

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### SoCal Supers Can Get Cash Through Rebate Program

A new rebate program that helps Southern California golf courses save water while improving distribution uniformity has been launched by the state's Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and local water agencies, according to Underhill International.

Called "Save Water – Save a Buck," the program encourages golf course superintendents to replace plastic nozzles on large turf rotors with solid metal FCI Profile nozzles. The metal nozzles have been shown in testing by the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT-California State University, Fresno) to improve irrigation distribution uniformity while conserving water and energy, according to Underhill International, which manufactures the nozzles.

Golf courses receive a \$13 rebate per replacement set of metal nozzles with a 25-nozzle set minimum. There is no maximum on the metal nozzle sets that can be retrofitted. The program is currently offered in four counties: Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County and southern Ventura County. FCI Profile nozzles are the only nozzles that have been tested by the CIT and approved by MWD for this rebate program, according to Underhill International.

"With water consumption in the Southwest at a reported 88 million gallons per course annually, it is not surprising that water districts in the Sun Belt are seeking innovative ways to use water more efficiently while also improving play conditions and turf health," said Ed Underhill, president of Underhill International.

For more information, contact [www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com) or call 877-728-2282.

## MSMA Lives ... For Now

HERBICIDE MAY NOT BE BANNED BY EPA AFTER ALL, RESEARCHER SAYS. ALSO, A NEW HERBICIDE FOR POA CONTROL?

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**W**hat would Mark Twain say about MSMA? That the rumors of the embattled herbicide's demise have been greatly exaggerated.

Golf turf expert Fred Yelverton, a professor of crop science at North Carolina State University, is saying the same thing. Yelverton, who spoke at the Warm-Season Weed Control Symposium sponsored by Bayer Environmental Science July 9-10 in Newport, R.I., reported that the Environmental Protection Agency might not ban MSMA after all.

MSMA, classified as an organic arsenical, is used for grass weed control in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass and on some cool-season turfgrasses. It is used for postemergence control of goosegrass, crabgrasses and dallisgrass in bermudagrass. In 2006, EPA announced it would cancel reregistration of any pesticides containing MSMA. Arsenic levels left by MSMA "raise a concern for can-

cer risk," EPA officials concluded.

But nearly two years later, MSMA is still around. "We thought EPA was going to ban it six months ago," Yelverton said, "but it has new life. What are the chances of keeping it? I would say 50-50. The final decision could be tomorrow, or it might be six months from now."

EPA is taking a second look at MSMA because the organization admits it acted too quickly to dismiss it.

"There are some people who believe the EPA was under political pressure to ban some products," Yelverton said. "Because MSMA was not used in many commodities, it was an easy target."

The EPA has agreed to take a second look at MSMA for two reasons, Yelverton said. First, it underestimated the need for MSMA, especially in the golf course industry. Second, EPA admits it might have overestimated the risk of organic arsenic and MSMA's contribution to environmental inorganic arsenic levels. Yelverton noted that organic arsenic is a naturally occurring element. The problem has been that people, including environmentalists, associate MSMA with inorganic arsenics, which are very toxic. "But organic arsenics are not," he added.

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Fred Yelverton



## Off The Fringe

### One ... Make That Two ... for the Golfing Ages



**R**ick Miles (right) and Kevin Ritter might want to buy a few lottery tickets together. Or head to the Las Vegas casinos together. Good things happen when Miles and Ritter, who are superintendent and assistant superintendent of Westview Golf Course in Quincy, Ill., are together.

On June 30, for instance, Miles and Ritter each aced the 176-yard, seventh hole. And get this: They were playing in the same foursome and riding in the same golf car. And get this: They did it back to back!

Ritter, using a 4-iron, was the first to ace it. Miles followed with a 6-iron.

It was Ritter's first hole-in-one and it was Miles' fourth ace. Odds of this happening are reportedly 17 million to one.

"All four of us went nuts after the first one, which took about five minutes of high fives," Miles says.

After the celebrating, Miles joked to Ritter that he would follow with his own ace. And when he hit his tee shot . . .

"I knew it had a chance," he says, "and when it hit the stick and dropped in, everyone went numb. We couldn't believe what we just witnessed. I had to have Kevin pinch me to see if I was dreaming." ■

**MSMA** — Continued from page 10

Yelverton pointed out that research shows MSMA has low mobility and strongly absorbs into soil. "From an environmental standpoint, it's safe," he added.

*Poa* control was also a popular topic of discussion at the meeting. Why is *Poa annua* such a problem, asked Bert McCarty, professor of horticulture at Clemson University. "Because there are so many biotypes," he answered.

"Of course, the [superintendents] up North have pretty much given up [on controlling *Poa annua*]," McCarty said. "But down South we're still trying to fight it, whether it's in bentgrass, overseeded ryegrass or overseeded *Poa trivialis*."

In his seminar on *Poa*, Yelverton says he has found a herbicide — amicarbazone — that controls the pesky weed on bentgrass pretty darn well. "I can tell you that it's the best thing I've seen in terms of herbicides in awhile [to control *Poa*]," Yelverton said of amicarbazone, which is not currently available in the United States.

There are keys to the herbicide's success, however. It should not be applied in the late summer or early fall when bentgrass' root structure is at its weakest, Yelverton said. Yelverton tested amicarbazone on perennial *Poa annua* in the spring and results were much better because the bentgrass' root structure was much healthier and deeper. He applied amicarbazone (2.6 ounces per acre) on Crenshaw bentgrass on March 28 and April 17 on a golf course in Wilmington, N.C. "We had 100 percent perennial *Poa annua* control, and perennial *Poa annua* is the tough stuff," Yelverton said. "The superintendent at the course went nuts."

Yelverton says amicarbazone performed well on A-1, A-4 and L-93 bentgrass when applied in the spring. However, Yelverton said other tests revealed that the Penncross bentgrass variety is not tolerant to amicarbazone in the spring or fall.

"I think [amicarbazone] has potential," Yelverton concluded. "It's something to work on." ■

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