

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Simplot disputes L-93 ruling

J.R. Simplot is disputing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's decision to abandon the Plant Variety Protection application of Loft L-93 bentgrass, marketed by the company's Jacklin Seed division.

The ruling, handed down by USDA's Plant Variety Protection office, means the cultivar has no proprietary owner and that generic versions of L-93 could be sold.

J.R. Simplot purchased the seed at a bankruptcy auction after the demise of AgroBioTech in 2000, but Simplot didn't obtain a new PVP, which is required when a variety changes hands.

"Simplot is aggressively pursuing all available avenues to restore the PVP application for L-93," the company announced in a media advisory. "Ultimately, Simplot believes the PVP office will reconsider its decision and reinstate the application."

NGP, AGC announce merger conditions

National Golf Properties and American Golf Corp., both based in Santa Monica, Calif., have announced conditions of their merger, which they reported in February. Under the merger, both companies would become subsidiaries of a new holding company that would be owned by current National Golf shareholders.

The new company would also not be a real-estate investment trust as National Golf was previously. The company plans a new name upon completion of the merger, which is expected late this summer.

Ruling doesn't affect golf industry

While the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) announced it wants to ban

Briefs continue on page 14

Embracing the 'Enemy'

SPEAKERS URGE COLLEAGUES TO USE GROUPS' EXPERTISE

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.,
Managing Editor

The words sent palpable shock waves through the conference room.

Two superintendents, appearing at a seminar on environmental success stories during February's GCSAA show, uttered words their colleagues never expected to hear about their ongoing battle with environmentalists: Embrace the "enemy."

Actually, Peter Lund and Ray Davies don't view environmentalists as the enemy at all — far from it. Lund, certified superintendent of Rhode Island CC in Barrington, R.I., said superintendents should embrace environmentalists because they have access to sufficient resources to

solve potential problems. Davies, a former superintendent who's now director of golf course maintenance and construction for CourseCo, a Petaluma, Calif.-based management company, says the environmentalists have access to government leaders in ways a superintendent will never achieve.

"These guys are the experts who know how to lobby governments, and they have the contacts," Davies said. "When you involve them in the process, you'd be amazed at how much they will help you accomplish."



"When you involve them in the process, you'd be amazed at how much they will help you accomplish."

RAY DAVIES,
COURSECO

Lund said environmentalists understand the complex web of government agencies that may have jurisdiction over projects and can help superintendents navigate those agencies.

"Engage the environmentalists and get them to contact the appropriate agencies on your behalf," Lund said. "They know which levers to flip, and they don't go away. They'll stay in the politicians' faces as long as necessary to accomplish their goals."



PHOTO COURTESY OF COLLIER'S RESERVE

Good News, Bad News for Bayer's Nematicur

In February, Rob Kloska, superintendent of Jupiter Island Club in Hobe Sound, Fla., expressed concern that Bayer's Nematicur would soon be taken off the market by the EPA.

"I have nematode problems really bad," Kloska said. "[Superintendents] wouldn't be able to make it down here without Nematicur."

For Kloska and other superintendents who use Nematicur to battle nematodes, there's good news and bad news. The good news — they can still purchase and use Nematicur for at least the next three years. The bad news — Bayer will voluntarily phase out Nematicur by May 31, 2005.

Nematicur, whose common name is fenamiphos and comes from the organophosphate nematicide chemical family, has been around for more than 20 years. A Bayer spokesperson said the company is already working on a replacement.

A Ball Mark Was Never So Easy to Repair

You can tell your golfers that Danny Edwards has made it easy for them to fix ball marks.

Edwards, a Senior PGA Tour player and CEO of GreenFix Golf in Scottsdale, Ariz., recently introduced the GreenFix Ball Mark Repair Tool, which takes the bending over and straining your back out of fixing a ball mark.

That's because a ball-mark repair tool is molded to the cap of a putter grip. Hence, the tool is always with a player who ventures onto a green with his putter. All the player has to do is engage the tool, hold the club face in his hand and repair the ball mark.

