

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Bayer joins John Deere One Source

John Deere Golf & Turf One Source says it has reached a sub-distribution agreement with Bayer Environmental Science to offer its fungicide, herbicide and insecticide products.

"Understanding many of our customers are loyal to the Bayer brand, it was critical for our distributors to provide these high-quality products," says Gregg Breningmeyer, director of sales and marketing for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source.

Bayer Environmental Science produces many chemical products, including Merit, 26GT and Ronstar. These, along with the full line of Bayer golf course products, are now available for purchase from any North American John Deere Golf & Turf distributor.

### Gullikson honored for environmental prowess

If an environmentalist wants proof that the golf industry can be good for the environment, the golf industry would be smart to point the environmentalist in Jeff Gullikson's direction.

Gullikson, the certified golf course superintendent of Spokane (Wash.) Country Club, was recently awarded the Certis USA Environmental Communicator of the Year Award at the annual Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) held recently in Memphis, Tenn.

### Singleton receives ASGCA's top honor

John T. Singleton of The Toro Company received the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects at their recent annual meeting, held in Pebble Beach, Calif. ASGCA presents the Donald Ross Award annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to the

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## Water in So Cal's Spotlight

By Thomas Skernivitz,  
Managing Editor

**W**hen it comes to baseball stadiums and the top 100 films according to the American

Film Institute (AFI), I want to see them all. Being a list kind of guy, those two are my guilty pleasures.

Unfortunately, a business trip to San Diego recently never even got me to first base at 2-year-old Petco Field. The Padres were out of town. Until I visit Busch Stadium in St. Louis this summer, I'm stuck at 26 Major League Baseball stadiums.

The good news is that, upon returning home from a water issues seminar sponsored by the San Diego Golf Course Superintendents Association (SDGCA), I immediately upped to 32 the number of top 100 films I've viewed.

Prompting a visit to Blockbuster was one of the conference speakers, Sandra Dunn, a California-based lawyer specializing in environmental issues. In detailing the historical "holiness" of water throughout the West, she cited the 1974 mystery "Chinatown."

Set in the 1930s, the Roman Polanski film — ranked No. 19 by AFI — delves into the world of

CLASSIC FILM SUBSTANTIATES ASSOCIATION'S EFFORTS IN STRESSING VITAL WATER ISSUES THROUGHOUT THE WEST

shady water rights and land deals. Starring Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway and John Huston, it's definitely a classic (although I wouldn't have ranked it one spot ahead of another Nicholson gem, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest").

More importantly, "Chinatown" really does substantiate the current



efforts of the SDGCA and Southern California Golf Association (SCGA) in stressing the critical nature of water issues throughout the West. Water is gold in California, and golf course personnel had better be on their guard, even if the corruption that had tormented Nicholson's character, Jake Gittes, went down the drain years ago.

"If we're not the proactive ones, we're going to have a governmental agency come tell us, 'You need best management practices, and here's what they are,'" said Sandy Clark, the certified superintendent of Barona Creek Golf Club. "We have to be the engine. We can't be waiting till the tail end and wonder what that parade was that just marched over our head."

Ironically, Southern California is nearing the end of its third-wettest season in

history. San Diego has received nearly 23 inches of precipitation, ranking behind only 25.97 inches in 1883-84 and 24.74 inches in 1940-41.

"We cannot be lulled to sleep by one good rain year," said Clark, who organized and moderated the seminar, titled "The Day the Tap Ran Dry." "That was a hundred-year event that we saw, so I don't think we can comfortably say that we're back in business with water."

The four-hour conference, held at Lomas Santa Fe Country Club in Solana Beach, attracted about 100 superintendents, club managers and owners and featured several speakers in addition to Clark and Dunn. Among the highlights:

► Mark Moede, a local liaison of the National Weather Service, said Californians should heed the weather conditions known as El Nino and La Nina. El Nino seasons are caused by warm water near the equator and result in wetter and cooler conditions along the West Coast. Its inverse, La Nina, leads to drier and warmer conditions in the same area.

"The (systems) you want to key on when you watch the local news or surf the Internet are the status of the El Nino or La Nina," Moede said. "That's probably going to be your best way to determine water usage for the upcoming season."

