

become too expensive for many companies to produce because it is derived from hydrocarbons, mainly natural gas. As petroleum-based prices escalate, manufacturers must look abroad for the economically viable production of raw urea. Most of the urea imported through St. Louis comes from China, Russia and Saudi Arabia, Stegmann says.

“This is an important development because crop farmers can raise prices, but the turf and ornamental markets are incurring higher costs without any real mechanism to raise their prices,” he told the media and distributors at the center’s grand opening in September. “Fertilizer prices probably won’t go back to the way they were, probably ever.”

The world uses about 130 million metric tons of urea for fertilizer each year. The urea center has output capacity of about 1 million metric tons each year. Other fertilizer makers, including Agrium Advanced Technologies, lease warehouse space and handling services from the urea center.

The company also expanded Agrotain’s Stabilized Nitrogen Center, a manufacturing facility that can produce 125,000 tons of its falling-curtain UMAXX and UFLEXX fertilizers each year. Its proprietary process incorporates a urease inhibitor and a nitrification inhibitor to allow a more efficient and longer-lasting absorption process, according to the company. ■

‘Elite’ Assistants Attend Green Start Academy

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

“You guys are the elite,” Scott Welge said. “That’s why you were chosen for this.”

Welge, director of marketing of green professional products for Bayer Environmental Science, was speaking to the 54 assistant golf course superintendents in attendance at the third-annual Green Start Academy, a two-day educational and networking event sponsored by Bayer Environmental Science and John Deere Golf. The event took place Oct. 1-3 at Bayer’s technical training center in Clayton, N.C., and John Deere’s Turf Care Manufacturing Facility in Fuquay Varina, N.C.

The 54 assistant superintendents were selected to attend the event by a panel of industry experts after being nominated by their respective superintendents and then submitting essays on why they should be invited. The assistants heard presentations from some of the top superintendents in the business, including

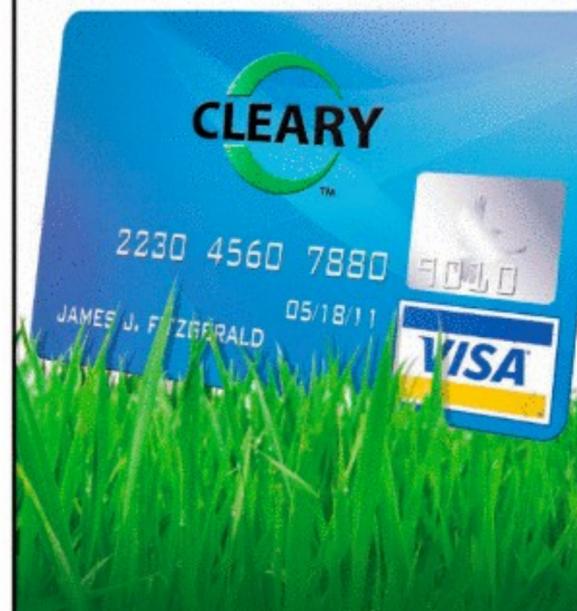
Bob Farren, director of grounds and golf course management at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club, and Bruce Williams, director of golf courses and grounds at the Los Angeles Country Club. They also heard from top technical personnel from Bayer and Deere as well as university professors and other industry professionals.

One of those professors was Dan Bowman from North Carolina State University, who spoke on water management. The roomful of assistants chuckled collectively after hearing Bowman say, “The worst thing to happen to golf turf is color television.”

Bowman, of course, was referring to TV networks that often portray golf courses as places of perfection with their well-manicured emerald-green turf, meticulously edged white-sand bunkers and placid blue-colored ponds. The assistants clearly understood Bowman’s point that they had to strike a balance between being responsible irrigators and providing golfers with fine-looking turf.

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Off The Fringe

“Assistants” — *Continued from page 13*

Bowman spoke about several water issues, mainly availability and quality. He asked the 54 assistant superintendents in attendance how many of them used reclaimed water at their golf courses. Not many hands went up.

“That will change,” Bowman told them, predicting that more golf courses will use reclaimed water for irrigation in the coming years.

The assistants also heard a presentation on “Career Development” from Dave Fearis, director of membership for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Fearis reminded assistants that there’s more emphasis on the business end of golf than ever, and superintendents are expected to know the numbers game. “Revenue has really entered into your profession,” he said.

While Williams is regarded as a highly successful superintendent, he



Did someone lost their car keys? No, they’re watching for fire ants, which Bayer Environmental Science houses for pesticide study at Bayer’s development and training center in Clayton, N.C., where assistant superintendents were given a tour of the center’s grounds and research facilities.

told assistants he has never felt any job security, which Williams said keeps him in focus to perform at a high level in his job every day.

And even though Williams is at one of the top clubs in the country, he said that doesn’t remove him from any criticism. He told assistants he still takes his punches. “I’ve been called every insult you can think of,” he added.

Nick Hamon, Ph.D. and director of development and technical service for Bayer Environmental Science, gave a presentation on “Sustainable Development.” He told assistants that it takes about \$270 million to bring a new pesticide to market.

“We take this very seriously; we have to,” Hamon said in regard to the high cost. ■

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