

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Associations plan to launch initiative

Seven industry associations are planning to launch the Turfgrass Research Initiative to help increase funding for turfgrass research from the United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS).

Tom Kimmell, executive director of The Irrigation Association (IA), said the associations plan to ask them to fund \$32.4 million for next year.

"Right now, the government only provides .0005 percent of their total research monies on turfgrass," Kimmell said. "We could take up a collection in this room and reach the amount they currently give us. Given our contribution to the overall economy, that's ridiculous."

Kimmell says there are 50 million acres of turfgrass in the country that is valued at \$40 billion, which is more than the value of other agricultural commodities corn, hay and wheat combined. Those three other commodities receive far more USDA-ARS funding, he adds.

The USDA-ARS will use a combination of turfgrass universities and its own network of research stations.

The associations working on the initiative include the IA, the GCSAA, the National Turfgrass Federation, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, the Sports Turf Managers Association, Turfgrass Producers International and the USGA.

Lebanon purchases technology

Lebanon Turf said it has acquired a patented slow-release fertilizer technology. The new products — marketed under the brand names MESA and EXPO — are designed to extend the benefits of ammonium and

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Generics or Bust

BRIGGS: IF YOU DON'T MARKET
POST-PATENT CHEMISTRIES,
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'LL
STAY IN BUSINESS

By Larry Aylward, Editor

Steve Briggs, the new director of BASF's Specialty Products Department, predicts that 90 percent of chemistries in the pesticide arena will be comprised of post-patent products or branded products past their patent expiration dates by 2006. That said, Briggs expects basic manufacturers to grasp generic products as part of their product lines. Briggs says they could be out of business if they don't.

Briggs, who oversees BASF's Professional Turf & Ornamental, Vegetation Management/Forestry, and Professional Pest Control groups, is overseeing the Specialty Products Department's expansion into the post-patent segment. Briggs, no stranger to that arena, is the former vice president of TopPro Specialties, where he directed generic product responsibilities. TopPro was a unit of the Micro Flo Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of BASF.

In June, the BASF Professional

Turf & Ornamental group finalized integration of TopPro into its existing professional turf business. BASF had been examining the strategic role that each TopPro product might add to the BASF Professional Turf portfolio since plans for the integration were first announced late last year.

As a result of the planning, the products included in the integration are Curalan fungicide, Iprodione Pro fungicide, Propiconazole Pro fungicide, Basagran herbicide, Amdro Pro fire ant bait, Permethrin Pro turf insecticide and Bifenthrin Pro insecticide.

"If you don't have a generic strategy in your long-term thinking, you'll be behind the game," Briggs said. "The whole agriculture industry is going to have to quickly adapt to the presence of post-patent chemistries. If you're not thinking about marketing post-patent chemistries in 2005-2006, I don't know

how you'll stay in business."

Briggs said BASF's Specialty Products Department will focus on customer solutions. "What a great opportunity our customers will have in choosing a portfolio of products that can solve their solutions," he said.

Even though it will offer post-patent products, BASF will continue to research and develop new products. The company plans to introduce Emerald fungicide this summer, pending EPA approval.



Steve Briggs

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potassium sulfates in a slowly available form without the need for coatings.

Deere teams with EAGL

John Deere was named the exclusive supplier of golf course maintenance equipment and financing to Evergreen Alliance Golf Limited (EAGL), a golf course management company serving more than 40 courses around the country.

Through the agreement, John Deere Golf & Turf One Source will be supplying golf and turf maintenance equipment to the superintendents of each EAGL course, including all mowing, aeration and specialty turf products. John Deere will also provide exclusive financing to the courses.

New Standards for Controllers and Sensors, But ...

The Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT) is in the process of developing nationwide standards for irrigation controllers and soil sensors that will be finalized by the end of the year. But Dave Zoldoske, director of CIT, said the draft standards won't matter unless irrigation consultants can convince construction firms to use the standards.

"It's great to have standards, but if no one implements them, what good are they?" Zoldoske said. "We need to work together to make these work."

Bayer announces reorganization

Bayer Environmental Science recently announced a reorganization within the Chipco Professional Products marketing group. The changes include several new positions, as well as adjustments within the structure of previous positions. The new slate of managers now includes:

Jim Fetter as director of marketing.

