

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Name Change Ushers in New Era

FMC Specialty Products Business is now known as FMC Professional Solutions. FMC's Dan Rosenbaum said the name change heralds the beginning of a new era of "customer-driven innovation" for the organization, which is a part of the global FMC Corp.

"We chose to rename our organization as a way of demonstrating our dedication to providing creative solutions that answer a direct need in the marketplace," Rosenbaum said. "This organization is wholly focused on and driven by our customers' needs."

FMC first entered the pest control industry in 1987 and has since expanded its portfolio to address market needs in the golf, nursery, turf, ornamental, aquatics and other segments.

"We continue as FMC, seeking new and better ways to actively involve the customer at the beginning of the innovation process," Rosenbaum said. "Our new Innova Solutions initiative is one way in which we seek to do this."

Innova Solutions, launched in 2005, was created to help answer two key strategic needs — expansion of FMC's product line and aggressive innovation.

Ariens Buys National Mower

Brillion, Wis.-based Ariens Co. acquired St. Paul, Minn.-based National Mower Co. to gain access to the golf market. Mike Thuecks, an Ariens vice president, said in a report that the company, which began in 1933, hadn't been able to break into the golf market because it didn't have the distribution link.

Metsker, Meyer Honored

Stanley E. Metsker, retired golf course superintendent from Colorado Springs, Colo., and
Briefs continue on page 16

A Sad State of Affairs

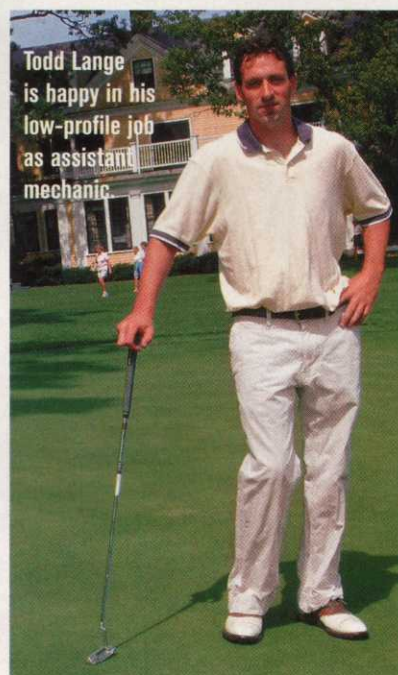
THE INDUSTRY SUFFERS
WHEN YOUNG, ASPIRING
SUPERINTENDENTS
DUMP THEIR DREAM JOBS

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

At 24, Todd Lange was a rising star in the golf course maintenance profession, but he didn't like what he saw or heard. Fickle and downright rude members prompted Lange to let go of his dream of being a superintendent just four years later. Although he hasn't totally extracted himself from the business, his story is an apt illustration of what can come when member expectations are out of control and the industry as a whole fails to confront the problem.

Now 28, Lange is enthusiastic about his job as assistant mechanic at The Country Club in Brookline, Mass., and the game of golf. The day I met Lange, who holds a 1 handicap, he reveled in the fact that he was playing a game he loved with others who enjoyed it as much as he did. And he was tickled to be the tour guide on our group's jaunt into the back nine of the heralded course.

It would appear that Lange is the perfect person to maintain a golf



course, for he loves the game, architecture and turf. But Lange turned his back on the profession he had been involved with since his high school days.

Lange began his career at a small private course in western Massachusetts and then moved on to a bigger course after graduating in 1998 from Stockbridge School of Agriculture with an associate's degree in turfgrass management. By that point, he was already getting a taste of the side of the business that would eventually drive him away.

Lange tells the story of forgetting to fill water coolers one weekend

ANALYSIS

morning at the course where he worked. That Monday he was grilled like a criminal about the error that he readily admitted he made.

"They wanted me to go talk with the green chairman," Lange said, shaking his head.

The topper came later in the week when Lange went out to play a few holes and walked past a couple of the members, one who said loudly enough so Lange would hear, "I'll bet the water coolers are filled today."

He swallowed that insult among others, thinking the business would only get better. He was sure it would when he went to work at Pine Valley Golf Club in New Jersey, working his way up to assistant superintendent. He said his life outside of the course did not exist; 90-hour workweeks made sure of that.

After 18 months, Lange quit Pine Valley and kicked around in Florida for a few years, including working on the crew at The Loxahatchee Club as the spray technician. After deciding to give his career in golf course maintenance another chance, Lange moved to eastern Massachusetts to work as assistant superintendent for a good friend at an exclusive private course. But it wasn't long before he encountered trouble.

He tells the story of a member charging up to the general manager of the club in front of Lange and the superintendent to complain about fairway damage incurred during aeration. Lange stood stunned as the member bellowed, "Did you see what that idiot did to the fairway? Somebody has to be held accountable."

