

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Andersons Gets Grant for Granules

The Andersons says that a collaborative team it is leading will receive \$5 million in grants from the Ohio Third Frontier Commission. The grants are for the development and commercialization of advanced granules and other emerging technologies to provide solutions for the economic, health and environmental concerns of today's agricultural industry, according to a press release.

The collaborative team consists of:

- The Andersons, a 60-year-old Maumee, Ohio-based diversified agribusiness that markets proprietary and patented dispersible granular technology for the turf industry through its Turf & Specialty Group.
- The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, the nation's largest ag-biosciences center.
- Syngenta Crop Protection, an agribusiness company committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology, which has invested in advanced granules for global consumption.
- PSB Co., a Columbus, Ohio-based manufacturer of granule applicators.
- National Lime and Stone Co., a Findlay, Ohio-based limestone supplier and granulator of advanced soil-dispersing granules.
- Ohio Bio-products Innovation Center, a Third Frontier Wright Center of Innovation group to foster industry and academic collaboration.

"This grant will enable us to accelerate our research in extending this proprietary technology to agriculture applications that we believe will provide benefits on a global scale. We are proud to be a leader in this project," said CEO Mike Anderson.

*Briefs continue on page 16*

## After the Flood

WHILE MOST IOWA COURSES ARE GETTING BACK TO NORMAL, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF JUNE'S NATURAL DISASTER REMAINS TO BE SEEN

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

### "IT LOOKS LIKE KATRINA."

A lot of us said that when we saw photographs of Iowa after the state endured severe floods in June. We thought of Hurricane Katrina and how it wiped out the Gulf Coast in 2005 with fierce flooding.

The Midwest, however, is not a safe haven from Katrina-like flooding. Much of Iowa was hammered by severe storms and intense rain last month. Eighty-three of Iowa's 99 counties were declared disaster areas by Gov. Chet Culver.

Cedar Rapids, the state's second-largest city, was hard hit. In fact, the natural disaster is being called a 500-year flood in Cedar Rapids and other parts of Iowa. That means there is a one in 500 chance of such a terrible flood occurring in any given year. Incidentally, the city's Cedar River crested at 31.2 feet, 15 feet above flood stage.

The golf course industry, of course, was greatly impacted by the flooding. But a month later, things are getting back to normal, says certified superintendent Jeff Wendel, executive director of the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association.

"Our guys have been through hell, but they are coming out on the other end," he said.

Still, Wendel is concerned about the economic impact the flooding will have on the Iowa golf course industry. "I think it will be this time next year before we really know the economic impact," he says. "We have a number of courses that won't be open until this time next year." It has been a tough year for golf course superintendents in Iowa. The state's courses had a major problem with winterkill that superintendents had to endure. "Then, just as they started getting back in shape, the floods came," Wendel says.

Most all of the state's roughly 400 courses were impacted by the heavy rain, Wendel says. About 100 courses were flooded. "Some courses that don't even have streams on them were closed for a few days because of the heavy rains," he adds.

Wendel's big concern is that people have gotten out of the habit of playing golf.

"Play is way down," he says. "It will be hard to get those rounds back."

Wendel says the Iowa Golf As-

*Continued on page 16*



## Off The Fringe

# Less May Be More in This Case

GRAIN COMMODITY PRICES PUSH GROWERS TO DEDICATE FEWER ACRES TO TURFGRASS SEED. BUT THOSE ACRES SHOULD YIELD BETTER PRODUCTS

By David Frabotta

Just about 30 miles from downtown Portland, Ore., wide expanses of crops and grazing cattle welcome the morning amid rooster crows and the familiar rumble of commercial tractors. Those wide expanses include turfgrass seed plants as far as the eye can see.

But unfortunately for superintendents and their respective budgets, there's a lot less turfgrass being grown today, largely because farmers are opting for heavily subsidized and more lucrative corn and soy, much of which is used for ethanol production. Wheat is in high demand as well, and canola and soy continue to quench the thirst for a healthy and reasonably priced fryer oil as more fast-food chains free themselves of trans fats. This summer's flooding in the Midwest has been a significant accelerator for food prices, too.

