

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

2,4-D verdict: no risk when used appropriately

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concluded that the herbicide 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) does not present risks of concern to human health when users follow 2,4-D product instructions as outlined in EPA's 2,4-D Reregistration Eligibility Decision (RED) document.

The agency's announcement and release of the RED on 2,4-D completed a 17-year EPA review process. 2,4-D is a phenoxy herbicide discovered 60 years ago and is used worldwide for a variety of applications, including golf courses.

Over the course of 17 years, the Industry Task Force II on 2,4-D Research Data developed and submitted to EPA more than 300 Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) toxicology, environmental and residue studies that EPA scientists reviewed to assess the herbicide's safety under the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).

Task Force members hold technical 2,4-D FIFRA registrations and include Dow AgroSciences, Nufarm Ltd., Agro-Gro and PBI/Gordon.

"The EPA's assessment of the human and environmental scientific data reinforces a growing number of regulatory decisions and expert reviews that conclude the use of 2,4-D according to product instructions does not present an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment," stated Don Page, assistant executive director of the Industry Task Force II on 2,4-D Research Data.

In 1947, 2,4-D was registered for use in the United States on crops and turfgrass. The EPA initiated an assessment for a toxicology review of 2,4-D in 1980, and reregis-

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Groups Wanted to Stay in New Orleans

BUT GCSAA, NGCOA HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO MOVE SHOW

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

The brass at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf

Course Owners Association (NGCOA) wanted to keep the February-scheduled Golf Industry Show (GIS) in New Orleans even after Hurricane Katrina had flooded and devastated most of the city. They wanted to keep the show there, says GCSAA CEO Steve Mona, for a good reason — to pump some money

into the ravaged city's economy. But when city leaders announced that all conventions through March had been canceled, Mona and NGCOA Executive Director Mike Hughes announced a few days later that the show would go on in Houston during its original dates, Feb. 9-11.

"We definitely wanted to support New Orleans," Mona said.

"Our first consideration was to host the event in New Orleans because we know the convention

industry will be vital to the city's recovery," Hughes added.

Mona says GCSAA's members felt the same way. Their collective message — mostly through e-mails sent to the organization — was to figure out a way to stay in New Orleans.

"In the last week or so we received more member feedback about any issue that I can recall in the almost 12 years I've been here," Mona said on Sept. 9.

Carey Spence, president of the Louisiana-Mississippi Golf Course Superintendents Association and superintendent of Ellendale Country Club in Houma, La., about 50 miles southwest of New Orleans, said in mid-September that it had been difficult to contact the chapter's

members because of damage to the region's communication structure.

"Communications around New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast are spotty at best and nonexistent for the most part," Spence said. "Those areas there are totally devastated. It's just a horrible situation."

Mona said the GCSAA has been in contact with some members who live and work in the Gulf coast area affected by the storm. He said about

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golf industry show

Do Golf Courses Provide Valuable Wildlife Habitat?

BY RON DODSON

Editor's Note: This column will appear bimonthly in *Golfdom*. Dodson, the CEO of Audubon International, can be reached at rdodson@auduboninternational.org.



Golf courses can be havens for all sorts of interesting wildlife. Golfers often say they enjoy seeing wildlife on the courses that they play. But questions are often asked about the actual value of the habitat that is created by golf courses. In other words, are golf courses providing valuable wildlife habitat, or are the species that are often seen on golf courses merely an illusion of a course being wildlife friendly.

These and other golf- and wildlife-related topics are at the root of the Wildlife Links program, a grant program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and funded by the United States Golf Association (USGA). The USGA has been providing \$200,000 a year to look into these and other questions.

The Wildlife Links program was started in 1996, and more than 15 projects have been funded since that time. In addition to generating scientific data concerning wildlife on golf courses, educational materials have been developed and are being disseminated to those interested in becoming involved in wildlife conservation on golf courses.

The projects include:

► Golf Courses and Bird Conservation: A Management Manual;

► Wetlands Management Manual for Golf Courses;

► Data Management System for Information on Wildlife Habitat on Golf Courses;

► Conservation of Native Pollinators on Golf Courses;

► Pesticides and Nutrients in Surface Waters Associated with Golf Courses;

► Effects of Construction on Amphibian Movements and Population Size;

► Avian Community Response to a Golf Course Landscape Unit Gradient;

► Corridor Establishment for an Endangered South Florida Butterfly;

► Enhancing Amphibian and Reptile Biodiversity on Golf Courses Through the Use of Wetlands;

► Are Forests, Such as Golf Courses, Hotspots for Biodiversity in the Desert Southwest?;

► Native Biodiversity and Golf Courses in Midwest Landscapes; and

► Burrowing Owl Conservation on Golf Courses.