"No more excuses," says Shawn Emerson, director of agronomy at Desert Mountain in Scottsdale, Ariz. "GreenFix gives all golfers the ability to properly repair ball marks. I believe that GreenFix will do for ball marks what alternative spikes have done for spike marks — gone."

We Americans love to have it easy. The GreenFix Ball Mark Repair Tool is up there with the remote control, paying at the pump and pizza delivery. Thanks Danny.



The ball-mark repair tool is molded to the cap of a putter grip.

Quotable

"I wish every course we played was in this condition. I can't say enough about David Johnson. He goes to the nth degree to make sure every blade of grass is immaculate."

— Barb Trammel, LPGA Tour's vice president of tournament operations, commenting on superintendent David Johnson and his course, Mission Hill CC in Rancho Mirage, Calif., which hosted the Kraft Nabisco Championship in March. (Rancho Mirage Press-Enterprise)

"The obvious victims of your proposals are not golf club manufacturers nor the elite golfers who may be compromising the integrity of a few 100-year-old courses. The true victims are beginning golfers, women golfers and seniors. Your actions, therefore, appear to be thoughtless."

— Frank Thomas, former USGA technical director, ripping his former employer for proposing to place restrictions on clubhead size. (GolfWorld)

"I'm building a course [Trump National GC] right now in Briarcliff Manor (N.Y.), and I'm totally involved. We're building a waterfall that's going to be 90 feet high, and five thousand gallons of water a minute are going to come down. It's a par three with the green sitting at the foot of the waterfall."

— Business tycoon and golf expert(?) Donald Trump on his new plastic course. His statement probably has the other Donald (Ross, the Donald that matters most in golf) spinning in his grave. (Travel + Leisure magazine)

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 10

15 products containing the broadleaf herbicide clopyralid for use on lawns in California, the state's golf course industry is not expecting an impact from the ruling.

Clopyralid accumulates in lawn clippings often used in compost. Accumulation of clopyralid in compost can damage some vegetables, according to the DPR.

But Steve McVey, president of the Southern California GCSA and superintendent of Virginia CC in Long Beach, said it's not a big issue for superintendents in California because most of them don't pick up clippings in roughs and fairways where clopyralid would be used. "This is more of a home owners' issue," McVey said.

Lesco's Foley resigns; DiMino becomes CEO

Lesco's board of directors accepted William A. Foley's resignation as chairman and CEO. The board promoted Michael P. DiMino, previously president and chief operating officer, to president and CEO. J. Martin Erbaugh was elected chairman. DiMino joined the company last December.

Bayer close to acquisition

At press time, Bayer AG submitted its proposal to acquire Aventis CropScience for \$6.4 billion and expected a decision by April 22. The head of Bayer's Crop Protection unit, Jochen Wulff, told Reuters he expects U.S. regulators to grant approval around the same time.