Making the criticism even more ludicrous, the member was talking about a 5-foot-square patch of turf on one fairway.

"They just give you the bad," he said of the majority of golfers. "It's not that I can't deal with it, but what's the point? I don't know, maybe I'm just a baby, maybe I'm just a whiner."

He is neither. He is someone who had his fill of abuse and disrespect that would hardly be tolerated anywhere else but a country club setting.

The longer I'm around the golf course business, the more I become amazed by the abuse handed out on a near-daily basis to superintendents, course workers, pros and others. I'm not sitting behind a desk making these observations. I've worked at golf courses sporadically since 1998.

Somewhere along the line in the golf business, putting up and shutting up has been confused with toughness; as if tolerating an impugning of one's integrity is a badge of courage. It's not. It's a subservience that can only lead to stress and unhappiness.

Maybe in the classes on communication that the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America hosts at the Golf Industry Show, there should be time taken on how to confront and stop the growing problem of demeaning and unnecessary treatment heaved on superintendents.

Quotable

"Someone once said the nicest part of this industry is all the people in it. I'll second that. It's been a great 40 years for me."

— *Certified superintendent George Thompson on being inducted into the Carolinas Golf Hall of Fame.*

"You can look at superintendents a lot of ways. One of the ways is as the makeup man in the movies. They rarely get fired for going over budget. But they get fired a lot when the stars have warts on camera."

— *Bill Middleton, senior technical advisor for Miliken Turf Products and founder of Emerald Isle True Foliars, on the pressures superintendents face to deliver a perfect-looking product.*

"When we got to No. 17, I joked that I'd just hit the ball into that huge sand trap so I could lie there for a while and get a suntan."

— *Mitchell Glod, superintendent of Fort Cherry Golf Club in McDonald, Pa., who ended up getting a hole-in-one on No. 17 at FarmLinks Golf Club using a six iron.*

Everyone has his or her breaking point. You see it all the time. Many superintendents leave the business to sell chemicals or hawk mowers because they've reached their breaking points.

It's an unfortunate comment on the state of the industry, but their choices are understandable. But what's even worse than experienced superintendents leaving the business is young, aspiring superintendents leaving the business.

It is a sad state of affairs when Todd Lange and people like him walk away from their dreams. ■

Pioppi is a contributing editor for Golfdom.

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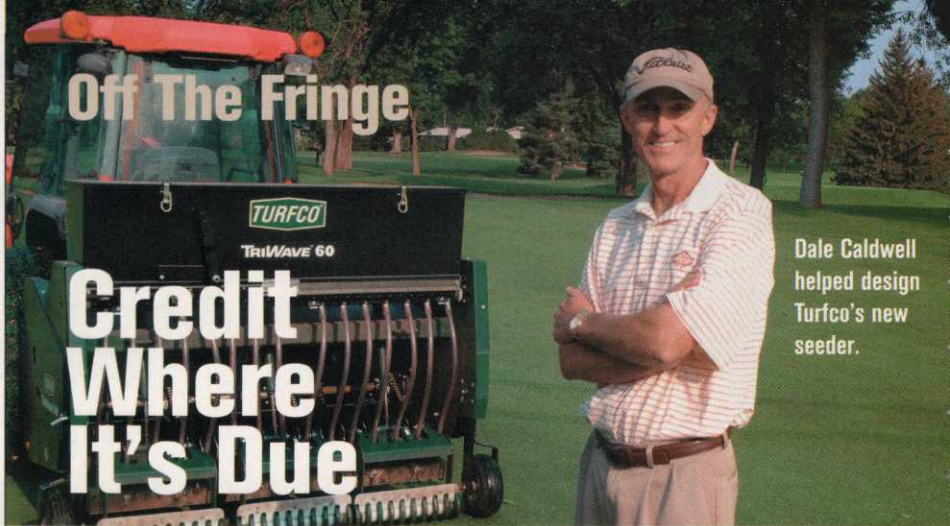
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Off The Fringe

Credit Where It's Due

Dale Caldwell helped design Turfco's new seeder.

TURFCO'S KINKEAD SALUTES SUPERINTENDENTS FOR HELPING TO DESIGN NEW EQUIPMENT

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

It was Scott Kinkead calling. The vice president of Turfco Manufacturing wanted to talk about his new seeder, the TriWave. But Kinkead wasn't calling to wax about how great the new machine performs. He was calling to talk about the superintendents who helped design it.

"I want to make sure they get the credit they deserve," Kinkead says.

It's not uncommon for superintendents to help companies create new equipment. It's just that superintendents, a humble bunch, often do it without much fanfare.

Kinkead recognizes that. So he credits superintendents for originating the ideas for many new products.

