

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

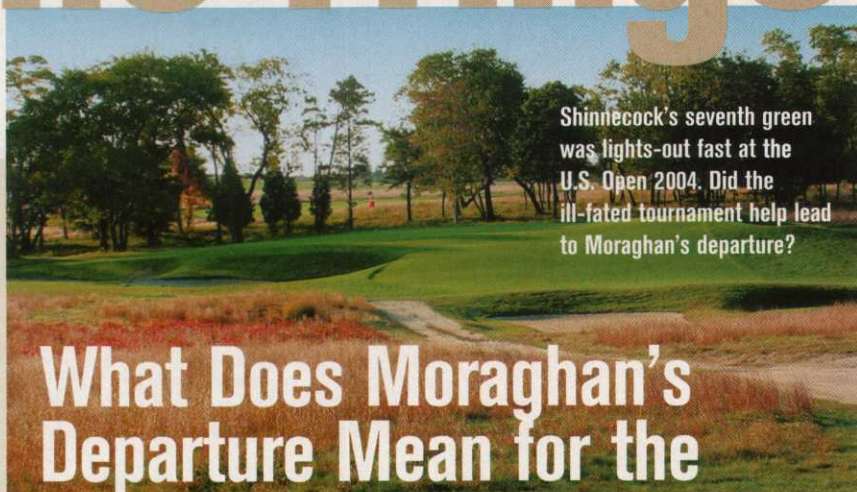
Deere Announces Changes in Regard to LESCO Acquisition

Gregg Breningmeyer, director of sales and marketing for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source, recently announced a series of changes in regard to Deere's acquisition of LESCO, which was finalized in May. The changes take effect in Deere's new fiscal year beginning Nov. 1. They include:

- LESCO agronomic products, as well as some current One Source partner products, will be available through the One Source program.
- John Deere One Source distributors will carry both equipment and irrigation heads and controllers and provide finance options for those products as well.
- Deere's new golf and turf field employees, formerly of LESCO, will provide the agronomic arm of One Source — with a focus on seed, fertilizer and chemicals.
- Stores on Wheels will continue to provide exclusive golf offerings, as "we have heard loud and clear that they are a valuable service to customers," Breningmeyer said.
- In addition to Stores on Wheels, customers will also be able to purchase golf and turf agronomic products through John Deere Landscapes gold branches (former LESCO service centers).
- While LESCO's headquarters operations and activities will be moved to the John Deere Landscapes headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga., Deere plans to keep an office in Cleveland.

"As you can imagine, merging two companies with rich histories and expansive expertise is not an overnight undertaking," Breningmeyer said. "As such, [these] adjustments are just the beginning."

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Shinnecock's seventh green was lights-out fast at the U.S. Open 2004. Did the ill-fated tournament help lead to Moraghan's departure?

What Does Moraghan's Departure Mean for the USGA Green Section?

By Geoff Shackelford, Contributing Editor

The United States Golf Association's removal of Tim Moraghan as championship agronomist offers yet another glimpse into the strange and turbulent little cult that is our game's North American governing body.

And not because of the decision to dispense of Moraghan.

After all, USGA President Walter Driver was not exactly eyeing Moraghan for inclusion in his will since the two worked together on the ill-fated 2004 U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. That's where then-Championship Committee Chair Driver came off as a fool when the USGA's defend-par-at-all-costs setup backfired. Driver convinced himself that Moraghan and then-course setup man Tom Meeks were solely responsible for the course teetering over the edge of sanity, and now both are gone.

No, the real surprise in the Mor-

aghan firing is the USGA's elimination of his position and the organization's plans to rely on the USGA Green Section staff to provide agronomic and construction advice for its championship courses.

The immediate reaction is to assume that this will be nothing but a headache for the section staffers, particularly if they are thrust into the U.S. Open spotlight without the pay and backing of the executive director to weigh in on pressure-filled decisions regarding turfgrass and construction.

However, if handled properly by the USGA Executive Committee (an enormous "if") and supported by the executive director (highly unlikely), this could turn into a necessary endorsement for the USGA's turfgrass consulting service.

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the **Golfdom Insider** and can be found in a longer version at www.golfdom.com.*

Dealing With Dreaded Disease

BASF'S KYLE MILLER SHEDS LIGHT ON HOW TO DIAGNOSE AND COMBAT TURF DISEASE OUTBREAKS

In 1982, Ronald Reagan was president, "Tootsie" was America's top movie, Rick Springfield dominated the music charts, and Kyle Miller began studying agronomy and turf disease. No doubt that Miller, the senior technical specialist for BASF Corp., has learned a few things in his field since that time.