As farmers plant more grains to cash in on higher food prices, turfgrass acreage falls. Total bluegrass acres planted are about half of what they were five years ago, says Kevin Turner, director of seed research and production for The Scotts Co., and fine fescue acres are a tad lower than normal.

"The price of grass seed is going to change," Turner told growers in late June at the company's field day in Gervais, Ore. "We're looking at probably strong price increases in bluegrass and fine fescues, and smaller increases on ryegrasses and tall fescues."



## Quotable

**"Hey, I know I suck. But I got nice equipment."**

— Former NBA great Charles Barkley on his not-so-great golf game. Barkley was hitting three and was not yet to the women's tee when he said this. (ESPN)

That's the bad news. The good news is that the varieties being planted have characteristics selected for what superintendents need, like the ability to tolerate low mowing heights and drought. At nearby turfgrass research facilities owned by Pure Seed Testing (Hubbard, Ore.) and The Scotts Co., cultural practices and chemical regimens are monitored closely to create turfgrass varieties that perform in line with those emerging needs. Tee-2-Green also hosted a field day for growers at the Pure Seed facility.

Among the field trials at the testing and research facilities are wear-tolerant and drought-tolerant fescues, ryegrasses that need less water, bluegrass blends that grow in almost full shade or thrive despite low-mowing, and fine fescues that have been traditionally bred for glyphosate resistance.

Developed by Scotts through selective breeding, its glyphosate-tolerant fine fescue helps primarily with *Poa annua* control because it tolerates about 8 ounces of active ingredient per 1,000 acres, which isn't strong enough to kill many broadleaves but is strong enough to kill annual bluegrass. While Roundup-Ready creeping bentgrass — a transgenic turfgrass engineered by Scotts — continues to be tested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its fine fescue is making its way onto American golf courses.

Unlike its transgenic counterpart held up in the USDA approval process, fears that the fescue's ability to tolerate glyphosate will jump into weed populations are very low because the turfgrass is naturally selected, not genetically altered.

"The opportunity for glyphosate resistance on the weeds we are trying to control are extremely low compared to many of the other products that we are using today," says Eric Nelson, Ph.D., a seed researcher for The Scotts Co.

Many of the new varieties being researched and grown for next year's seed could help superintendents tread easier on the environment, a theme commonly alluded to amid trials for drought tolerance and fewer fertility requirements. ■

**Scotts agronomist Jim Frelich explains the parameters of a partial-shade study. He says shaded turf has a better chance to thrive if it is mowed as high as possible.**



## Off The Fringe

# Are You Stressed Yet?

SEMINARS ADDRESS SUMMER  
STRESS OF TURFGRASS AS WELL  
AS SUPERINTENDENTS

By David Frabotta

If you're not sure why your turfgrass is dying this summer, then it's probably because several factors are contributing to its decline. Poor growing environments, improper irrigation and mechanical injury are all primary causes for turf loss during

summer stress, and pathogens and chemical practices can contribute to turf loss under the right conditions.

Summer decline complex is appropriately named because a complex denotes two or more inter-related factors that contribute to a problem, which is why diagnosing maladies is so difficult amid summer stress, says Peter H. Dernoeden, professor of turfgrass management and pathology at the University of Maryland.

"About 30 percent to 40 percent of all samples are negative for a primary pathogen, and that's a conservative number," Dernoeden told superintendents and distributors during a regional Stomp Out Stress Seminar in Philadelphia hosted by Bayer Environmental Science, which conducted several of the regional events this year.

Superintendents commonly diagnose many summer stress manifestations as takeall patch, Dernoeden says. But the fungus *Gaeumannomyces incrustans* creates many of the same symptoms, and only a molecular test will diagnose its presence properly. Sometimes outbreaks could be hallmarks of underlying causes, Dernoeden says. For instance, anthracnose can be an indication of low nitrogen and mechanical injury.

If superintendents experience turfgrass loss due to any of summer's pressures, odds are good that they will be feeling the heat themselves. Managing the professional stress along with turfgrass can be a challenge, largely because stress comes from so many sources, including labor, employees, boards, committees, golfers and bosses.

