

# Off The Fringe



(Below) Deere's Mike Buccheit and Jim Roach observed as superintendents tested equipment; (Left) Superintendents socialize over dinner at the Washington Duke Inn.



## Feeding Frenzy

**At John Deere Feedback, superintendents get their say on Deere equipment — and more.** By Beth Geraci Senior Editor

The morning of Sept. 12 was a cool and misty one in Durham, N.C. The Duke University golf course was damp with dew, and the sun had just risen.

Superintendents and equipment managers, along with the John Deere dealers who had invited them, had gathered on the course for John Deere's Feedback event. They were there to sample Deere's full line of upcoming equipment and give their feedback on it — hence the event's name. Deere will then use that input to adapt its current and future products.

"This year marks the 25th year of John Deere being in the golf business, and the 20th time we've held a Feedback

event," said Mark Ford, marketing manager, John Deere Golf. "This event offers superintendents an inside look at how we think, how we work, and gives a glimpse into our product plans for the coming years."

Mike Buchheit, a John Deere dealer from Fuquay Varina, N.C., is in his 14th year with Deere, and he's been to every Feedback event held during that time.

Feedback "plays a very big role in our product development," he said. "The machines we're building now are going to be impacted by the feedback we receive, and the machines we'll build in the future will be impacted."

Dudley Nation, equipment manager at Maidstone Club in East Hampton, N.Y., called the event "eye-opening."

"It's good that John Deere has the end users come down and see what the engineers are doing, and that they'll actually take some of our advice and use it," he said.

While others tested Deere equipment and noted pros and cons, Jason Brownell, superintendent at Big Canoe Golf Club in Jasper, Ga., said the event gives him a clearer picture of what equipment is coming and how his course could use it.

"Coming to these events and meeting new superintendents and engineers and suppliers, it's necessary for this business," Brownell stressed. "It's necessary so you can stay abreast of new technologies and changing trends and things like that, so you don't get left behind."

As useful as Feedback was for both sides informationally, it was just as appealing from a social standpoint. On the patio of the Washington Duke Inn, the host hotel, superintendents casually talked shop over beers and dinner. "We've got guys from all over the country," said Jonathan Gruber, superintendent at Hampton Grove Golf Course in Huntsville, Ala. "We've got everything from equipment technicians to operators to superintendents.... It's been a fantastic event."

Markus Heldt, president of BASF's Crop Protection division, says the acquisition will "...sustainably create value for our customers."



# BASF to Acquire Becker Underwood for \$1 Billion

By Seth Jones Editor-in-Chief

**A**billion dollars can get you a lot of cheese. Or, if you're BASF, it can get you Becker Underwood.

BASF announced its intention to acquire Ames, Iowa-based Becker Underwood for the price of \$1.02 billion. Becker Underwood is one of the leading global providers of technologies for biological seed treatment and seed treatment colors and polymers, as well as products in biological crop protection, turf and horticulture and other areas.

"Becker Underwood has a strong position in North America. We will continue to expand this core business as we expand globally. Together we can sustainably create value for our customers," Markus Heldt, president of BASF's Crop Protection division, said in a statement.

BASF's Nevin McDougall, senior vice president of crop protection for North America, told *Golfdom* that the acquisition complements the company's existing portfolio, especially in the area of seed treatments, seed coat-

ings and biologicals.

"A lot of the products they've commercialized, and just recently commercialized, are of great interest because they are new to BASF," McDougall said. "I think some of (Becker Underwood's) future plans toward plant health are very interesting from the standpoint of our investment in that area and the future potential we see."

Becker Underwood employs 479 people at 10 sites around the world. McDougall said BASF will take the next three months to create a plan to integrate Becker Underwood into BASF.

Charlie Hale, Becker Underwood's marketing strategy and support lead, said that in the meantime, superintendents can expect "business as usual" for

any product needs they may have.

"The No. 1 goal of Becker Underwood and BASF is ensuring that our customers continue receiving the high quality solutions they have come to expect from Becker Underwood," Hale told *Golfdom*. "Our production facilities are producing products; these products are available for purchase by our customers. And except for a few already-planned lineup tweaks — including a couple new and/or improved products, no changes to the overall Becker Underwood product lineup is currently anticipated."

Upon receiving the necessary legal approvals, most of Becker Underwood's business will be integrated into BASF's Crop Protection division.

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<http://golfdom.blogspot.com>

In last month's issue, we ran Gallup poll numbers on the presidential election that basically showed a 50/50 split between Obama and Romney. But we decided to do our own survey at the *Golfdom* Daily and there was more of a clear leader...

58% ROMNEY      38% OBAMA      4% UNDECIDED



AT GOLFDOM, WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN. Because after months of tweaking and perfecting, *Golfdom*'s electronic archive of back issues has launched! Log on to the archive home page at <http://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/golfd/> to see what all the fuss is about.

The archive, a collaborative project between North Coast Media, LLC and Michigan State University Libraries, offers access to all but six months of *Golfdom* issues, dating back to our first one in 1927. And that's no small feat. Now, from cover to cover, superintendents can see *Golfdom*'s early design and peruse nearly every story published in the magazine since it was founded as the industry's first business journal.

The original digest-sized publication, founded and published by the legendary Herb Graffis, was the "bible" for greenkeepers, club managers and golf professionals in search of relevant information.

As much as the magazine's evolved over the years, that's one thing we like to think hasn't changed.