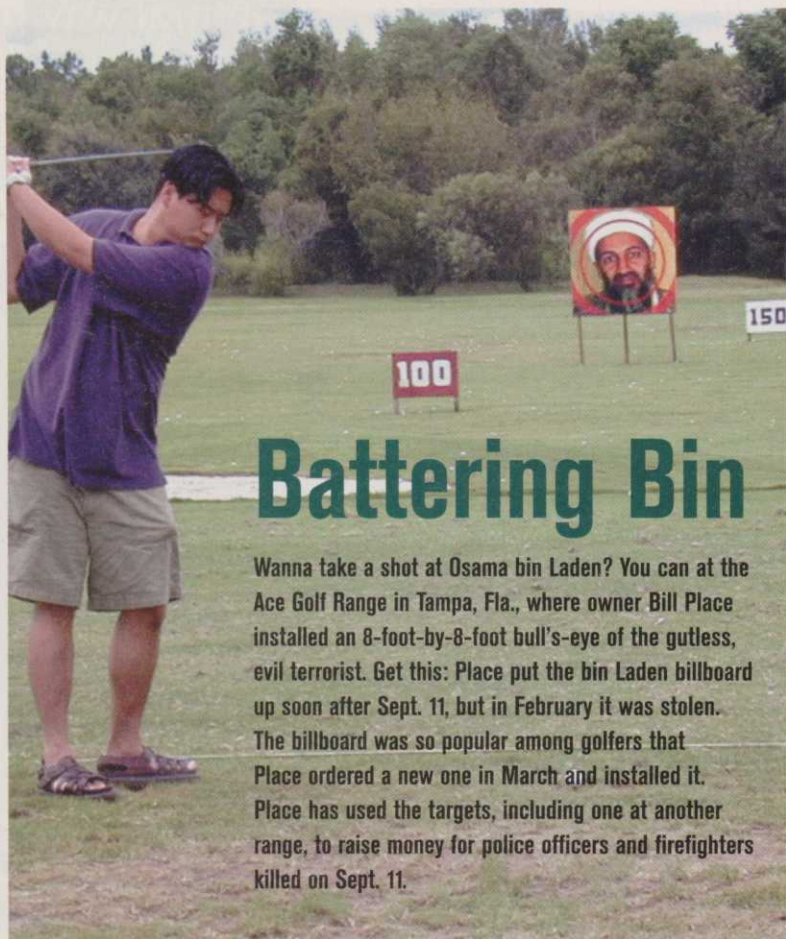
The acquisition will move Bayer from No. 7 to No. 2 in the \$30 billion-a-year agrochemicals market behind Swiss-based Syngenta AG.

Deere closes Illinois plant

Moline, Ill.-based Deere & Co. will close its Phoenix International facility in Springfield, Ill., later this year.

The company will consolidate some of its operations with its plant in Fargo, N.D. Deere cited economic conditions and a need to decrease the overall cost of doing business.

Briefs continue on page 19



Battering Bin

Wanna take a shot at Osama bin Laden? You can at the Ace Golf Range in Tampa, Fla., where owner Bill Place installed an 8-foot-by-8-foot bull's-eye of the gutless, evil terrorist. Get this: Place put the bin Laden billboard up soon after Sept. 11, but in February it was stolen. The billboard was so popular among golfers that Place ordered a new one in March and installed it. Place has used the targets, including one at another range, to raise money for police officers and firefighters killed on Sept. 11.

PHOTO BY BILL PLACE

We Asked Superintendents:

What words of advice would you give a young person considering a career as a superintendent?

"Be committed to education and be patient during your climb from staff member to superintendent. Work on your communication skills to all age groups, especially older adults who we normally have as customers, members and supervisors."
— Kyle D. Sweet, Superintendent
The Sanctuary GC,
Sanibel Island, Fla.

"Work hard and good things will happen. But when you have reached what you think is the pinnacle of your career [at a club], start looking for another opportunity. You peak at your club when things are going great. Then you

can only go one way and that is down. Sounds cynical, but I've seen it happen."
— Bob DiRico,
Certified Superintendent
Brae Burn CC,
West Newton, Mass.

"The question is: What do you want out of life? For me, I figure I'll work until I'm at least 65. In this business, I can wake up and look forward to going to work every day. But it's not for everyone."
— W. Craig Weyandt,
Superintendent
The Moorings Club,
Vero Beach, Fla.

Mechanics Inclined

CAROLINA TECHNICIANS FORM ASSOCIATION

By Trent Bouts

The founding members of a new professional association believe their formation will offer a significant boost to golf course maintenance in the Carolinas.

More than 50 service technicians from across the two states formed the Turf Equipment Technicians Association of the Carolinas late last year. Brandon Gale, from Cheviot Hills GC, in Raleigh, N.C., was named the first president.

"We're really excited about what such an organization could achieve, not only for its members but for golf course maintenance in general," said Gale, who credited Rex Floyd, past president of the Carolinas GCSA and superintendent of Wilson CC in Franklinton, N.C., for spearheading

the association's start. "We have a lot of work to do before we make the next step, but the foundation is there and so is the enthusiasm."

Gale says the association's goals fall into three main categories: education, communication and professionalism. Gale said the association wants to find ways to provide more frequent and accessible education opportunities for members. A primary asset for communication would be a member directory that not only lists the names and contact details of who is in the association but also lists their equipment inventory. Such a list would allow individual technicians to speak directly with colleagues experienced with similar equipment to share knowledge and solutions.