"We mechanize the solutions for the problems that they come up with," Kinkead says. "I just don't think people always appreciate how much impact superintendents have on the [development of] actual products."

One of the superintendents who helped Kinkead create the TriWave is Dale Caldwell, who has been the superintendent at the Minneapolis Golf Club for about 22 years. When Minneapolis-based Turfco began research on the TriWave three years ago, Kinkead visited the Minneapolis Golf Club to talk turf with Caldwell. He asked Caldwell what his challenges were when it came to seeding.

Kinkead and the Turfco engineers used Caldwell's feedback when they went to the drawing board to invent the seeder. Caldwell said the seeder he was using didn't follow contours very well, and it tended to rip up turf when run over high spots and not seed when run over low spots. Also, the seed would fall next to the slit.

"Dale told me, 'It would be nice if we could actually put the seed in the slit,'" Kinkead recalls.

It just so happens that Caldwell was one of the first superintendents in the nation to use the TriWave. Lord knows he needed it.

Caldwell's course suffered massive winterkill in the spring of 2005. The Minneapolis area received below-average snow that winter, but desiccation was at a premium thanks to continuous freeze and thaws.

"There wasn't a blade of grass on about 13 of my fairways when we came out of winter," Caldwell says.

Caldwell overseeded the course's fairways four times, once using the seeder he helped create before it was on the market. "The TriWave helped get the seed right where we wanted it," he says. "It was a bad year for golf courses, but it was a great time for us to come up with a seeder prototype."

Turfco's design features a disc, not a blade, which separates the soil. The Tri-

Continued on page 18

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 10

William A. Meyer, Ph.D., professor and director of the Turfgrass Breeding Project at Rutgers University, Cook College, are the recipients of the 2007 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Distinguished Service Award.

Toro Is First Victory Club Member

The Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, announced that The Toro Co. has become the first member of the Victory Club, recognizing its cumulative giving of more than \$1 million during the last 19 years.

"The Institute could not have accomplished what it has without the support of Toro," GCSAA CEO Steve Mona said.

USGA Teams With American Express

American Express and the United States Golf Association (USGA) agreed to make American Express the USGA's first corporate partner in the association's 112-year history. The USGA said the agreement will allow it to broaden its communication with golfers.

"We believe this partnership will allow us to reach more golfers and make them more aware of our many programs that benefit their golf game," said USGA President Walter W. Driver Jr.

Club Car Teams With EWGA

Club Car will help provide opportunities for women to learn, play and enjoy the game in conjunction with the Executive Women's Golf Association (EWGA).

"The Executive Women's Golf Association has led the way to make golf more accessible and welcoming for thousands of women who in turn have made the game and our industry stronger," said Phil Tralies, president and CEO of Club Car, a business of Ingersoll-Rand Company Limited, a diversified industrial firm.

As a supporting sponsor of the EWGA, Club Car will provide financial assistance and encourage EWGA membership among its employees, among other things. ■

In the Blood

REDEXIM'S HOLLIS GREW UP TO BE IN THE GOLF BUSINESS

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

The golf industry is in his blood, Paul Hollis says. But it was not a lineage he was particularly fond of while growing up.

The 43-year-old Hollis is the executive vice president of Redexim Charterhouse, a Zeist, Holland-based company that sells turf-management equipment for aerification, seeding and topdressing. But a funny thing happened to Hollis on his way to joining Redexim Charterhouse. He didn't want anything to do with the golf industry.

Hollis worked on his uncle's golf course during four summers in Carlisle, Ill., when he was growing up. He raked bunkers, ran weed eaters and washed golf cars.

"I did all the grunt work," he says.

Because it was a family business, Hollis wasn't paid a dime.

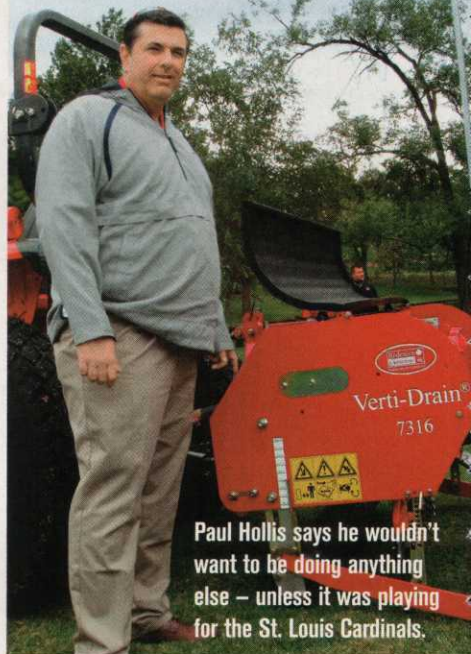
"It wasn't the most attractive job in the world," he says. "I almost felt like it was punishment. It was a lot of hours and a lot of dirty work."

