

Business briefs

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success," said Steve Spain, head of Syngenta Commercial Lawn and Garden. "His knowledge of Syngenta and his unique perspective will be invaluable for us moving forward."

At Syngenta, he served as a field sales representative for the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions, regional sales manager for the Midwest, and program manager. With Bayer Environmental Science, he served as regional golf sales manager for the Southeast.

BASF Joins FarmLinks

BASF Turf and Ornamentals became a cornerstone partner with FarmLinks, a research and demonstration golf course in Sylacauga, Ala. BASF joins The Toro Co. and Agrium Advanced Technologies as cornerstone partners for the 18-hole, championship facility.

About 1,200 superintendents visit the facility each year for product training and information on how to manage turf problems. BASF plans to invite about 400 turf professionals to FarmLinks each year to learn more about its products. "The Experience at FarmLinks will help BASF reach our customers and end users through a variety of avenues, including product launch training, product demonstration, focus groups and relationship building with end users and distributors," says Toni Bucci, Ph.D., business manager for BASF Turf and Ornamentals.

Exact terms of the marketing partnership were not disclosed, but BASF will pay FarmLinks to use its products on the golf course, and BASF will have first right of refusal on future initiatives at FarmLinks in the areas of horticulture, aquatics, lawn care, forestry and integrated vegetation management.

The partnership arises as former cornerstone partner Syngenta Professional Products and FarmLinks "came to an amicable end in the middle of 2006," says Erle Fairly, president of FarmLinks. "In the normal course of business, programs and projects come to a close as strategies evolve, and we're continually re-evaluating them."

FarmLinks also recently added Aquatrols to its partner list. Other FarmLinks partners include Club Car, Tycrop Turf, DryJect, Profile Products and The Soil Reliever.

Taking Care of a Precious Resource

RAIN BIRD'S JOHNSON TALKS ABOUT WATERING WISELY

More than 2.7 billion people will face severe water shortages by the year 2025 if the world continues consuming water at the same rate. That's not some extreme environmental group talking. It's the United Nations.

Other reports — from similar-minded groups — state that nations will one day wage war over water. And this could happen soon, not in the next 500 years.

Golfdom Editor in Chief Larry Aylward recently spent time with Dave Johnson, Rain Bird's director of corporate marketing, and asked him questions about the water crisis and the golf industry's role in watering wisely.

Is the fresh water crisis as serious as some people say or are these just doomsayers predicting this resource's demise?

I think you've got things at both ends of the spectrum. Certainly, there are people out there who are overreacting. But the truth of the matter is there's a crisis and maybe sometimes you need a little overreaction to move the needle one way or another. You look out at different parts of the country like the South, Southwest and West and some of the reservoirs like Lake Powell and Lake Meade are at record lows. The truth of the matter is there isn't as much fresh water out there.

Are people, including superintendents, taking the crisis seriously?

I think it helps all of us for everyone to think about the water issues and think



about ways we can use less, and that certainly includes superintendents.

Several areas of the country experienced drought this summer. What did superintendents do to combat this drought?

You'll get all sorts of answers to that question, from some who didn't do anything to some who took it very serious. But every superintendent out there can benefit from what some who were more affected by drought were doing. They measured their water use. They looked at their irrigation systems and looked at their distribution uniformity. Some golf courses increased the number of sprinkler heads they put out on the turf because that actually leads to increased precision of their watering. Some golf courses also looked to technology — smart pump systems and smart weather control systems and things like that. In terms of turf care, some courses went as far as to stop watering the rough area and letting it go natural. We've also seen more courses using reclaimed water than before, sometimes by legislation and other times by choice. Also, golf courses are paying more attention to spaces that do not need irrigation, maybe having more native materials or areas of desert landscape with drip irrigation. I've even seen some places where cities are paying golf courses to take out areas of turf and replace them with something else.

What are irrigation manufacturers doing technology-wise to save water?

There's a lot of new technology out

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Off The Fringe



"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.

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.