

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.

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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 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-

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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. ■

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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.”

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