

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Bayer CropScience plans new active ingredients

Bayer CropScience says it will launch several new active ingredients by 2005. Bayer CropScience, which includes Bayer Environmental Science, says it sees the greatest opportunities for growth in the plant biotechnology segment.

The bioscience business will benefit in the medium term from new agricultural practices and new processes being developed in plant biotechnology.

Toro earnings increase

The Toro Co. reported net earnings of \$27 million on net sales of \$394.5 million for its fiscal 2003 third quarter, which ended Aug. 1. Results for the quarter included an after-tax restructuring charge of \$1 million related to the closing of the company's two-cycle engine plant in Oxford, Miss.

For the nine months ending Aug. 1, Toro reported net earnings of \$76 million on net sales of \$1,186.3 million. This compared to a reported net income of \$30.3 million on net sales of \$1,123.9 million for the same period last year.

Davey honored for environmental stewardship

Davey Resource Group (DRG), a division of The Davey Tree Expert Co., was recently honored with an "Innovation and Commitment to Change" award, presented by The Pulte Land Group.

"One of Pulte's core values is the protection of the environment," said Karen Wise, manager of natural resource consulting and environmental planning for DRG. "We helped them achieve one of their core values — being better environmental stewards."

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PCNB Spells Controversy

BUT QUESTIONS OF FUNGICIDE'S DEMISE HAVE BEEN FUELED BY A NOT-SO-TRUE RUMOR MILL

By Larry Aylward, Editor

PCNB, the popular fungicide for snow mold control, has been swirling in the rumor mill. But the buzz it has created, according to Bob Eichenberg of The Andersons which markets PCNB, has hurt the product's image.

"There have been a lot of half-truths, and there has been a lot of witch hunting going on with PCNB," Eichenberg said.

However, *Golfdom* has learned that the biggest ugly rumor surrounding PCNB — that it has killed turf on several golf courses in Colorado — is not exactly true.

Tony Koski, an extension turf specialist at Colorado State University, said PCNB was applied to turf that died on about six Colorado golf courses in the past 15 years. This part of the rumor is true. But what has not come to light as part of the rumor is that PCNB has not been the sole culprit in the turf's demise, Koski noted.

Rather, in those cases where turf died, PCNB was used in combination with another fungicide; or it was used on turf that was already stressed, such as recently aerified and top-dressed greens; or it was not applied



PCNB was applied to turf that died on several Colorado golf courses. But the fungicide did not kill the turf on its own, an expert says.

during appropriate weather conditions; or it was simply misapplied.

In essence, PCNB was part of the "perfect storm" that caused the turf to die.

"There were a bunch of other factors in conjunction with PCNB," Koski said. "Because 99 times out of 100 times, you can use PCNB and not have any problems."

But what happened at some of the courses where the turf damage occurred is that the superintendents stopped applying PCNB because

they were afraid to use it. Then they told their peers about their experiences with PCNB — and the rumor mill began to spin.

Problem is, the entire story wasn't told as it made its way around industry circles, Koski said. "It came out that it was just PCNB [that caused the damage]," he said.

Close on the tail of the rumor that PCNB had killed turf was another rumor: That the USGA Green Section was advising superintendents to quit using PCNB, and that the Green Section was working with a major basic manufacturer to develop an alternative to PCNB. But Matt Nelson, an agronomist for the USGA Green Section's Northwest Region, says both rumors are false.

"I don't have it in for PCNB, and I'm sure the Green Section doesn't have it in for PCNB," said Nelson, noting that he often recommends to superintendents in his area that they use PCNB to treat snow mold.

Nelson said PCNB has been the industry standard for snow mold control in the North for many years.

"It continues to provide good results," he added. "PCNB is versatile and affordable. I suspect it will remain a cornerstone for disease-control programs in the North for as long as it's available."

PCNB's availability has also sparked talk and spawned even another rumor

ACCORDING TO EPA SPOKESWOMAN SUZANNE ACKERMAN, PCNB IS ON A LIST OF PESTICIDES THAT WILL BE REVIEWED FOR REREGISTRATION IN 2004.

