

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Robinson Named Superintendent of Pinehurst No. 2

Pinehurst Resort has named Kevin Robinson as golf course superintendent of Pinehurst No. 2, host site for the 2014 U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open Championships. Robinson replaces Paul Jett, who left the resort unexpectedly last month.

Robinson has spent the last 18 years maintaining Pinehurst's courses, including the last 11 as a superintendent on four different Pinehurst courses. He has led renovation projects on three different Pinehurst courses and will be charged with guiding Pinehurst No. 2 through a restoration conducted by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw.

"Kevin has done an outstanding job preparing and maintaining a number of Pinehurst courses, and his proven track record and experience will be invaluable on No. 2," said Pinehurst President Don Padgett II.

Rounds Rise in April

After dropping the first three months of the year, rounds rebounded in April and were up 10.5 percent compared with April of 2009, according to Golf Datatech LLC. But rounds are still down 3 percent through the first four months of the year. Public access play was up 11.6 percent April and private course activity was up 6.9 percent. A total of 3,850 courses are represented in Golf Datatech's report.

SipcamAdvan Opens New Laboratory

SipcamAdvan has opened a new laboratory facility in Valdosta, Ga., which will augment the company's formulation expertise and new product speed to market, both key components of its growth plan for 2010 and beyond, the company says. ■

The Top Talk Shop



DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS
GATHER FOR A WEED-CONTROL SYMPOSIUM
TO DISCUSS MSMA AND OTHER ISSUES

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Scott McElroy admits he loves controversy. Hence, it was no surprise that McElroy, associate professor of turfgrass and weed science at Auburn University, opened the 2010 Warm-Season Weed-Control Symposium held by Bayer Environmental Science last month talking about a controversial topic — the fate of monosodium methanearsonate, or MSMA.

Ten top turfgrass researchers from various universities in the South gathered in Key Largo, Fla., for the three-day event. The researchers discussed myriad topics, including testing results on two new Bayer ES herbicides — Specticle, which Bayer expects to debut in the fourth quar-

ter; and Celsius, which the company released early this year. The researchers also spoke about key issues affecting the golf course maintenance industry, from controlling *Poa annua* to researching funding in a tough economy to how to replace MSMA if it is placed on the proverbial shelf.

MSMA, classified as an organic arsenal, is used for weed control in bermudagrass, zoysiagrass and some cool-season turfgrasses. It's used for post-emergence control of goosegrass, crabgrass and dallisgrass.

There has been much talk the past few years about MSMA's fate. Some say the herbicide's days are numbered. Others aren't so sure.

"I love arguing about it," McElroy said with a smile.

The big question is what products
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THE TOP Continued from page 6 will be used to replace MSMA to control various Southern weeds if the Environmental Protection Agency does suspend the herbicide.

Shortly into his talk, which focused on MSMA replacement strategies, McElroy reiterated EPA's stance to cancel MSMA use on golf courses. "After Dec. 31, 2012, registrants are prohibited from selling or distributing existing stocks of products containing MSMA labeled for use on golf courses," the EPA states in its ruling. "After June 30, 2013, persons other than registrants are prohibited from selling or distributing existing stocks of products containing MSMA labeled for use on golf courses. After Dec. 31, 2013, use of products containing MSMA labeled for all uses, except cotton, is prohibited."

In 2006, the EPA announced it would cancel re-registration of any pesticides containing MSMA. Arsenic levels raised by MSMA "raise a concern for cancer risk," the EPA stated. But the organization decided to take a second look at MSMA, partly because it might have overestimated the risk of organic arsenic and MSMA's contribution to environmental inorganic arsenic levels. Organic arsenic is a naturally occurring element.

In its most recent ruling, McElroy said EPA has written that if someone can prove that arsenic — not organic arsenic, of which MSMA is based — is not toxic, it will reverse the ruling.

"Organic arsenicals ... are much safer than elemental arsenicals," McElroy said. "But I'm going on the assumption the EPA will not discover any safety information ... so MSMA will go bye-bye."