Hollis didn't think highly of his uncle's profession of owning and maintaining a golf course. When he went to college at Arkansas State University, Hollis vowed he'd never work in the golf industry.

But Hollis landed a job after college with a turf and irrigation supply distributor in St. Louis. Seven years later he was hired as a salesman at another distributor that served golf courses. The bad memories of raking bunkers came back to him.

"At first I was apprehensive," Hollis says. "I began calling on superintendents. I had images of my uncle."

But Hollis soon developed an



Paul Hollis says he wouldn't want to be doing anything else – unless it was playing for the St. Louis Cardinals.

appreciation for the industry. He began to understand why superintendents had to work long hours. Hollis understood why they had to get dirty.

"I found a respect for what superintendents do, instead of a resentment," he says.

At Redexim, Hollis began as the Western sales manager. He was promoted to product manager, general sales manager and then general manager. He was named executive vice president in 2003. Hollis, a huge St. Louis Cardinals fan, resides near the city.

"It's a challenge," Hollis says of his role. "The fun aspect is coming up with marketing and business plans, putting them on paper and seeing them come to fruition."

One thing he misses is making sales calls to superintendents on golf courses.

"I see superintendents at trade shows, but I don't get out and see them at their golf courses as much as I'd like."

That's quite a revelation coming from a guy who once wanted nothing to do with the golf industry.

"I don't know that I'd want to do anything else," Hollis says now. "Once it's in your blood, you don't want to leave." ■

Off The Fringe

Continued from page 14
Wave also features 18-inch heads to follow contours better, improving seed-to-soil contact.

This is not the first time that Turfco and the Minneapolis Golf Club have teamed to devise a new product. The course's first superintendent, Herb Cohrs, and his brother, Arthur, had the idea for the first mechanized topdresser in the early 1960s. The brothers brought their idea to Turfco, known as Sodmaster then, to help them devise the topdresser. John Kinkead, Scott's father, worked with them to create it.

At the time, golf course maintenance workers used shovels to spread topdressing sand on greens. The first topdresser, developed by the Cohrs brothers in conjunction with Sodmaster, featured wooden slats and a wooden hopper. Turfco sold the first unit in 1961.

Caldwell is glad to continue the tradition of helping the Kinkeads design new equipment. "I'm happy to do anything I can to make anyone's job in this industry easier," he says. ■



Scott Kinkead (right) says golf course superintendents like Caldwell deserve credit for their ingenuity.

A Combined Effort

CHEMICAL COMPANIES ADD TO THEIR FORMULATIONS TO IMPROVE PRODUCTS

By Curt Harler

A trend in turfgrass seems to be to double-up chemicals ... or triple-up or quadruple-up, if that is the proper term. This trend was obvious in several presentations given by golf industry representatives at the C-5 Turfgrass meetings as part of the Crop Science Society of America gathering recently in Indianapolis.

Doubling-up is the theory behind a new wetting agent from Aquatrols. Synergistic alkylpolyglycoside-block copolymer surfactants give 1.4 times better water infiltration and increased the time for water runoff by 2.5, according to Stan Kostka, western regional sales manager for Aquatrols. The combination also seems to have some effect on increased nitrogen-use efficiency.

Bayer Crop Science is adding StressGard formulation technology to a number of fungicide products. Tartan, released earlier this year, features StressGard, a formulation that strengthens the plant and helps Tartan improve the overall turf quality while controlling 13 turf diseases. Bayer's new Lynx product, with activity against anthracnose and brown patch, also will be packaged with StressGard.

So, if two is good, does that make three better? Syngenta Professional Products' Instrata, a Daconil-Banner MAXX-Medallion combination, shows promise for snow mold control with activity on anthracnose, brown patch, summer patch and others.

Not to be outdone, PBI/Gordon has devised a four-way combination called Q4Turf, a herbicide that was registered in 2006. It combines Drive, Dismiss, 2,4-D and dicamba (Surge). Recommended for cool-season grasses, it might be approved for bentgrass in 2007. It may also be labeled for warm-season bermudagrass. Its use is recommended in 50 gallons of solution per acre (there was a significant improvement at 50 gallons versus 40). As would be expected, it has excellent activity on broadleaf weeds.

At Dow AgroSciences, the company's Escalade2 herbicide combines 2,4-D, fluroxypyr and dicamba. According to Mike Melichar, customer agronomist for Michigan and Indiana, Dow is also releasing a new sulfonamide herbicide that contains penoxsulam, which has good soil-residual activity. It is effective against English lawn daisy, a problem in the West. The product is safe on cool- and warm-season turf and is a "reduced risk" material. ■

Harler is managing editor of *Golfdom's TurfGrass Trends*.

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