— that it's on the Environmental Protection Agency's hit list. Koski said he keeps hearing the rumor that PCNB is "going to go away." He said he believes the rumor, but is unsure of a timetable for PCNB's termination.

Quotable

"We were thankful we had food, that we had a place to stay. Actually it was a nice, quiet time."

— Lee Janzen, who stayed in a private home not far from Oak Hill CC with golfer Ben Crane, reflecting on the blackout after the first round of the PGA Championship in August. (*The Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*)

"I don't want to say that times are tough in the golf business, but I recently had a panhandler give me money after I told him I operated several courses in the area."

— Del Ratcliff, president of Ratcliff Golf Services, during a seminar on player development held earlier this year.

"It's disappointing if you lose turf. But it's disappointing if you're at Pine Valley, Pine Tree or any other course."

— Rick Christian, superintendent of the famed Pine Valley GC in New Jersey.

According to EPA spokeswoman Suzanne Ackerman, PCNB is on a list of pesticides that will be reviewed for reregistration in 2004. "But that does not mean it will be cancelled," she said, adding that the review will focus on how PCNB is used and applied.

Bill Strange, the regional manager of Northern states for AMVAC Chemical, which also markets PCNB, says people who believe PCNB is on its way out are misinformed. Strange added that it's the responsibility of companies like AMVAC to educate superintendents and others that PCNB is not unsafe and on EPA's hit list.

Strange said AMVAC has invested millions in its PCNB business. He also said the company recently hired someone to oversee the PCNB business on the turf and ornamental side. "We're not letting [PCNB] go anywhere," Strange said.

At Colorado State University, a

researcher is studying biocontrol for snow mold, said Koski, noting that USGA has helped fund the research. Koski said a more environmentally friendly product is needed to treat snow mold on golf courses near Vail and Aspen because of those cities' close proximity to sensitive waterways, such as trout streams.

Nelson said that he and the USGA Green Section are supportive of new products to treat snow mold if those products are proven to be safer and provide better results. "But we don't have PCNB in our crosshairs," he reaffirmed.

Amid the rumors, Eichenberg says The Andersons has been trying to separate the fact from the fiction about PCNB's efficacy, resistance and safety, among other issues. The company issued a "PCNB Update" paper last year.

PCNB is also marketed by Crompton/Uniroyal Chemical, United Horticultural Supply and LESCO.

Business briefs

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Major Challenge winners participate in Deere Pro-Am

James Goins of Pembroke Pines, Fla.; Marcel LaRose of Red Deer, Alberta; Bradley Brandt of Lincoln, Neb.; and John Holmes of Sundre, Alberta, were the big winners in the second annual Major Challenge, sponsored by John Deere and *Golfdom*. The four men each received an all-expenses paid trip to play in the John Deere Classic Monday Pro-Am at the TPC at Deere Run in September.

In a similar vein, Milliken Turf Products announced that superintendents Dave Kohley and John Cunningham won all-expense paid golf trips to Ireland. Milliken Turf Products selected the two winners in a random drawing of about 250 entrants in the 2003 Take the Emerald Isle Challenge. The two took their trips this month.

Ewing acquires Oasis

Phoenix-based Ewing Irrigation Products has acquired Oasis Irrigation. The acquisition leads to the creation of Ewing's new Moreno Valley Branch in Riverside, Calif.

Rogers joins Rain Bird

Rain Bird named Robert Rogers as a rotor product manager for the company's golf division. He will help manage the company's family of rotor products and execute new product development activities.

Gullikson tabbed for award

Jeffrey L. Gullikson, certified superintendent of Spokane (Wash.) CC, will receive GCSAA's 2004 President's Award for Environmental Stewardship in recognition of his involvement in the Golf and the Environment initiative. Gullikson, a 20-year member of GCSAA, will receive the award in February at the GCSAA show.