Gale added that turf equipment technicians were eager to take a leaf

from the book of superintendents in terms of elevating their profession.

"Years ago, superintendents were seen as farmers out mowing grass," he said. "Any credit for a providing a good golf course went to the club professional. Superintendents have really raised their image over the years, and that's something we would like to see for ourselves because ours is a technical profession. We're not just shade-tree mechanics anymore."

A few other states have technicians' associations in placed. There's been talk in technicians' circles of a national association forming, but Gale believes more state associations are needed before that can happen.

Bouts is communications director for the Carolina Golf Course Superintendents Association



Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews www.reeusda.gov

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

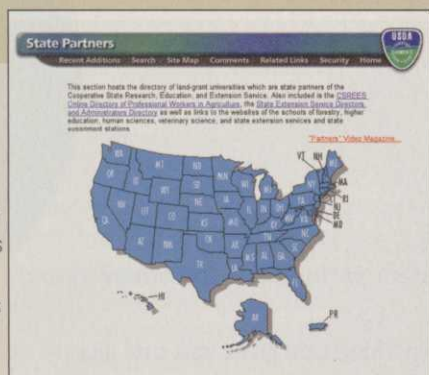
If you need to find a turfgrass extension specialist quickly, this site would be the place to start. It's the official site of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, and it provides information clearly and concisely.

You can click on the latest news from the USDA (which may alert you to which pesticides are on the EPA's hit list), or you can find your congressional representative to lobby against legislation that will harm your profession.

The best part of the site, however, is the interactive map, where you can click on your state to reveal the extension programs there. This portal will allow you to find out whether your state has extension specialists who

focus on turfgrass. After you've clicked on your state, you'll find links to the Web sites of your local extension programs (and most of them have easy-to-use Web sites as well). From there, you're just a few mouse clicks away from finding the person with whom you can discuss your particular problem.

If you're having trouble getting your club to fund a course improvement, there may be a USDA grant program to help you defray the cost if you can link it to a research project it's doing. In an era of tight budgets, extra money is always helpful. The USDA frequently funds a variety of research studies, and creative superintendents can create proposals that allow their projects to fall into one of them.



Superintendents should bookmark www.reeusda.gov because its ongoing value will keep you coming back time after time.

Golfdom's managing editor Frank H. Andorka Jr., who often admired The Ohio State University extension campus from afar as a student at The College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio, compiles Scanning the Web. You can reach him at fandorka@advanstar.com with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 14

ServiScape reacquired from TruGreen-LandCare

ServiScape LLC announces its reacquisition from the TruGreen-LandCare Division of The ServiceMaster Co. "We're very pleased the TruGreen-LandCare management chose to sell the operation back to us, and we're very enthused about our future," said Peter Sinnott, founder and president of Serviscape.

Syngenta launches GreenCast

Syngenta Professional Products has launched GreenCast, an online resource to help superintendents better manage their operations. The Web site features up-to-the-minute information on weather, insect and disease pressure, and other matters. For more information, contact greencastonline.com.

Superintendents can get in the pit

Superintendents who demo a Club Car Carryall turf utility vehicle before May 24 could become an honorary NASCAR Winston Cup pit crew member. Four superintendents will be chosen in random drawings to watch a race from pit row as honorary crew members with the Hendrick Motorsports NASCAR Winston Cup team. Superintendents can request a demo by calling 800-ClubCar or by visiting www.clubcar.com.

Charwood named course of year

The South Carolina Golf Course Owners Association named Charwood CC as South Carolina's Golf Course of the Year in 2002. Charwood is a 27-hole semi-private club.

Flowtronex restructures division

Flowtronex says it has restructured its golf division and created several new divisions to meet the growing demand for its modular pumping systems and services.

Dakota completes plant expansion

East Grand Forks, Minn.-based Dakota Peat & Equipment completed expansion of its production facility in East Grand Forks, Minn. The new 80,000-square-foot building will quadruple the company's production capability.



