

## Stick to the Brands



BY JIM DAVIS

This time of year, superintendents across the country are sorting through their 2003 chemical management plans. In most cases, a combination of factors influence the selection process, including:

- What are the goals for my operation in 2003?
- What pest pressures will I contend with this year?
- Have I been satisfied with my current options?

Once the agronomic requirements are established, additional questions come into play:

- What specific products should I choose?
- What suppliers should I work with?
- How much will it cost?

Today, superintendents have more options in terms of solutions than ever before. These options run the gamut from name-brand products to off-patent generics, with many viable alternatives along the continuum. What factors play into the analysis of these options? While price is one consideration, we believe that a number of other variables factor into the value proposition and ultimately the purchase decision. For instance:

- What can I learn from my peers about the products they use?
- What are the results of the research trials on the products I'm considering?
- Who is the manufacturer of the product?
- What support do I receive from that manufacturer? Is there anything that stands out?
- Has the manufacturer returned value to me in the last year by supporting meetings or educational seminars?

When considering manufacturer support, what can we tell you about Bayer Chipco that you don't already know? You probably know by now that we recently completed merging and integrating the Bayer Professional Care and Aventis Chipco Professional Products turf and ornamental organizations.

This allows us to have more than 40 field employees in the areas of sales, research and development, and technical service. We supply the market with more than 20 chemical solutions and numerous value-added programs, like Chipco Academy, Accolades and Greenback, just to name a few.

In addition, we have a full regulatory staff in place to manage through the many EPA requirements of product stewardship. The regulatory staff are often unsung heroes, defending products long after patents expire.

Recent examples of this include reregistration work

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## A Valuable Option



BY OWEN TOWNE

When superintendents sit down to crunch their annual budget numbers, they face and evaluate an array of alternatives. These days, one key consideration is choosing between a brand-name product and the equivalent material in the form of post-patent chemistry.

In most cases, post-patent materials offer the better value and are useful alternatives to higher-priced brands. Let's take a look at some of the reasons why an increasingly growing number of superintendents are making post-patent pesticides their products of choice.

For turf managers, the two leading considerations for choosing a specific product are performance and price, in that order. The material must work, and efficacy will always be the chief requirement for superintendents. But in most every case, generic products perform at least as well as the originals. That's because the quality of the active ingredients must be at least equal, but in many cases are superior, to that of existing materials. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) verifies that the technical material or active ingredient of the generic is at least equivalent to that of the original before the product can be marketed.

In many cases, post-patent products are manufactured in more up-to-date facilities than the initial products. These newer formulations often take advantage of the most recent technological improvements in manufacturing and can make better, and more efficient use of the raw materials used in the process.

Since generic materials are generally less expensive than brand-name products, they particularly make sense in today's economy. As I talk with turf managers, distributors and others in the supply chain, I keep hearing that the economics of a product are increasingly important to them. Once they appreciate they can get the same bang for fewer bucks, the decision is fairly simple. That's why we've seen a steady growth in the number of superintendents using post-patent products in recent years. It's also why we expect this number to grow annually.

One reason the generic market is growing so quickly is that so many of the major products are post-patent. Most of these are proven performers that make first-rate rotational and tank-mixture partners for the newer chemistries. With even more key active ingredients coming off patent in the next few years, a larger number of generic offerings will be added to the industry's arsenal of pesticides. Superintendents will see value in these products as long as they perform.

Remember that post-patent products aren't only of-

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on Dylox, ensuring that superintendents continue to have access to excellent rescue treatment for grubs.

This means we invest — heavily — to ensure that superintendents continue to have the tools they need to succeed in their jobs. We want to ensure that they have solutions, not only for ex-

isting problems, but for future problems as well.

Our development team works hand in hand with researchers at local universities around the country to better understand the issues faced by superintendents and to solve these problems. They do this by bringing new technology to market as well as by adding

additional uses to existing labels.

Our corporate goal is to bring at least two new active ingredients to the market each year. This is what basic manufacturers must do if we want to be relevant to you today and in the future. If we fail to bring new technology, we will soon find ourselves trying to solve new problems with old solutions that may not be successful.

What does all this mean to superintendents? We could spend hours elaborating, but we know and you know that other manufacturers are nearly a mirror image of us.

What makes us different? Consider that superintendents are under immense pressure and have many challenges and many alternatives to help them meet these challenges. At Bayer Chipco, we understand these issues and provide solutions to the problems that superintendents face every day.

One real-life example is our improved 26GT formulation, providing both preventative and curative control at one rate — allowing superintendents more flexibility and superior performance than the old 26019 formulation.

We also worked with West Coast scientists to identify a new *Poa Annua* seed head suppression control with Proxy. We were able to add a new Chipco Signature label for preventative anthracnose control, providing help in basalrot management.

However, providing high-quality products that work is the price of entry for any manufacturer in this market. It is our responsibility to differentiate ourselves. To do so, we must go beyond the price of entry. We must add value beyond product solutions and, ultimately, we must continually *earn* superintendents' business.

This is the commitment from the entire Bayer Chipco team, from the highest level of management to our field sales force. We are challenged to be remarkable, to make you remarkable. ■

*Davis is Southern Region Manager for Bayer-Chipco Professional Products.*

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