But Fred Yelverton, professor of crop science and co-director for the Center for Turfgrass Environmental Research and Education at North Carolina State University, said he's not convinced MSMA will be eliminated. Yelverton



Scott McElroy talked about the fate of MSMA and what could be used to replace it.

said an EPA official told him the use of existing stocks

of MSMA could be extended beyond Dec. 31, 2013.

MSMA's demise would mean one less herbicide to control at least four weed species in warm-season turf — crabgrass, goosegrass, dallisgrass and broomsedge. Golf course superintendents will also be losing an inexpensive product in MSMA, McElroy pointed out.

The researchers at the meeting agreed that quinclorac and sulfentrazone could be used for crabgrass control, mesotrione for goosegrass control, foramsulfuron for dallisgrass control, among other herbicides. Bayer ES's two new products can also control the weeds.

McElroy said a post-grass control herbicide was needed. He asked the other researchers if they thought a three-way herbicide could be used for such control.

Yelverton's presentation focused partly on pre-emergent crabgrass control in tall fescue. Yelverton says improper mowing height — tall fescue is cut too short at 1 or 2 inches — will cause pre-emergent herbicide to not work as well.

"If you raise the mowing height, you will get a lot more crabgrass control," Yelverton said. "Something as simple as mowing height has a tremendous impact on pre-emergent herbicide efficacy."

James Brosnan, assistant professor of plant sciences at the University of Tennessee, gave a presentation on the fundamentals of weed germination. Brosnan said three consecutive days and nights with soil temperatures above 55 degrees F will cause crabgrass to emerge.

Brosnan said *Poa annua* germinates at 44 to 85 degrees F, and that superintendents in Knoxville, Tenn., were

having a difficult time controlling *Poa annua* in the fall. Brosnan said his turf trials show that Bayer's new herbicide Specticle, which the company expects to register later this year, offers promising in controlling crabgrass and *Poa annua*. Specticle's active ingredient is indaziflam.

Don Myers, Bayer ES's product development manager for herbicides and plant growth regulators, touted indaziflam's low-use rate, which he said is favorable to the EPA. Yelverton said that fact provides a strong marketing angle for the product.

"Resorts all over the world want to market as being more environmentally friendly — and that includes everything from soap to pesticides," Yelverton said. "This is a big deal in the golf course industry, and it's not going away."

Other presenters included Joe DeFrank, professor of horticulture from the University of Hawaii, who spoke about goosegrass control on Hawaiian golf courses, and Bert McCarty, professor of horticulture at Clemson University, who spoke on doveweed and sedge control. DeFrank talked about mechanical control (verticutting), cultural practices (inducing moisture stress to prevent goosegrass roots from reaching the soil) and chemical control to combat goosegrass. McCarty said doveweed is an up-and-coming problem weed.

"I've received more calls on it than any other weed in the past two years," he added. "We usually don't see it emerge until about the third week of May."

In closing the event, Matt Bradley, Bayer ES's herbicide product marketing manager who hosted the symposium, thanked researchers for their time and insights in warm-season grass weed control.

"We appreciate your input," Bradley told them. "This kind of pulls everything together."

Until they meet again. ... ■

Off The Fringe

Water Friendly

MARYLAND COURSE PROMOTES ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES VIA DESIGNATION

By John Walsh, Contributing Editor

Ever hear of a Groundwater Guardian Green Site? Jon Lobenstine wants to make sure you do.

Little Bennett Golf Course, one of nine public courses operated by the Montgomery County Revenue Authority in Maryland (MCRA), completed an application to evaluate and document its groundwater-friendly practices to earn the designation awarded by The Groundwater Foundation (www.groundwater.org), a nonprofit organization based in Nebraska.

There are about 38 golf courses throughout the country with such a designation.

A site, in this case a golf course, undergoes annual soil testing for precise fertilizer inputs and has no-application buffers around bodies of water. By using drought-tolerant turfgrass cultivars and tracking irrigation usage and efficiency, course management helps protect and conserve local water supplies.

