

There are three things in this issue I'll point out to you, and then I'm going to tell you how I think they're all loosely related.

The first is Part Three of our "Talking TurfTech" series, this installment written by former certified superintendent Steven Tingle. It focuses on GPS technologies in our industry. The second is on page 7 — the announcement of the availability of *Golfdom's* entire archive on the web, courtesy of our friends at Michigan State University Libraries. And lastly, on that same page, the news of BASF's acquisition of Becker Underwood.

BASF invited me to their media summit this summer. It was held in Chicago, one of my favorite cities, at the Trump Towers, one of the nicest hotels I've ever been in.

At the event, it quickly became clear that the executives at BASF have their eye on the bigger picture. The conference started off discussing solving a problem everyone can agree on — world hunger. They were talking higher yields in crops, stronger plants, better farming.

In this quest to feed the world comes a lot of one-off products, such as the chemicals superintendents use to keep fairways green and disease-free. It's a win-win. And it made me feel good to listen to people way smarter than me talk about the work they're doing toward feeding the planet's ever-expanding population.

Then recently news came of BASF's plans to acquire Becker Underwood. I started working the phone, calling some of those contacts I made at Trump Tower. One call was to Nevin McDougall, BASF's senior VP of crop protection, North America. I asked McDougall, utilizing his 20 years' experience in the industry, if recent acquisitions (such as Syngenta's acquisition of DuPont's insecticide portfolio, as we reported last issue) were similar to the slew of acquisitions this industry saw a decade ago.

"Some of the larger mergers/acquisitions we saw then was driven for the need to get greater cost efficiencies, to address the growing cost of research and development and gain critical mass to pay for the increasing rise of

Forest from the Trees

BY SETH JONES



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— NEVIN MCDUGALL

regulatory and development costs," McDougall said. "What I've observed here recently are acquisitions more to tap into new and emerging technologies. In the case of Becker Underwood, they are clearly market and global leaders in the area of biologicals, inoculants and new plant health products, so for us it's great to tap into new emerging technologies that can provide great value in the future."

I think the last part of that comment was the most valuable quote I got from McDougall. Equal parts insightful, hopeful and inspirational. Because I do want these companies to do what it takes to accomplish their goals and help create a brighter future.

At the end of the day, BASF, a big company, just got bigger. But looking to see the forest from the trees here... is it possible that we're all so busy enjoying the new iPhone that we don't appreciate this golden age of technological advancements we're living in?

I read Tingle's technology story, and saw that to my surprise, GPS technology only became readily available during the Clinton Administration. Then my friends at Michigan State called and told me every issue of *Golfdom*, dating back to the first issue in 1927, is now available online, to everyone, for free.

These are not life-saving advancements, no. But there are so many advancements happening right now, it's hard to keep up with them all. If you still pick up the daily paper, or if you have these stories zapped directly to your smart device, do you take the time to appreciate, collectively, what is going on right now?

There are no flying cars yet, I know. The world might not look like "The Jetsons." But I wonder: Is this the future, right now?

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