

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Petro-Canada getting into golf business

Petro-Canada, the Calgary-based fuel and lubricant giant, is getting into the turfgrass chemical market with plans to introduce a golf course fungicide later this year, said Reinhold Drygala, manager of Lawncare Products. The fungicide product is a virtually non-toxic product, while the reduced risk herbicide will significantly reduce the amount of active ingredient used, he said.

"We've been following what's been going on with the (pesticide) bans in the municipalities in Canada, and we've been able to capitalize on our two decades of experience with agricultural spray fluids to develop some innovative products for turf care," Drygala told *Golf-dom* during the Golf Industry Show in Orlando.

He described the new products as being effective, safe and environmentally responsible. They are being readied for both the U.S. and Canadian markets.

"We've been talking to communities and telling them that before they consider an outright ban, here's a solution. There is no need to go from chemical to non-chemical completely," he said. "Some are listening."

Petro-Canada blends and packages more than 350 different lubricants, specialty fluids and greases that are exported to more than 60 countries on six continents. It says its products are manufactured from 99.9 percent pure base oils.

### Toro, ITT Flowtronex team up

Two companies are joining forces to help golf courses more efficiently manage water resources. The Toro Co. has partnered with ITT Flowtronex to allow Toro distributors to

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## What Has the 110th Congress Done?

**ANALYSIS**

NOT MUCH, DESPITE INDUSTRY CONCERN THAT IT WOULD

By David Frabotta, Senior Editor

**B**lame the Mitchell Report. Blame election politics or a closely divided Congress. Blame an ongoing war or squabbles over immigration reform. Blame the improprieties of Larry Craig and Tom Foley (at least we got that much-needed Page Board Revision Act out of it, one of eight laws enacted by this Congress).

Whomever you blame, it's clear that Congress has done little to impact golf businesses. Despite concern that the Democratic-controlled Congress would implement far-reaching environmental policies when it took over 18 months ago, the legislature largely has been unable to enact many environmental initiatives that much of the industry worried about.

"Our industry was right to be concerned just based on the track records of the congressmen in important environmental positions," says Carrie Riordan, lobbyist for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. "But the fact that Congress is so closely divided certainly has contributed to a lot of the inability to come



together (to enact legislation)."

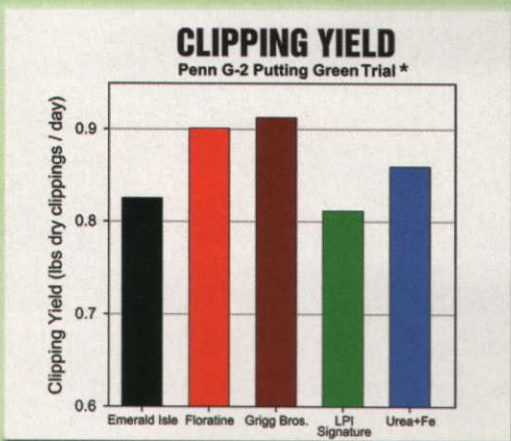
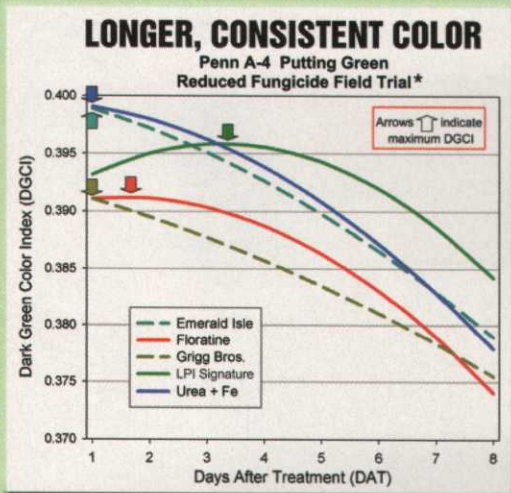
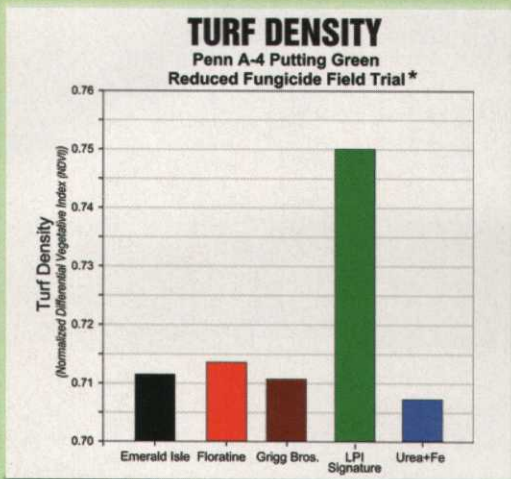
In one regard, it's kind of comforting that our do-little Congress was distracted enough to, well, do very little. We're a conservative bunch. And the legislature would rather address political wedge issues (remember Terry Schiavo?) and easy-to-digest politics rather than tackling the tough issues that might make America a better place to live.

I guess Roger Clemens is easier to find than Osama bin Laden, and baseball is easier to fix than Social Security.

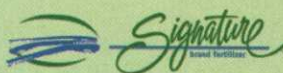
But environmental policies haven't exactly been on the back burner. Many failed bills littered the floor of the House and Senate or are held up in committees. Failures of note include America's Climate Security Act of 2007, which is stalled in subcommittee (although, I bet someone is pitching a new movie called "Climate Secu-

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\* Max Schlossberg, Ph.D (PSU), 2007.



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**“Navigating Product Evolution”** – Continued from page 20  
golf course superintendents in conjunction with the 2006 Golf Industry Show in Atlanta. During those focus groups, a matching exercise of a number of popular product brands, active ingredients and manufacturers showed that though superintendents are well educated on active ingredients, they don’t necessarily know which products contain which ingredients, or which basic manufacturer is responsible for each branded product.

**What can the chemical side of the golf industry do to change this dilemma? And how important is it for superintendents to know who’s making their products?**

Most participants in our focus groups actually expressed feeling embarrassed for not knowing which active ingredient belonged to which manufacturer. One of their suggestions was to prominently display the name of the active ingredient and the name of the basic manufacturer on the product label. And yes, it *is* important to know the manufacturer that is making and servicing you with a product. Quality is not always equal among products. There is value in what we’re doing in terms of production quality, technical service and complaint handling. That’s important for our customers to know. ■

**“Congress”** – Continued from page 14

ity” to Stephen Seagal right now), and the Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act of 2007 is also stalled in committee.

If they fail to reach the floor for a vote by election time, then they will need to be reintroduced by the 111th Congress in 2009.

While those might be coups for the industry, the legislature’s failure to agree on an immigration bill might have hindered superintendents’ ability to find necessary workers, especially because Congress allowed the returning-worker provision of the H2B visa bill to expire.

But the legislation that is having the biggest impact on turfgrass managers is being debated and implemented at the local level, Riordan says. Water-use issues have plagued the Southeast and Southwest, and water rights are being debated around the Great Lakes.

Municipalities still debate the regulation of phosphorous leeching, and a New York municipality is trying to ban leaf blowers to diminish noise pollution as well as emissions.

Here’s what we know: Politics are local. Golf business is local. Your confidence in the economy and personal prosperity are local. So seriously, can you afford to stay on the sidelines while city councils, watershed councils and others in the community continue to create obstacles that prevent you from doing your job as superintendent?

After all, we don’t really need change that we can believe in. We need people who we trust to make the right decisions. And whom do you trust more than yourself? ■