Plumley joins Cleary

Cleary Chemical named Karen Plumley as its new director of research and regulatory affairs. Scott Trbovich, Mike McGrath and Steve Stringer were hired as technical sales representatives.

Superintendent Wouldn't Want It Any Other Way

TOURNAMENT RETURNING TO HARTFORD AFTER ALL

By Anthony Pioppi

You could almost hear the state of Connecticut sigh in relief when PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem announced a corporate sponsorship from Buick for next year's Greater Hartford Open (GHO).

Finchem's announcement came during this year's Buick Open, which was thought to be the last. After a year of being on its own, but still able to survive thanks to more than 35 local "bridge sponsors," the 52nd installment of the event in July appeared to be the finale. In one way it is: Hartford will no longer be part of the tournament name beginning in 2004 when it changes to the Buick Championship.

If Thomas DeGrandi, superintendent at TPC River Highlands, site of the GHO was not jumping up and down over the deal you could understand why. The effects of close to 200,000 spectators trampling his golf course annually and the amount of time away from home preparing for the GHO can take its toll on a man.

But in fact he was happy.

"The Greater Hartford JayCees put a lot of money back into the community," DeGrandi said. "It's important for the city of Hartford and the state."

Since the tournament began, the JayCees, a leadership training organization for people between the ages of 21 and 39, has donated \$20 million to charities throughout the Nutmeg State through its foundation funded through the GHO.

After years of economic downturn, Hartford — the capital — is going through somewhat of a rebirth. A GHO swansong would have set the cause back dramatically. Instead, it turned out to be a great year, except for area superintendents.

For DeGrandi and others in the area the season was a tough one. A winter that wreaked havoc was followed by wet spring and summer turned even wetter during tournament week soaking River Highlands where DeGrandi has worked for 12 seasons, the last 10 as superintendent.

The month leading up to the event was the toughest for DeGrandi and his crew of 31. DeGrandi got to see his children briefly each night for about a month as he logged extensive hours preparing for the tournament. He was barely home when it was still light, never mind for dinner.

He still tried to perform his nightly fatherly duty, reading to children Myles, 9, and Emma, 6.

At least his children understood what his job entails. Both golf at the TPC and usually visit their father at least twice during the week of the tournament, including Sunday. Last year DeGrandi rode up the 18th fairway with Myles at his side as Phil Mickelson was making his way to the amphitheater green to the tune of 40,000 fans-plus fans jammed into the bowl area cheering him on to his second-consecutive GHO victory.

"You could *feel* it," DeGrandi said of the roar. "That's why the tournament isn't going away."

And that's OK with him.

Big Moves at Top Courses

LATSHAW LEAVING OAK HILL FOR MUIRFIELD; MCBRIDE JOINING NICKLAUS DESIGN

By Larry Aylward, Editor

Paul B. Latshaw wasn't looking, but opportunity came knocking — in the form of Jack Nicklaus and Muirfield Village GC.

Latshaw, fresh off hosting the PGA Championship at Oak Hill CC in Pittsford, N.Y., in mid-August, accepted Nicklaus' offer to become superintendent at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio, shortly after the PGA. Nicklaus designed and built Muirfield, his dream course, in the early 1970s.

Latshaw, 37, left Oak Hill, the historic Donald Ross design, after almost five years. He will replace Mike McBride, who had been superintendent at Muirfield for the past 18 years. McBride will continue to work for Nicklaus as an agronomist with Nicklaus Design.

Latshaw, who enjoys the thrill of hosting top golf tournaments, will get to do so every year at Muirfield with the Memorial Tournament, one of the most popular tournaments on the PGA Tour.

"The big thing that's intriguing is the opportunity to work with the Nicklaus organization," Latshaw said. "Jack Nicklaus was one of my boyhood idols.



MARY CORCORAN

Paul B. Latshaw loves the thrill of hosting big tournaments, something he'll get to do at Muirfield Village every year.

The Memorial is a first-class event."