Much of that stress can be alleviated if the management team is on the same page, organizational strategist Barbara Jodoin said. That might require a different organizational structure for the club, where members are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to operations instead of executive teams or boards of directors. "You need to serve the same master to operate a club successfully," says Jodoin, who is also general manager for Pinetree Country Club in Kennesaw, Ga. ■



## The Turfco CR-10 makes it happen!



Whether you're top dressing your fairway, renovating bunkers or relocating material, the Turfco® CR-10, with a 4 cubic yard hopper, is the workhorse you've been looking for. Its patented three-position switch, cross-conveyor flow control and self-cleaning hopper make it the most effective material handler available. And now the CR-10 is available with WideSpin™ technology—allowing you to deliver light or heavy top dressing applications at unprecedented widths and depths. All this—plus a three-year warranty. The CR-10. Don't start a project without it.

Call 1-800-679-8201 for a  
free on-site demonstration or video.

1655 101st Avenue NE • Minneapolis, MN 55449-4420 U.S.A.  
(763) 785-1000 • Fax (763) 785-0556 • [www.turfco.com](http://www.turfco.com)

**TURFCO**  
THE LEADER. SINCE 1961.



# Off The Fringe

**"Flood"** — Continued from page 10

sociation has asked Gov. Culver to declare two golf holidays to spur play, not to mention the collective economic engine of the state's golf courses.

"I have to believe there are a lot of facilities that are in major financial pain," Wendel says. "But this is Iowa ... people will fix things and move on."

Some Gulf Coasters might be willing to help. Wendel says the Louisiana-Mississippi GCSA contacted him to see if its members could help. The Iowa GCSA had done the same for its peer association after Katrina hit.

"The spirit is there," Wendel says. ■

## Products you gotta have!

- Low cost, low maintenance. The ultimate in durability and dependability
- Optional Kawasaki 9 Hp engine for maximum power, quiet operation
- Heavy gauge steel ramp for easy loading, unloading
- Handles up to 1/2-ton loads



@hiiks.com

**Red Rider.**  
Durable. Dependable.

weedalert.com

## The Turf Professional's Free On-line Source for Weed ID and IPM Control Recommendations

- Weed ID Photos • Regional Alerts
- Control Options • Turf School Links

**TEST YOUR WEED IQ!**  
**WEEKLY CONTEST-**

Correct ID  
Can Win This  
**Magic Mug**  
With Disappearing Ink



An Industry Service From



An Employee-Owned Company

## Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 10

### Aquatrols Forms Water Impact Alliance

Paulsboro, N.J.-based Aquatrols has formed and launched the Water Impact Alliance (WIA), an organization dedicated to educating and promoting effective communications between regulators, consumers and water users in the green industries. The WIA will serve as an information and communications planning source for green industry professionals on key issues affecting water resource regulation at the federal, state and local levels, according to Aquatrols. The organization will partner with other green industry groups and provide information and unique planning tools to industry professionals, helping them to communicate as effectively as possible with regulators, consumers and other key stakeholders about water stewardship and conservation.

Leaders in the green industry are applauding the WIA, citing it as a much-needed outreach effort to ensure that green industry professionals are heard in the water regulatory debate, according to Aquatrols. Industry leaders also like that the initiative provides turf and ornamental professionals with methods of engaging consumers at the local level, to help educate the public about the ongoing water conservation practices in the industry.

"The launch of the Water Impact Alliance comes at a crucial time," said Mark Esoda, certified golf course superintendent of the Atlanta Country Club, in a press release issued by Aquatrols. "The group gives our industry a way to perform an important public service, as well as an excellent platform for making our voices heard in the regulatory debate."

The Water Impact Alliance was formed in part as an industry response to increasing water regulation on the federal, state and local level, according to Aquatrols. "We realized that the turf and ornamental industry has a tremendous amount of knowledge about wise water management," says Kathy Conard, marketing manager for Aquatrols. "It's not enough to craft and adopt best management practices — we need to communicate that to consumers and other key stakeholders, so they get the true picture of our industry's hard work in this area."