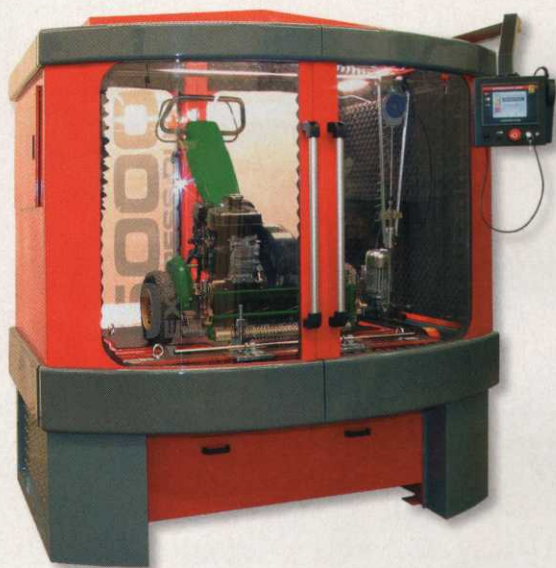


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Off The Fringe

Navigating Product Evolution and Confusion

BASF'S BUCCI DISCUSSES WHAT THE INDUSTRY CAN
DO TO COMBAT PESTICIDE PRODUCT

Research shows that many superintendents have a difficult time correctly identifying a chemical's brand with its manufacturer. Industry acquisitions often bring about changes in active ingredient ownership, further confusing the marketplace as to which company owns which molecule. Toni Bucci, Ph.D., the business manager of the BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals, is an expert in this area. *Golfdom* Editor in Chief Larry Aylward recently discussed the topic with Bucci.



Toni Bucci

What are some of the non-traditional ways that active ingredients make it to market? And could you explain how and why this happens?

Basic manufacturers are challenged to constantly provide innovative products to the marketplace. Considering the time investment to bring a new product to market, which is roughly 10 years, and considering changing customer needs, manufacturers really have to combine both science and marketing to find new solutions for customers.

Innovation in this industry has many forms. It is scientific discovery, but it's also making the right business decisions at the right time. Though we're committed to R&D, acquisitions of active ingredients are an important piece of that. Basic manufacturers are always keeping an eye out for unique ways to help solve those unmet customer needs.

I understand that it took BASF's Trinity fungicide nearly 20 years to find a home. Can you talk about the product's evolution?

Triticonazole, today known as Trinity fungicide, was discovered by Rhone Poulenc in 1988 but wasn't rigorously tested until 1997. Triticonazole was then taken over by Aventis through a merger with Rhone Poulenc and then Bayer Environmental Science acquired the active ingredient when Aventis was purchased. Triticonazole was actually submitted for registration as Triton on March 14, 2002, and then it changed hands again to BASF in the latter half of 2002. In that year, BASF acquired a number of assets, which included

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global rights to triticonazole, but it really wasn't even until 2005 that we gained exclusivity for use in U.S. turf. So it took nearly 15 years for the product to find a permanent home and then another five before it came to market. The product received federal registration by EPA on Jan. 11, 2007.

I understand you have done some research showing that many product users aren't able to match product brands, active ingredients and manufacturers. How much of this is a problem with golf course superintendents?

We conducted some research that shows that there is some confusion out there.

BASF conducted two focus groups with

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Quotable

"We talked shop right up until the end, and he always had a twinkle in his eye when we talked about golf and turf. I owe everything to my dad when it comes to teaching me the business and also the lessons of life. I will miss telling him I love him."

— Bruce Williams, certified golf course superintendent at the Los Angeles Country Club, on the March 7 death of his father and mentor, Robert, an industry icon who spent 60 years in the golf course maintenance profession, including 21 years as Bob-O-Link Golf Club's superintendent. (Chicago Tribune)

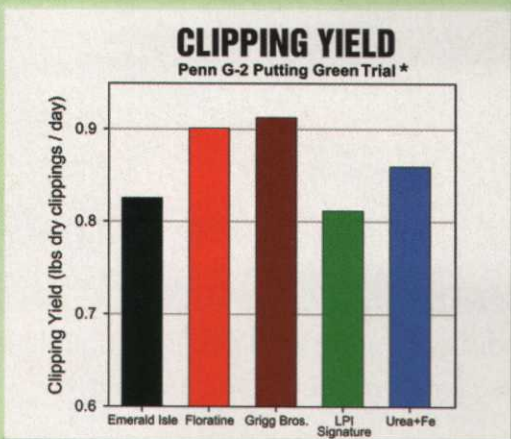
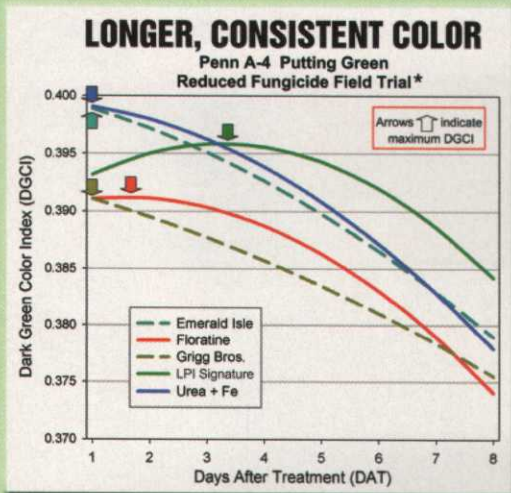
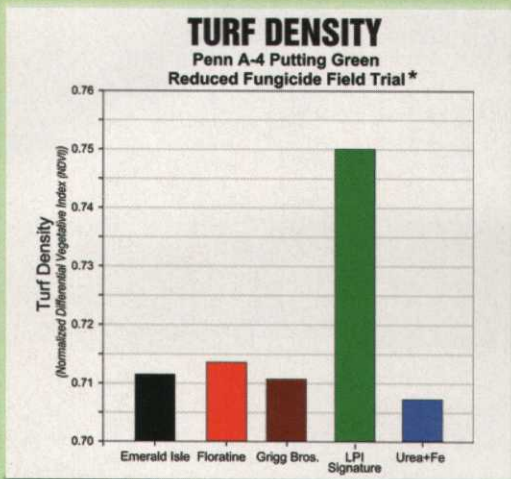
"What do you get when you put basketball and golf together? You get Charles Barkley tearing up the turf."

— Jason Fausey, market development specialist for Valent U.S.A., on the harsh consequences that turf must endure from certain golfers.

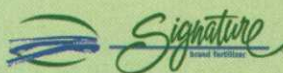
"I like the kid but he's got to get his head on straight. The partying and other shenanigans . . . if that's the way he wants to be, I don't choose to be a part of it."

— Renowned golf coach Butch Harmon on John Daly, his former student, who seems to be interested in things other than golf. (Associated Press)

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



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Off The Fringe

“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? ■