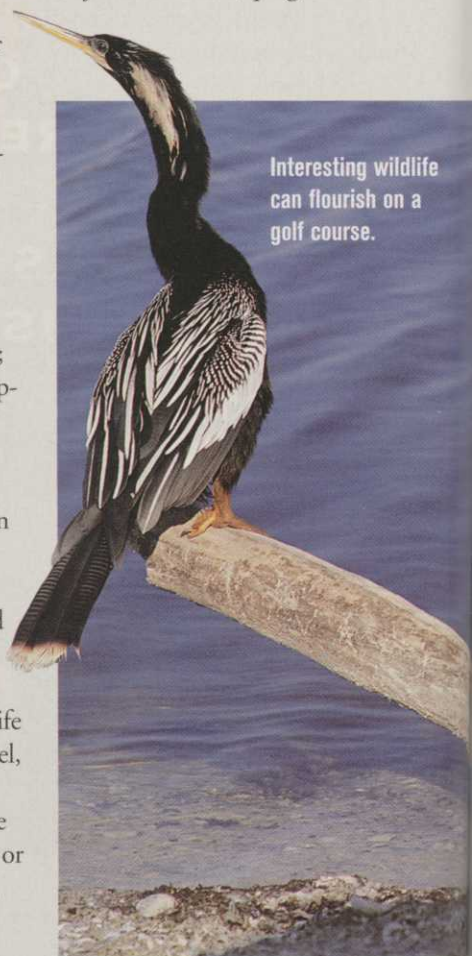
For information about the Wildlife Links Program, contact: Peter Stangel, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta 30345, 404-679-7099 or e-mail him at peter.stangel@nfwf.org.

In addition to working with the National Fish and Wildlife Founda-

tion, the Wildlife Links Program has an established committee to review all proposals and a group of technical advisors to help with specific proposed projects. Groups on the Wildlife Links Committee include: Audubon International, the USGA Fairfax County Park Authority, The Wildlife Society, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Defenders of Wildlife.

The Technical Advisory Group is comprised of representatives from Antioch New England Graduate School, The Xerces Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, American Birding Association, Sutton Avian Research Center and the European Golf Association.

For a summary of the results of the funded project efforts, go to www.nfwf.org or to the USGA Green Section Web page at www.usga.org/turfenvironmental_programs.



Full of Firsts

GRANT, REHR AND GIORDANO MAKE HISTORY AT ST. ANDREWS

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

It was the 134th playing of the Open Championship and the 27th time that the Old Course in St. Andrews, Scotland, was hosting it. But this year's event in July, at least on the maintenance side, was also full of firsts.

Old Course Head Greenskeeper Euan Grant was on the job for his first Open and is believed to be the first non-St. Andrewsian to hold the title.

Lauren Giordano, who in 2003 interned at the Old Course and became the first woman ever to work on the crew there, was back, becoming the first woman ever to volunteer for an Open Championship. She has since earned a degree from Rutgers University.



Jay Rehr

And maybe most impressive was Jay Rehr, who undoubtedly became the first golf course turf technician to chalk up a career Grand Slam. Rehr spent 16 years turning wrenches at Augusta National, worked at the 1997 and 2002 U.S. Opens as well as the 2003 PGA before completing the slam at the most hallowed golf course in the world. He also has two U.S. Senior Opens, a U.S. Women's Open and a pair of Memorial Tournaments in his toolbox.

"Who wouldn't want to do a British Open?" the jocular Rehr asked rhetorically. Since 2004 he has been on his own as the sole employee of Turf Equip-

ment Consulting based in Grovertown, Ga., but it was his old boss at Augusta, Marsh Benson, that advised Rehr to complete the Slam at the Old Course.

"He told me, 'If you're going to do it, do it right,'" Rehr says.

What impressed Rehr most about the entire Old Course maintenance operation and what set it apart from all other major tournaments he's worked was the laid-back attitude. Starting with Grant on down to the guys who raked bunkers, tournament week was approached with a supreme air of confidence but without the manic pace and the world-could-end-at-any-moment attitude found in the maintenance facilities at many U.S. Majors.

Grant usually had a song on his lips when he made his first appearance at about 4 a.m. each day even though he was often working on less than three hours sleep. His boundless enthusiasm was at once amazing and frustrating to those in his presence. Grant's demeanor established the tone for the entire tournament. "You're not under pressure. You're not under the gun. It's not like everything has to be done immediately," Rehr said.

