

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Flat as a Pancake in Kansas

Golf rounds came in at 0.0 percent for July. That's right, golf rounds were neither up or down for the month when compared with July 2008. Breaking it down, public courses were up slightly (0.1 percent) and private courses were down slightly (0.4 percent), according to Golf Datatech. The findings represent 4,025 reporting courses.

For the year, rounds are up 0.2 percent — probably better than most people expected.

### Andersons Appoints Bandy, Black

Maumee, Ohio-based Andersons Golf Products announced two significant changes in its regulatory, technical and marketing departments. Marketing Manager Mike Bandy is filling a new role of technical services manager, in charge of product development, regulatory and product management. Tasha Hussain Black will fill the new marketing development manager position to support the professional turf, consumer, industrial and cob sales units.

The Andersons said the changes are being made to better meet its resource needs related to the increasing regulatory scrutiny surrounding the green industry, as well as increased activity related to the \$5 million Ohio's Third Frontier Research and Commercialization grant, which the company was awarded for the advancement of granular technology.

Black is currently vice president of technology for the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP) and director of Launch, a business-assistance program focused on supporting tech-based start-up companies in northwest Ohio.

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Dave Shetlar makes his point.

## The BugDoc Gets Antsy

### NOBODY CAN TELL A STORY ABOUT INSECT CONTROL LIKE OHIO STATE'S SHETLAR

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**N**obody in the golf course maintenance world — make that the world — can talk more eloquently about insect control than Dave Shetlar, professor of urban landscape entomology at the Ohio State University and known as The BugDoc.

In August, I attended the 2009 Turfgrass Research Field Day at Ohio State. The event, sponsored in part by the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, reports on research findings in various capacities, especially in the use of pesticide trials. Shetlar's presentation was titled, "Control of the Turfgrass Ant, *Lasius neoniger*, on Ohio Golf Courses." OK, at first glance, maybe such topics don't have

a lot of bite, no pun intended. But when Shetlar's waxing about them, they come to life.

"If you haven't had them," Shetlar said of the turfgrass ant, "then you're probably lying or applying way too many pesticides."

The turfgrass ant is one of the most common inhabitants of turfgrass in the northeastern U.S., Shetlar said. The ants build mounds on greens and tees, which can kill shortly cut turf, interfere with play and dull mower blades. You can apply insecticides with short residual activity and kill foraging worker ants on the surface, but this would only stop mounding activity for a few weeks because the colony survives,

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Shetlar said. The key, he added, is to kill the queen, the colony and the brood (larvae).

But you have to have an insecticide to get at the colony, where they're feeding underground. Let Shetlar explain, as only he can.

"The ants store food in their nests.

They do it in a very interesting manner. They don't just store food; they use living cupboards, which are called replete ants. These ants say to the other ants, 'Just keep bringing me food.' And [the replete ants] keep swelling up. They sit there and just get fat. They become the community stomach. So when there's a shortage

of food or the ants can't get food, the workers come up to the replete ants and say, 'Hey remember all that food I gave you? Cough it up.' Then the replete ants go 'blop' and spit up the food and feed the colony."

Amazingly, the ants can go up to four months in the fall and winter living off the replete ants, Shetlar said. Hence, another insecticide is needed to control them, rather than one with a short residual activity.

"We're beginning to adopt the same strategies the pest control industry has adopted [to control ants]," Shetlar says. "The pest control industry



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**"The worker ants come up  
to the replete ants and say,  
'Hey, remember all that food  
I gave you? Cough it up.' "**

has always had this mantra — if you're going to kill an ant colony, you have to kill the queen. We need to get an insecticide into the colony, get it the workers and then to the queen. What we're talking about is colony elimination, not ant activity elimination."

Shetlar says recent control tests using neonicotinoid insecticides show significant reductions in mounding activity five to eight weeks after application, which suggests the insecticides are either reducing food sources or they're slowing acting within the colony to kill the brood and or/queen. A fall application appears to reduce colony activity significantly the following season, he adds.

"This is true colony elimination," Shetlar says. "You're not just fooling around with the workers on the surface."

The BugDoc not only knows best, he knows how to tell it best. ■