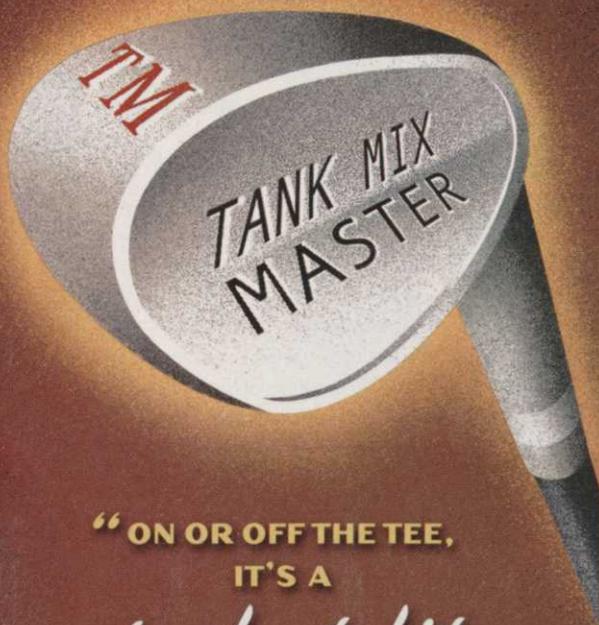
Unfortunately for superintendents, the next three decades could bring an abundance of dry La Nina

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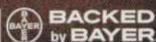
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**Golf course water issues were discussed at the seminar, which attracted about 100 people.**



## Off The Fringe

### Business briefs

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game of golf and golf course architecture.

"John Singleton is a true gentleman, problem solver and friend to everyone in the golf industry," said ASGCA President Bill Love. "His 40-year career at Toro and his dedication to golf and golf course architects has helped us provide the world's golfers with the best possible playing conditions."

#### **AGCOA joins the world**

On June 9 the golf industry — that's world golf industry — welcomed a new association: The Asian Golf Course Owners Association (AGCOA).

The AGCOA is a non-profit organization, commissioned by the National Golf Course Owners Association. Golf course owners and operators attended the inauguration of AGCOA, together with the nomination and selection of AGCOA board and committee members in Beijing, China.

The NGCOA was founded in 1971 by a group of public access golf owners. Since then the group has grown to more than 6,000 members in America alone. Another commissioned organization is the European Golf Course Owners Association (EGCOA), founded in 2001. Seeing the explosive growth potential of the Asia's golf market, NGCOA entered Asia as AGCOA.

#### **Huesgen leaves Pebble for new club**

Tom Huesgen, the former superintendent at Pebble Beach, will assume the same role at Cornerstone, a new private golf community located in southwestern Colorado, near the ski resort city of Telluride.

"Obviously, Pebble Beach has grandeur, history and a matchless setting for golf," Huesgen said, "but I have a very special opportunity at Cornerstone. This is going to be a fabulous opportunity and a unique challenge."

A 6,000-acre project, Cornerstone features a Greg Norman Signature course.

#### **Becker acquires Brazilian producer**

Becker Underwood acquired Nitril Urbana, Brazil's largest producer and supplier of rhizobium inoculants. Previously, Nitril Urbana was a joint venture between Becker Underwood and Sr. João Jurandir.



### EXPECT A BUSY HURRICANE SEASON, FORECASTERS SAY

**A**s if 2004 wasn't prolific enough, the forthcoming hurricane season is expected to be even busier, according to forecasters. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) calls for seven to nine hurricanes this season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Of those, three to five will be major storms ranked Category 3 or higher on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

The forecast is slightly higher than had been 2004's, which predicted six to eight hurricanes, two to four of which would be at least Category 3, which has winds of 111 mph to 130 mph.

The 2004 season wound up spawning 12 major storms, including four that hit Florida directly and one indirectly. An average Atlantic season produces six hurricanes, said Frank Lepore of the National Hurricane Center (NHC).

"Just for historical perspective, we were actually below average in the decades of the '70s, the '80s and half-way through the '90s," Lepore told CNN. "That is, less than six hurricanes on average per season."

"It is difficult to make any kind of an accurate prediction of how many of these will strike land," said NOAA Administrator Conrad Lautenbacher. "But I think statistically you can look at the fact that when seasons are more active, and we have a higher level of hurricanes, you have a higher chance of hurricanes striking the United States."