Previously an agronomist for the department of transportation in Virginia and a turfgrass research biologist at Monsanto, Miller has a master's degree in agronomy from Auburn University.

At BASF, Miller is involved in developing market opportunities for new and existing products through university and end-user trials. He spent some time recently with *Golf-dom* Editor in Chief Larry Aylward to answer some questions on diagnosing pest outbreaks on turf.



Kyle Miller

What new turf diseases are wreaking havoc on golf courses across the country? What are you seeing?

In the last five years or so we have seen several new diseases that superintendents now have to be on the lookout for. One is *Pythium* root dysfunction, otherwise known as *Pythium volutum*. This disease attacks bentgrass during the spring and summer months.

A second new disease is rapid blight, which is seen primarily on *Poa* and ryegrass. Finally, there is Waitea patch, which is also called brown ring patch. Waitea patch is the newest disease and is found on bent-

grass both in the East and the West.

Superintendents should be assured that turf pathologists across the country are working hard to characterize new diseases, and manufacturers are working closely with them to discover effective chemical controls to fight them.

How can golf course superintendents best combat these turf diseases from occurring? What cultural practices can they implement?

By characterizing and understanding these diseases better, turf pathologists now can inform superintendents on what environmental and cultural conditions cause these diseases.

Pythium volutum is a stress-induced disease related to fertility, water and mowing practices. The disease is observed when bentgrass roots are actively growing, thus occurring primarily in the spring and fall.

Rapid blight was initially linked to golf courses that use high salinity water, but it has become more widespread and is now present in more than 11 states. Superintendents should check water quality to determine salt levels.

Waitea patch or brown ring patch seems to affect primarily annual bluegrass, but can also be seen in bentgrass. This disease is a *Rhizoctonia* species (like brown patch) but is not always controlled by standard brown patch fungicides. Although similar in some ways to yellow patch, it occurs in warmer weather. This disease is not well understood.

I understand that some diseases, including dollar spot and anthracnose, are lasting longer? Why is this happening?

When I talk with superintendents

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Quotable

"Golf is an important trigger for the long-term development of Dubai's tourism and residential markets. Yet we must ensure that all golf course development is environmentally sustainable. We do not just want to follow international best practice — we want to set it."

— Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, chairman of Dubai World, the residential golf development with four 18-hole, environmentally friendly golf courses, in Dubai. The courses are named Fire, Earth, Water and Wind.

"I don't care what those folks at Augusta say, Pinehurst is the golf capital of America."

— North Carolina Congressman Howard Cobel addressing the Green Industry folks who attended Legislative Day on the Hill.

"It's kind of nice to come over here and get some rest. But [parenthood] has been great. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

— New father Tiger Woods on heading to Carnoustie, Scotland, for the British Open — and some peace and quiet. (*Sydney Morning Herald*)

Business Tip of the Month

Off The Fringe

To Lease or Buy Depends on a Few Factors

Whether to lease or buy turf equipment and golf cars involves some of the biggest decisions a superintendent makes. Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. "It depends on a lot of different factors," said Club Car Marketing Director Michael Read, echoing the thoughts of Toro Finance Marketing Manager Paul Danielson. Two of the most important factors are a club's cash situation and the importance it places on having newer equipment.

Leasing has been on the rise for the last decade. "Leasing started with the golf development boom of the mid-1990s," noted David Hamilton, vice president of sales for Club Car's Golf Americas group. Developers and owners put millions of dollars into designing and building courses and clubhouses during that boom period. Delaying large up-front purchases through lease arrangements was an attractive option for those new facilities.

Leasing instead of buying can be appealing from an accounting standpoint. A lease is generally treated like a rental expense rather than a balance-sheet item. That may help an operation live within loan covenants and potentially enhance some financial-performance ratios, such as return on equity. Leased equipment is also usually turned over every three to five years and can be serviced and stored by the distributor.

Leasing is just an option; many clubs still purchase their equipment. If a club owns its equipment, it will likely continue doing so and can roll its equity into a new purchase. If decision makers like to pay cash or make monthly payments to finance the purchase of their own cars, then buying golf cars and maintenance equipment may be more attractive. "That's the personal preference side of the issue, and there's nothing wrong with doing what feels comfortable, especially if it's a strategy that fits your business model or has worked well over time," Hamilton said.

Internal Revenue Service depreciation guidelines changed in 2003 and now allow owners to take a depreciation deduction up to \$100,000 of the purchase price in the first year of ownership. Prior to the change, depreciation deductions were scheduled over a longer period. An accountant can help decide whether this favors purchasing.

The "Tip of the Month" is provided by Syngenta to support superintendents in their agronomic, business and professional development. To comment on this column, submit a lesson from your own experience, or suggest a topic to be covered in a future issue, please visit www.golfbusinesslips.com.