Instead of 18-hour days common for mechanics at U.S. Majors, the Old Course techs were broken down into two nine-hour shifts. Another difference in the work atmosphere that Rehr said was readily apparent was that the golf course and the tournament were the focal points, not the head greenskeeper. Grant had no desire to put his individual stamp on the event other than to have the Old Course in the best condition possible.

With course conditions the focus, the results were universally praised. Some players, including Greg Norman, said the Old Course was in the best condition they had ever seen.

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tration data development by the 2,4-D Task Force and review by EPA began in 1988.

Andersons restructures group

The Andersons has restructured its Processing Group and named Tom Waggoner president of the group. Waggoner had previously been vice president of sales and marketing for the group.

Arysta secures marketing rights

Arysta LifeScience North America announced it has secured exclusive domestic marketing rights for fluoxastrobin, a strobilurin fungicide in development for disease control alone and in combination products.

"We view this investment as a demonstration of our continuing commitment to supply highly effective plant disease control chemistry for turfgrass management and ornamental production," said Elin Miller, Arysta LifeScience North America president and CEO.

Fluoxastrobin is being tested extensively in university trials, according to the company.

Ex-ClubCorp head begins company

Former ClubCorp president Jim Hinckley has formed Century Golf Partners, a golf investment company created for the purpose of acquiring and managing country clubs and daily-fee golf courses throughout the country.

In addition, Century Golf Partners has created a golf investment partnership with Walton Street Capital, a private real estate investment company based in Chicago.

Hetrick leaves GCBAA

Lee Hetrick has left the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA) as its executive director after six years. Hetrick, based in Lincoln, Neb., announced his departure at the end of the association's summer meeting in New Jersey, adding that he wants to pursue other career goals. Hetrick will serve as a consultant to the GCBAA Executive Committee until the end of the year. Hetrick was instrumental in the growth and stability of the organization. GCBAA membership grew by 30 percent under his reign.

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180 members are from the region.

"We've heard reports that range from people who came through the fury of the storm OK to stories where golf courses that some of our members worked at — and I have to use the past tense — are basically unrecognizable now."

Mona said he hadn't heard of any members and their kin who had been killed. "We've heard of people who can't get back to their homes, so they're living in different places," he added.

Mike Tinkey, the NGCOA's deputy director, said golf course owners have stepped up to help their fellow owners whose courses were battered by the storm. Tinkey said many phone calls came from Florida owners who had endured the rash of hurricanes that ripped through that state last year. They empathized with what owners on the Gulf coast had gone through and wanted to help them, even though their courses hadn't recovered fully from the Florida hurri-

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Steve Mona



canes. "I thought that was very moving," Tinkey said.

It's not certain how many jobs in the golf industry will be lost because of the hurricane. Typically, insurance doesn't cover lost employee income, Tinkey said, so employees could be out of work if courses shut down for a long period.

Spence said he's worried that golf course workers won't be able to make a living. "That's the main concern we have is how these people are going to live," Spence says, noting that U.S. superintendents who want to help dis-

placed workers can contact him at 985-851-1376 or csecc@bellsouth.net.

This is the first time GCSAA has been forced to move its show so close to its date. Mona says it will take extra work, effort and money to do. "We're attempting something that's never been done, but we're very confident we can do it," he added.

The GCSAA and other golf organizations have established a relief program to assist the public and its members effected by the hurricane. For more information, contact the GCSAA at 800-472-7878.

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The Old Course was being prepared for the Championship well before Grant came on board in 2004. But under his guidance the majority of the 112 bunkers were rebuilt in the last year, many of them restored to their former configurations.

The famed Road Hole Bunker was completely done over with the foreknowledge that the golfing world would be scrutinizing the efforts. The fact that no players complained about the alteration may be the highest praise.

Giordano, who's now on the crew at Bam Hollow Country Club in Tifton Falls, N.J., was ecstatic about her return to the Old Course. With her mother along to enjoy the experience, she was glad to be back to the epitome of minimal maintenance.

"I don't agree with what we do in America — lush, high input," she said. "You look at the conditions and ask, 'Is this necessary?'"

Giordano's goal is to become superintendent at a low-input layout. And for a week she was back mowing fairways and syringing greens on such a course, which is also her favorite course.

"It's dreamland," Giordano said, probably not the first time that has been said about the Old Course.

Quotable

"Reality is reality, and Mother Nature wins all battles. Just like today, I wanted rain . . . but not an inch and a half."

— Paul Galligan, superintendent of Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City, Mich., on dealing with the weather

"Never have so many poorly skilled people spent more money on an activity that makes them swear and hate themselves."

— Comedian and writer Jay Mohr on the great game of golf (*Sports Illustrated*)