagen.”

— Dan Jenkins, noted golf writer, regarding the recent glut of golf book releases (*Golfworld*).

“An athleticism at odds with golf’s ‘fat guys in carts’ image made Snead seem younger than his years.”

— Cleveland Plain Dealer sports columnist Bill Livingston in a tribute to Sam Snead, who died at 89 in May.

“I go by smell. When I’m golfing around the greens, I can smell when there’s a potential fungus problem. It smells like raw potatoes. Nobody else can smell it, but I can for some crazy reason.”

— John Monson, superintendent of the Long Prairie (Minn.) CC, on his fungicide detection method, called “Follow Your Nose.”

“Grasses are better, the machinery they’re cutting with is better and superintendents are better. Conditions everywhere we play are phenomenal.”

— Golfer Greg Norman giving credit where he feels credit his due (*Jacksonville Times-Union*).