...and the envelope, please

You don't need a beautiful mind to figure out which of this year's Majors have earned "Lord of the Links" status among superintendents.

SOURCE: GCSAA
ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY

INEXPERIENCED • COMMON • SECOND-RATE • ORDINARY • RUN OF THE MILL

Looking for uniforms and/or professional looking apparel for your staff?

Need to improve the image of your crew?

Would a "face lift" for your group's apparel do the trick?

NEW this Issue!! Check Out the Classifieds!

A new section of advertisers that have just what you're looking for! Don't miss out on these quality companies that offer the products and services you need to get it all together. They'll help you find what you're looking for to make your staff, crew and ALL of your employees look as professional and polished as they need to be. Bring your ideas to these image and apparel professionals and get the job done.

Watch your team transform before your eyes...



EFFICIENT • PROFESSIONAL • POLISHED • TOP-NOTCH • DISTINCTIVE • FIRST-CLASS

The Pressure's On

IN THIS DAY AND AGE OF BEING A SUPERINTENDENT AND A SUPPLIER, YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR OPTIONS

Editor's note: Golfdom asked BASF's Lemly to provide her take on the current state of the industry. In the future, we'll provide other supplier-written articles on various topics

Feel like you're being pulled from all directions? No wonder. You're right in the middle of three potent trends in golf turf management: golfers' expectations, environmental issues and supplier consolidation. While these have been building for years, they're now converging to bring new challenges to all of us in this industry. Let's examine the trends that are shaping your business and ours.

Expectations

Jim Snow, national director of the USGA Green Section, lays it out clearly: Golfers' expectations for course conditions are higher than ever before. With golf tournaments on prime-time television — including a cable channel that's devoted to golf — your golfers want their home courses to look as good as they see on television. This is the so-called "Augusta Syndrome."

You're the one caught in the middle. You have to deliver the results your course officials and golfers expect. But in today's uncertain economy, you may have fewer dollars available to do it.

Environment

The EPA has long favored newer technologies that show improved environmental qualities, including those with less impact on nontarget species, shorter residuals, lower use rates and technologies that are less prone to off-

View Point



BY EVELYN LEMLY

site movement. As technology progresses, there's a potential that some standby "workhorse" products could leave the market.

At the same time, golfers look beyond the fairways and greens. Their expectations encompass the entire "experience" of playing golf. They value the beauty and environmental benefits of wildlife areas in the rough — the growing popularity of Audubon sanctuary areas is a testament to this. So you need to continue to solve tough turf problems while enhancing the native species and habitat areas of the landscape.

Consolidation

You're not alone in feeling the pressure. It's so intense that some long-time pesticide suppliers have thrown in the towel. They've sold their agriculture-related divisions to concentrate on other technologies, such as pharmaceuticals.

Does this foreshadow further reductions in your product choices? No. In fact the odds are this will strengthen and expand the product lines available to you. For BASF and the companies that remain in this business, our survival depends on providing more focused and complete attention to your needs. To put it

bluntly, there's no room in a consolidated industry for a part-time player.

This marketplace reality is why BASF boosted its commitment to the agriculture industry, in both crop and non-crop sectors. We see great promise in the agricultural business. Selling our pharmaceutical holdings provided more capital to commit to the specialty agricultural markets. As a result, we're making acquisitions and funding research — including development of an entirely new class of fungicides for turf — that capitalize on our global resources in plant technology.

The bottom line

While new course development appears to have peaked, the decade of the 1990s saw a sharp increase in course construction to more than 400 per year, up from about 150 per year in the mid-1980s, according to Jim O'Hara, vice president of research of the National Golf Foundation.

From turf suppliers' standpoint, that's attractive because it means many more superintendents and course acres. But because of the three trends I've described, the pressure is on for us to provide you with innovative, environmentally friendly and effective products.

From the superintendent's standpoint, while these trends bring challenges, they also give you the opportunity to clarify which companies are committed to earning your business — the ones taking visible, bold steps to provide the people, services and technology you need to solve your problems.

Lemly is director of the BASF Specialty Products Department.