"So I would expect two to three perhaps striking the United States," Lautenbacher said.

Lepore said scientists were looking at warmer ocean temperatures as a possible factor in this year's forecast. "The issue this year is the anomalously warm sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic," he said.

The surface temperatures of the Atlantic are warmer earlier this year than they were at the same time in 2004, Lepore said.

Another report states there are "high odds" of a hurricane making a major hit in the United States.

# Syngenta, LESCO Part Ways

## COMPANIES CITE PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**A** fundamental disagreement over philosophies regarding the role of the distributor in marketing and selling products to superintendents has led to a breakup between two of the golf industry's major players — Syngenta Professional Products and LESCO Inc.

Greensboro, N.C.-based Syngenta announced last week that its products would no longer be represented by Cleveland-based LESCO in the marketplace.

"We have decided that LESCO's strategies in the marketplace are inconsistent with Syngenta's," Bill Lewis, vice president of Syngenta Professional Products, said in a news release.

In a conference call with reporters, Michael Vanausdeln, Syngenta's manager of corporate communications, said Syngenta didn't agree with what its company representatives said was LESCO's increased emphasis on a retail strategy to sell products rather than through its sales representatives.

"We're committed to the traditional distribution model, which is one of several reasons why the business strategy is divergent," Vanausdeln said. "We're maintaining a long-standing strategy that we've had ... where you want to continue to provide high-quality branded products through full-service, value-added distribution partners and their field staffs."

Joe DiPaola, golf market manager for Syngenta Professional Products, added that it was "a lot of little things" that led to Syngenta's decision.

Michael DiMino, LESCO's president and CEO, said in a conference call that he was "surprised and disappointed" by Syngenta's decision. He said Syngenta's products represent "at or under 5 percent" of LESCO's total net sales of about \$560 million.

During a meeting with Syngenta's leaders, DiMino said he and other LESCO representatives were so stunned when they were told of Syngenta's decision to end the relationship that "our mouths dropped out of our heads."

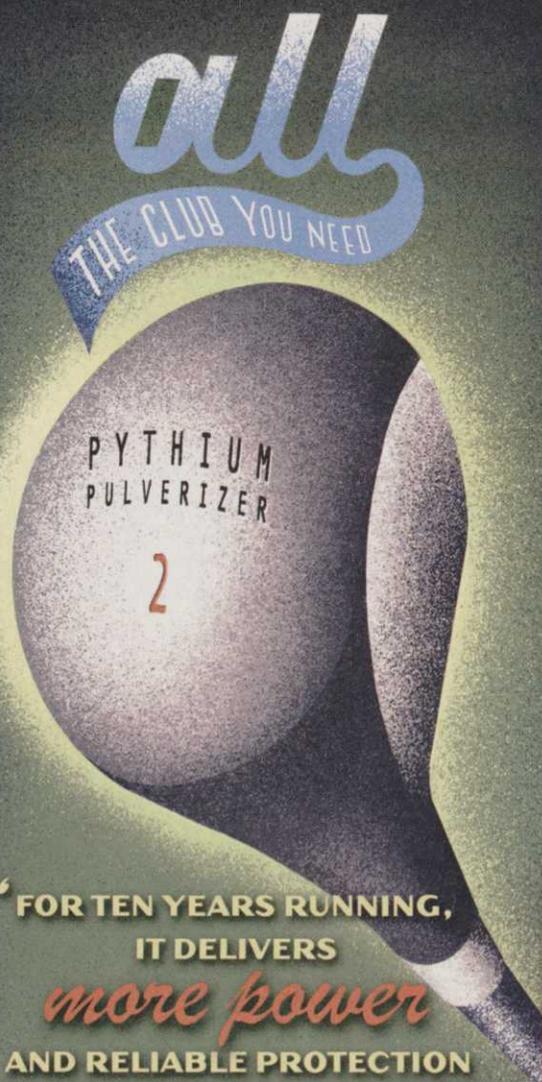
But Keelan Pulliam, group head of Syngenta Professional Products' Turf and Ornamental division, told *Golfdom* the decision shouldn't have been a surprise because it had become clear in the past 12 months to 18 months that Syngenta's and LESCO's business strategies were moving further apart.