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about their golf courses, they tell me that years ago, dollar spot was a spring and fall disease, and now they see it throughout the growing season.

With anthracnose, it used to be just a summer problem, and now we see it occurring much earlier or much later in the year during cooler weather.

I believe the reason these diseases are lasting longer is related to the improved playing conditions that superintendents are providing. With the improved playing conditions come more intensely managed turf that is being mowed shorter, allowed to dry out a little longer and not fertilized as much.

These are all stresses that lower the turfgrasses defenses and make it more susceptible to disease.

Generally what are the best tools that superintendents should have in their tool boxes to help them identify turf diseases?

Superintendents can stay current on the latest turf issues by attending educational events and seminars, whether it's at the Golf Industry Show or at their local state conference or meeting. Another important tool for superintendents is to keep in touch with other local superintendents to discuss what they are seeing on their own courses.

The Internet is a great tool and can provide excellent information on diseases. The Internet allows our turf pathologists to get information out to superintendents very quickly.

Lastly, a superintendent shouldn't be hesitant to send a turf sample to a local diagnostic lab to have them provide a formal diagnosis. You don't want to get caught in a situation where you are treating for the wrong disease. Such a situation could result in extensive damage on the turf, and unfortunately, it can put a superintendent's job in jeopardy.

Editor's note: To listen to a short podcast of a similar interview with Miller, visit www.golfdom.com/onlineexclusive.

Business briefs

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Arysta and Valent announce clothianidin agreement

Arysta LifeScience and Valent U.S.A. announced they have reached a supply and marketing agreement in the United States for the active ingredient clothianidin.

Under the terms of the agreement, Valent has rights to the brand names Arena, Clutch, Celerio and Belay. Valent will enter the crop and ornamental markets with clothianidin in September and the professional turf market by the end of November.

Arysta will continue to market clothianidin in premixtures for use in the granule and sprayable segments within the professional turf market under the brand name Aloft. Registration is anticipated before the end of November. Arysta and Valent will make separate announcements related to product offerings for the 2008 season.

Bayer Appoints Rees

Richard Rees is the new product development manager for fungicides and plant health for Bayer Environmental Science. Rees will be responsible for coordinating the development of new products and providing technical support for the fungicide portfolio, as well as coordinating the efforts of the new Bayer health plant initiative.

Miller Named LPGA Agronomist

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) appointed John Miller as the first full-time agronomist for the LPGA. Miller, a 24-year GCSAA Class A member and a certified golf course superintendent, will assist LPGA tournament operations staff in developing consistent course conditions and serve as a liaison between the LPGA and the host facility golf course management team.

Pursell Raises \$100,000

The 2007 Pursell Cup Charity Golf Challenge raised \$100,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) during two days in June at FarmLinks Golf Club in Sylacauga, Ala.

Survey Reveals Golf Course Owners' Plans, Thoughts

The nation's largest golf course owners have a few things on their collective minds, according to a recent survey. For starters, ownership groups are in deal-making moods and have their sights set on getting even bigger in the year to come. They also see their own employees as the key to attracting golfers to their courses and feel it's mostly the responsibility of local facilities to grow the game.

Those were among the findings of a survey of top executive officers attending the 2007 Multi-Course Owners Leadership Retreat hosted by the National Golf Course Owners Association in June in Monterey, Calif. The companies represented at the 12th-annual NGCOA conference own or operate seven or more courses in the United States and worldwide and are considered some of the golf industry's most influential leaders.

The largest number of attendees (44 percent) said they planned to increase their golf course holdings in the next 12 months through acquisition. That number was up from 29 percent a year ago. Seventeen percent said they planned to sell courses in the next year, and 25 percent said their plans included both acquisition and disposition.

A highly engaging and well-trained staff is the most effective tool in motivating golfers to choose one facility over another, according to 43 percent of the respondents. A "value-added" experience, which might include a free golf car rental, range balls or a restaurant credit, was the top choice of 25 percent of the owners and operators, while only 10 percent said discounting green fees is the best way to attract customers.

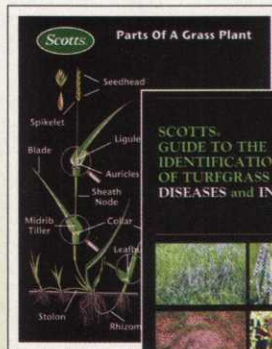


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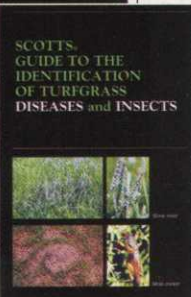
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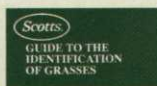
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