The opportunity to join Muirfield surfaced a few days after the PGA Championship ended on Aug. 16. Latshaw said he wasn't looking for a new job, but he couldn't turn down the offer to join Nicklaus. He joined Muirfield in September.

In a press release, Nicklaus said he was impressed with Latshaw's ability to groom turf.

"I spoke to several players who were in the PGA field, and to a person, they remarked on the fantastic condition of

the golf course at Oak Hill," Nicklaus said. "August is one of the most difficult times of year for turf management, so to hear such high praises of Oak Hill is a true compliment to Paul's ability."

Nicklaus said McBride's talent will come in handy with possible renovation projects at other Nicklaus courses. McBride, who has worked at Muirfield since 1982 and helped build the course while he was in college, said he looks forward to "a fresh" start as an agronomist with Nicklaus Design. "It's time to move on, and I look forward to doing something a little different," said the 49-year-old, who will set up a home office in the Dublin area.

Nicklaus said McBride's new position allows him to grow as a person.

"The design of a golf course and its agronomic demands go hand-in-hand," he said. "At the same time, a significant number of our older projects are exploring the need to renovate their courses, so Mike's input on that process will be invaluable."

Jeff Corcoran replaces Latshaw at Oak Hill. Corcoran was previously the superintendent at Weston (Mass.) GC. He worked as an assistant to Latshaw at Oak Hill for three years in the late 1990s.

Are Women Welcomed at Your Course?

Who better to address the issue of women's golf than a woman, specifically Nancy Berkley. She explores the issue in her new book, *Women Welcome Here! A Guide to Growing Women's Golf*, published by the National Golf Foundation.

As you've heard time and again, women participation is vital to growing golf, which is crucial for the overall health of the industry. Too many women take up golf and quit. The trick is getting them to keep playing.

In the book, Berkley provides the insights needed for capturing women golfers and keeping them golfing. The book helps answer the question, "Are women welcomed here?" It offers tips as to how a golf course can make sure it's doing all it can to attract women and make them feel comfortable.

In the book's introduction, Suzy Whaley, head golf professional at Blue Fox Run GC in Avon, Conn., writes



that women are not as physically strong as men and therefore their power and distance are limited.

"This, however, does not mean that women

cannot play the game well or enjoy it as much as men," Whaley states. "As golf professionals, we must be willing to take the time to educate women."

Field of Research

BAYER'S HAS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR R&D – AND THEN SOME

By Ron Hall

Bayer hosted Green Industry editors at its Bayer Environmental Science (BES) technical research facility in Clayton, N.C., this past summer. At 281 acres, it's believed to be the largest single site in the United States devoted to developing and testing turfgrass and structural pest control products.

In addition to several acres devoted to turf plots, the site includes a two-hole golf course with bentgrass greens (three additional holes were to be added in the summer). Noticeable on the grounds was a row of shiny new

John Deere turf equipment. BES is field-testing Deere mowers and other turf maintenance units there, as well. The Deere turf business is located in nearby Raleigh.

Eventually, the golf course will have nine holes. BES plans to hire a turf manager to help manage the site.

"Any company that wants to be a major player in this business needs to have a facility like Clayton," said Don Myers, Chipco product development manager for herbicides and PGRs.

Players? That's a short list indeed. Bayer, because of consolidation within the specialty chemical business, can literally count its turf competitors on one hand. BES itself is a blend of former Bayer and Aventis business organizations.

Marketing Director Jim Fetter

acknowledged that the current economic climate could be better, but he pointed to the BES research farm as evidence of the company's long-term commitment to turf — and its conviction that the market will continue to grow.

The Clayton site will be used to test new products, but much of the activity there will also focus on finding ways to add value to the chemistry that Bayer has already developed or obtained through acquisitions.

One of the biggest challenges facing BES, he added, will be "sorting out all the brands" now under its umbrella, and finding a common voice within the turf market for them along with its strong Bayer and Chipco lines.

"Both have been around a long time," Fetter said.

Hall is editor of Landscape Management, Golfdom's sister publication.

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