"The relationship became more and more strained, and it was probably difficult for both parties to find some common ground," Pulliam added.

In the spring, DiMino said LESCO was "extremely

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# Talkin' Bugs

John Cunningham, the certified superintendent at Black Diamond Ranch Golf Course in Lacanto, Fla., recently organized a two-day event designed to teach sixth-grade students about insects.

On Day 1 he taught classes in insect physiology and identification at a local school. On Day 2 he invited 150 students and their teachers to his golf course.

**1** Students tour Black Diamond, a 45-hole, Tom Fazio-designed championship course ranked by *Golf Digest* in the "Top 100 in the World." Built on a former stone quarry, the course is the centerpiece of a gated community 90 miles from Tampa.

**2** John Cunningham, center, shows students how he uses light traps to capture beetles and determine threshold levels for timely pesticide applications. Light traps were provided by Bayer Environmental Science to help facilitate applications of Merit insecticide.

**3** Cunningham tells students about the environmental benefits of golf courses. His program is an example of how superintendents communicate the benefits of golf courses within their local communities.



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seasons. Moede described the phenomenon known as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, a series of 30-year cycles that rotate between El Nino and La Nina.

"What (forecasters) are saying is that we are coming to the end of a 30-year, mostly El Nino oscillation," Moede said. "They're thinking the trend is shifting to this pattern where more of our seasons over the next 30 years are going to be La Nina weather trends, which mean typically less than normal amounts of rainfall."

Of course, that didn't prevent a few dry seasons over the last 30 years, including 5

inches of rain in 2003-04 and 3 inches in 2001-02.

"There are exceptions to the rule," Moede said. "But as a general rule — 70 percent of the time — you can expect this type of scenario during those El Nino or La Nina weather conditions."

► Noting the recent abundance of rainfall, Anatole Falagan, an official with the region's Metropolitan Water District (MWD), said, "What's critically important this year is that we're trying to store all this water."

Falagan said the MWD covers six counties and 5,200 square miles in Southern California, from

Ventura to the Mexican border. Eighteen million people reside or work in the area, with an annual growth rate of 220,000 people.

Golf courses can do their part to conserve water by adhering to the MWD's Innovative Supply Program, which has offered \$250,000 in grants for concepts with the potential to provide new sources of drinking water in Southern California. The United States Golf Association (USGA) received a \$50,000 grant to study golf course on-site recycling.

"Water recycling is typically associated with the county or city sanitation district," Falagan said. "We

want to see how you can actually do on-site recycling, which means that you're located somewhere on the watershed and you're capturing that wastewater stream as it makes its way down."

With more than 320 golf courses in Southern California, the district and USGA are proposing that at least 250 of those courses use potable water by 2025. The result would be 100,000 acre-feet of savings — an acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, and provides the needs of two typical Southern California families for a year — that would provide enough supply for 200,000 households, Falagan said.

# Quotable

**"Maybe we're all supposed to stink at this. It's our punishment for playing this insane game."**

— *Golf commentator David Feherty on the average golf score, which has not changed for decades. (New York Times)*

**"Leadership can be taught, learned and developed. The pay-back comes both in information gained and in lasting friendships."**

— *Trent Bouts, executive director of the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association.*

**"I do like disease. If that makes me strange, so be it."**

— *Bruce Clarke, director of the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science and a turf disease aficionado.*

"We're looking for big things out of this study," he added.

Falagan also said the MWD is offering incentives to courses that upgrade their irrigation systems and utilize detailed water budgets.

► Kevin Heaney, the assistant executive director of the SCGA and a representative of the lobbyist group California Alliance for Golf, said many golf course personnel are still a bit apathetic when it comes to water issues.

"They think perhaps the biggest issue confronting golf is the hot golf ball and how the elite players are hitting that hot golf ball and how it's making golf courses

obsolete," he said. "I guarantee you that that is an issue in golf, but that's certainly not the biggest threat to golf. We think water is our single biggest concern at this point, and that's where the California Alliance for Golf is focusing most of its efforts.

