

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### No Special Review for 2,4-D

The Environmental Protection Agency recently announced its decision to not initiate a special review for 2,4 dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D). "Based on extensive scientific review of many epidemiology and animal studies, the agency finds that the weight of the evidence does not support a conclusion that 2,4-D, is a likely human carcinogen," the EPA stated in an Aug. 9 news release. "The agency has determined that the existing data do not support a conclusion that links human cancer to 2,4-D exposure."

The EPA first considered a special review for the widely used herbicide in 1986.

### Ravel "Coming Home" to Syngenta

Dave Ravel is returning to Syngenta Professional Products in Greensboro, N.C., as its market manager for golf after spending four years as head of sales for consumer products with Bayer Environmental Science. Before that, he had been with Syngenta and legacy company Novartis from 1997 to 2003.

"Returning to Syngenta is like coming home," said Ravel, who graduated from Slippery Rock University with a degree in environmental education and earned a master's degree in business from Frederick Taylor University. "I've kept a close eye on the company as a competitor for the last four years. Syngenta has significantly grown its offering of products and services to the golf market"

Ravel replaces Joe DiPaola, who will lead a new initiative within Syngenta's ornamental business units. DiPaola was Syngenta's golf market manager for six years.

"Ravel brings a wealth of experience and leadership to the market, with a track record of

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## He's the Real Deal

ED BEGLEY JR., THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT TORO'S WATERSMART EVENT, IS A TRUE ENVIRONMENTALIST

By David Frabotta, Senior Editor

**A**ctor Ed Begley Jr. is a pretty cool guy. He's the furthest thing from a Hollywood snob you'll ever meet. In fact, he's probably the target of such snobbery when he arrives to tinsel-town events on his bicycle or in his electric car.

Oh sure, other Hollywood types will have a Prius for the political statement so media crews can get a glimpse of them saving energy when they pull up to their private jets.

But Begley — who was the keynote speaker at the second-annual Toro WaterSmart Symposium held in July at the company's irrigation headquarters in Riverside, Calif. — is the real deal. And he doesn't just ride his bike around town. He rides one to generate electricity at his house, too. That's right, after 10 minutes of furious peddling on his stationary bike, Begley generates enough electricity to make two pieces of toast. How many would be willing



Ed Begley rides his bike for 10 minutes to brown his toast. He also cooks his dinner in a solar oven.

to make that kind of time investment into such a small part of their days?

The rest of the house's electricity is generated by solar panels, and the Studio City neighborhood home also features a white picket fence made from recycled plastic, recycled rainwater for his drought-tolerant landscape, and energy-efficient appliances including a solar oven.

Begley has been showing the world how people can live greener, too. His reality show, "Living with Ed," premiered earlier this year, and season two began Aug. 27 on HGTV. But don't expect a militant preacher on a soapbox. He and his wife, Rachele Carson, continually negotiate lifestyle decisions and debate their environmental impact (she is very conscientious, but isn't quite on the same level as Ed. Who could be?).

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"Every single thing I've done that's been good for the environment has been good for my pocketbook," Ed Begley told attendees.

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So the show is a great microcosm of idealism versus practicality and the pampered lives we've come to expect.

And there is no doubt: It's not just for show. Begley wholeheartedly believes in the life he lives and he treasures his responsibility of treading lightly on the environment.

"There's no time to go door-to-door with all these issues, that's why I'm doing the show," Begley told an audience of 250 golf course superintendents, landscape irrigators and water district authorities at the conference, which was held in conjunction with the Irrigation Association's Smart Irrigation Month campaign.

"Every single thing I've done that's been good for the environment has been good for my pocketbook," Begley says.

Begley acknowledged that superintendents are good stewards of water

and irrigate wisely to reduce costs. He said the biggest opportunity to save water lies with homeowners.

But many golf courses can improve. Golf courses can save about 15 percent to 25 percent of the water they use with a weather-based system, says Erik Christiansen, a former superintendent turned irrigation contractor. He founded EC Design Group to help golf courses identify the most efficient and effective irrigation techniques for individual properties. Wind exposure, solar radiation, slope, shape, soil content and soil depth all influence how a space should be irrigated. Similar microclimates then can be linked into a single zone for irrigation needs.

Toro's WaterSmart Symposium moves to Las Vegas next year. The Irrigation Association Show takes place in San Diego Dec. 9-11. ■

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there from simple things like rotors that are wind tolerant so your water goes where you want it to go and not as much evaporates to smart pump technology that adapts to weather conditions coupled with smart controller technology that is evapotranspiration (ET)-based, where it measures the precise amount of water being used by the environment and replaces just that amount of water. Golf courses are bringing in advanced weather stations to help measure that ET data.

### **Where will the green industry stand in 10 to 20 years in regard to fresh-water use?**

I don't know if I can speak for an entire industry, but I can tell you what I'm observing. Almost without exception, people are taking more responsibility for it and looking for ways to solve the problem and be part of the solution. I think you'll see the golf industry in general figuring out ways where we can still enjoy a round of golf on a Sunday morning on beautiful green turf but still use water intelligently and not waste it.

*To listen to a podcast of a similar interview with Johnson, visit [www.golfdom.com/onlineexclusive](http://www.golfdom.com/onlineexclusive).*

## Golfdom's Blog of the Month



To me, most vanity license plates are just about the silliest and most self-absorbed thing you can waste your

money on. Oh sure, there are some clever and cute ones. A newlywed friend of my little brother has one that says TEACH4U (Mitsubishi Eclipse). She's yet to find a job, but her exuberance is adorable.

Then there's the minivan that says BILLPAYR. Ironically, they now have one extra bill to pay with the personalized plate. HAVEFUN or SUNGODSS on a convert-

ible makes me smile (and my wife jealous). My favorite one donned STOP EPA on a rebuilt 1978 F-150 in response to Ohio's mandatory emissions check (he had to write his congressman and present the letter to the BMV for that one.)

But it really annoys me when a vanity plate redundantly brags about the car.

MYPRSCHE from the movie "Office Space" epitomizes this redundancy quite well. If you drive a car, we already know the model and probably that it's yours (even if your daddy bought it for you).

LEXUS and S CLASS (Mercedes) are some of the least original. And it's hard to

go a day without seeing PONYGT or MSTNG on a ... well, you know what. Why don't you ever see FOCUS or TAURUS on a Ford? (Side note: What genius named the Aspire? Does it aspire to be a better car?)

So now it's your turn to let me have it. How many out there have TRFGURU, GRNSPEED or TURFGUY? What are the coolest or lamest vanity plates that you see around town? I bet each state has a HOT2TROT and an ALLTHAT with a bag of chips magnet on the bumper.

*E-mail your thoughts to David Frabotta at [dfrabotta@questex.com](mailto:dfrabotta@questex.com).*