"We're trying to get the word out that golf courses aren't bad environmentally," says Lobenstine, the director of agronomy for the nine MCRA courses, all of which are registered as Groundwater Guardian Green Sites. "People don't truly understand how conscientious we are when managing golf courses. So many great resources are available to help us care for the world around us."

Earning the groundwater designation is part of an overall approach to promoting and being recognized for

environmental stewardship, Lobenstine says, adding that another goal of all nine courses is to be Audubon International-certified in two years. Currently, one is — Little Bennett. The environment is important to MCRA partly because its courses are located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Internally, Lobenstine formed an environmental committee to analyze how the MCRA can make its golf course operations more environmentally friendly. In doing so, Lobenstine came across The Groundwater Foundation.

"The designation helps us acknowledge our green efforts," he says, adding the no-cost process to be designated a Groundwater Guardian Green Site is a straightforward process that aligns with Audubon's application. "We want to redefine ourselves as a company, and the environment is one of our core values. The environment, beyond the golf course and into the world around us, is our responsibility."

Lobenstine says most superintendents have already implemented the practices the Groundwater Foundation uses as criteria to designate a

golf course: using native plants, soil and water testing, proper disposal of rinsate, and no pesticide or fertilizer applications around wetlands and bodies of water (50- to 100-foot buffer zones).

"The superintendents I've talked to about the Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program are intrigued by it because it's a relatively new program that provides a solid resource for our environmental goals, but none have heard of it," he says.

The Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program began in 2007 to recognize good stewards of groundwater by encouraging managers of highly managed green spaces to implement, measure and document their groundwater friendly practices. Interested facilities can become involved in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program by visiting the foundation's Web site at www.groundwater.org and downloading the program application

So the next time someone mentions the Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program, you can say you're in the know, thanks to Jon Lobenstine. ■



PHOTO BY: MATT BURTON

Family Legacy Lives On

By Jim Black,
Contributing Editor

Every spring the golfing world is filled with the anticipation of the season's major opening events — the Masters at Augusta National, the Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass and the Shields Memorial at Glen Dale Golf Club.

What? You've never heard of the Shields Memorial?

This year marked the 31st anniversary of this mid-Atlantic event, held in honor of the achievements of identical twins Ray and Roy Shields, and their brother Bob. All proceeds from the event benefit the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland in support of scholarships and operating expenses. Since its inception, more than \$72,000 in student scholarships have been awarded.

The Shields brothers arrived on the Maryland golf scene in the late 1930s, securing locker room and lifeguarding jobs at East Potomac Golf Course near Washington, D.C. The twins soon left East Potomac to work at the Annapolis Roads Club, a nine-hole golf course with a beach club.

This year marked the 31st anniversary of the Shields Memorial, played in honor of the three Shields brothers.

They purchased the club in 1941 and, in 1945, the twins recruited their older brother Bob to help renovate it after it was neglected during World War II. In 1950, the twins leased a nine-hole club called White Flint, where they held golfing exhibitions that drew the likes of Ben Hogan and Sam Snead. The twins purchased Glen Dale Golf Club in 1958. The club was badly in need of renovation and once again brother Bob was called in to assist.

Ten years later, the brothers decided they were ready to realize their ultimate dream. They purchased a 300-acre tobacco farm in southern Maryland and carved Twin Shields Golf Club out of it, designing it from the seats of a couple bulldozers and a pan. Twin Shields is one of the finest public golf courses in Maryland.

In 1948, Bob Shields left Annapolis Roads and dedicated his career to the promotion of the role of superintendents, including a stint as president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in 1965. Bob was superintendent of Woodmont Country Club from 1952 until his death in 1982.

Shortly after Ray Shields' death in 1980, The Ray Shields Memorial Tournament was founded. After Roy Shields' death in 1998 the tournament simply became the Shields Memorial. Here's to it living on for another 31 years and more. ■

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