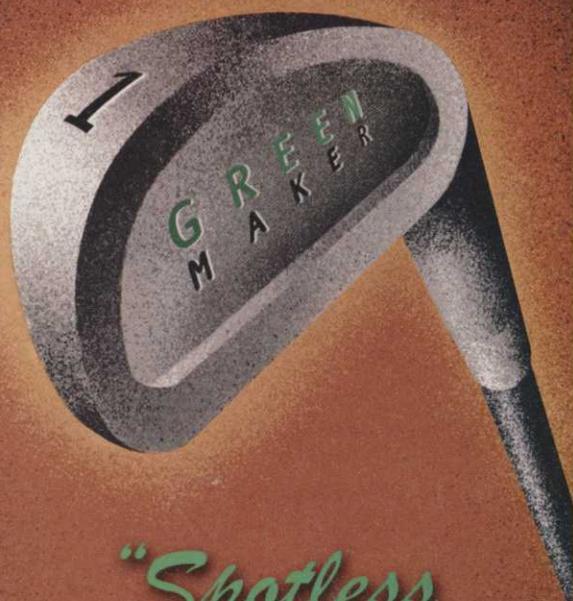
"In the big picture, golf isn't using much water. However, it's also a very visible use of water, and when people are concerned about water, and if their water is restricted at all, the first [one] they are going to point at is the golf course down the street because we do, unfortunately, still have the image of being the fat cats."



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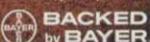
— *Mike Combs  
Orchard Hills G&CC  
Washougal, Washington*

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## Off The Fringe

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pleased with the operating performance of our new Service Centers and view this segment as our best avenue to consistently grow earnings over time."

Pulliam said Syngenta didn't agree with that approach. "We still value salespeople who are on the ground standing in front of an end-use customer and providing value and services and agronomic skills," Pulliam said. "We think end users value that and will align themselves with channel partners or distributors who do that."

DiMino said he thinks Syngenta has a goal of owning or controlling the relationship with the end-user on the golf course. "I think that's the role of the distributor, whether it's LESCO or another distributor," he added.

Pulliam stressed that it's not the company's goal to own or control such relationships.

"At the end of the day it's all about the end user and in this case were talking about superintendents," Pulliam said. "It's about meeting their needs

**"By severing the relationship, it gives us the opportunity to expand in molecules that we didn't expand on before."**

**BRIAN ROWAN**, LESCO

and providing the best possible end-user experience we can provide. No one owns that relationship. You do that in partnership."

DiMino said all of the Syngenta

products that LESCO will soon lose are replaceable with other molecules from other brands. "So we don't think we're going to lose any sales," he added.

But superintendents will no longer be able to purchase PRIMO, a widely used plant growth regulator, from LESCO.

"On a given product we may have some shortcomings," said Brian Rowan, LESCO's senior director of merchandising. "But by severing the relationship, it gives us the opportunity to expand in molecules that we didn't

expand on before because of our relationship."

While the relationship is over, it will officially conclude after a transition period.

### Princess 77 Provided Cimarrón Golf Course with the Cost Effective Solution for Their Renovation Project



Mario Aguilar, Golf Course Superintendent for Cimarrón Golf Course in Cathedral City, California kneels on a renovated fairway of Princess 77.



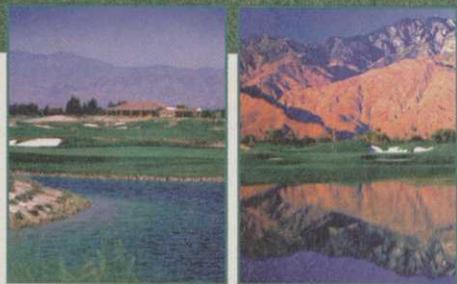
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"We have seen great seedling vigor in Princess 77 being over-seeded into ryegrass fairways" reports Mario. "We had full coverage in eight weeks and never shut down for the renovation. Our fairways look great and we are thrilled with the ease of handling seed as opposed to sod." Princess 77 also helped Cimarrón achieve an environmental goal of cutting their water usage for the year. Mark Goulet, Head Golf Professional for Cimarrón says "We expect to achieve a larger water savings next year by increasing the amount of Princess 77 on our course."

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\*Response of Bermudagrasses and Zoysiagrasses to Applied Water Using a Linear Gradient Irrigation Design, Sean Reynolds, 2000, Master's Thesis

  
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