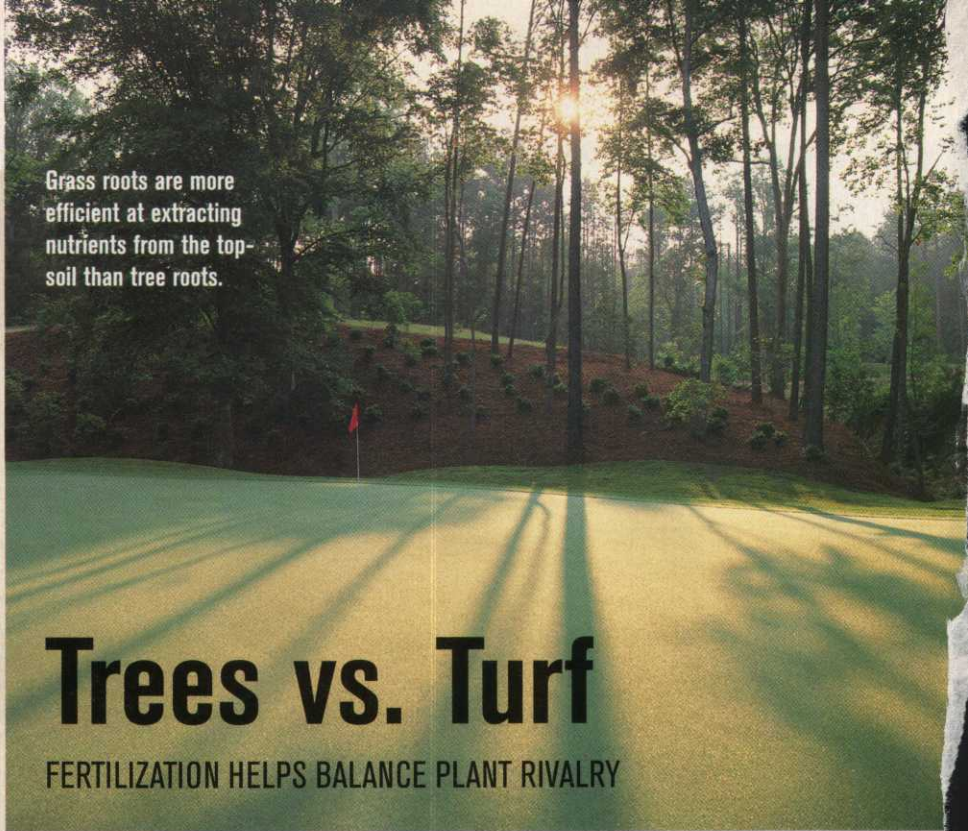
Marc McNulty as business manager of insecticides.

George Raymond as business manager, herbicides/PGRs.

Eric Kalasz as business manager of fungicides.

Mike Ruizzo as business manager of CNIs.

Bryan Gooch as program manager.



Grass roots are more efficient at extracting nutrients from the topsoil than tree roots.

Trees vs. Turf

FERTILIZATION HELPS BALANCE PLANT RIVALRY

By Jami Pffirman

Great battles are waged on every golf course, and the competition is fierce. The contenders bring with them an intense hunger to win. But instead of clubs, they are armed with competitive root systems.

On every golf course, the towering trees are in constant competition with the plentiful turf. The winner draws in a purse containing the most nutrients a course has to offer. But with the right care, the trees vs. turf rivalry can result in a win-win situation for both of the competitors as well as superintendents and golfers.

In forests, trees grow in typically ideal conditions. Forest soils are rich in nutrients from leaf decomposition and other decaying plant matter.

In most landscaped environments, many plants lack the nutrients necessary to thrive. The space surrounding trees is usually occupied by turfgrass, which competes with trees for nutrients. Grass roots are more efficient at extracting nutrients from the topsoil than tree roots. Grass roots are more fibrous and closer to the soil surface, and are better able to absorb the nutrients and fertilizers before they have a chance to reach the deeper tree roots.

The key to healthy trees and turf, in part, is a proper fertilization program. For trees, the goal is to get the fertilizer down deep enough into the soil so that the roots can easily absorb nutrients. To increase nutrient absorption, the fertilizer must be applied below the grass roots. A subsurface tree fertilizer is applied in the top four to 12 inches of soil, which is where trees' most active roots grow.

Applying a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer in the fall enables trees to assimilate the nutrients necessary for ample chlorophyll and subsequent carbohydrate production that eventually increases overall tree health. Although trees can be fertilized with a slow-release form of nitrogen fertilizer at any time of the year, fall applications produce immediate effects the following spring.

Well-nourished trees are more tolerant of insects, disease and unfavorable environmental conditions like drought.

MIKE KLEMM

Pffirman is a communications specialist at the Davey Tree Expert Co.