

# Off The Fringe

## Lebanon Acquires PHC

**L**ebanon Seaboard Corp., parent company of LebanonTurf, announced recently that the company has acquired the U.S. horticultural and turf division of Plant Health Care (PHC), Inc.

Established in 1995, PHC is regarded as a pioneer among manufacturers of biologically based products for all segments of the green industry. The company is known for its research applied to fertility products incorporating beneficial microbes, mycorrhizal fungi and soil nutrients.



"PHC products add to our ability to create both environmental and economic benefits for our customers and capitalize on a movement throughout the green industry toward natural systems and biological products that promote plant health," Katherine Bishop, president and CEO of Lebanon Seaboard, said of the acquisition.

The acquisition of PHC complements Lebanon Seaboard's 2009 acquisition of Novozymes' turf and landscape business and its 2008 acquisition of the Emerald Isle line of foliar and granular fertilizer products from Milliken Chemical. ■

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## Cal-Riverside Halts Diagnostics Lab

**I**n a letter to the industry, Frank Wong, Ph.D., Cooperative Extension specialist at the University of California-Riverside, announced that as of March 7, 2011, their turf diagnostic lab services would no longer be in operation.

The lab collected more than 500 samples a year and supported the industry in California and surrounding states. But because of the reduction of several funding opportunities, personnel changes and the failure to get larger grant funding outside the turf industry, the lab was no longer sustainable.

"The true cost of the diagnostic program was subsidized by funding from UC Riverside, cooperative research with chemical companies, other grant resources or GCSAA contributions, and we have for the most part made it work," Wong said in the letter. "For 2011 we will try to reorganize under a new business plan to meet the diagnostic lab needs of the industry,

and relaunch the service under a different model as soon as we can."

Paul Mayes, CGCS at Hemet (Calif.) Golf Club, said the news was discouraging and would complicate his work maintaining Hemet GC, an 18-hole public course set in California's Hemet Valley.

"It's a shame, because other than Larry (Stowell, Ph.D.) at PACE Turf down in San Diego, there's nothing out here," he said. "I probably used (UC Riverside's lab) four to six times a year."

Wong stated in his letter that the annual cost to maintain the lab was \$80,000, while on average it only brought in \$30,000 a year over the last three years.

"It's unfortunate that they can't support golf courses," Mayes said. "Hopefully they can get the funding fixed and get it back on track. But it's just like everything else these days, everyone's seeing cutbacks – it's the almighty dollar." ■