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If you're thinking of buying new equipment, either now or in 2005, you should take advantage of the reformed law.

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- not part of a binding contract prior to May 6, 2003; and

- MACRS-eligible (Modified Accelerated Cost Recovery System) with a recovery period of less than 20 years.

The rules apply only to golf courses operating on a for-profit basis, not municipal facilities, provided net income is equal to or greater than the deduction.

All of this accounting language may sound complicated, but it's easy to see the huge financial rewards when put into simpler terms.

For instance, suppose someone has a small business, and he buys new laptops for \$5,000. Then he expenses that purchase on his taxes and writes off the entire \$5,000 this year. If his company had \$5,000 of profit before factoring in that transaction and he deducts the \$5,000 laptops, he would now show zero profit in terms of tax liability.

When you're looking down your income statement from the tax book standpoint, you always want to reduce your net earnings, and qualifying business purchases allow you to do that. So if you're in a 34-percent tax bracket, every dollar reduced from your tax liability will save 34 cents out of a check you'd write the IRS.

Therefore, if you were to purchase \$100,000 of new equipment, you'd reduce your tax liability by \$34,000. That's quite a difference.

Perfect time

This money-saving opportunity makes good business sense, and the timing can work in your favor.

Fall is the time of year many superintendents begin assessing their equipment inventory and planning their needs for next year. If you're thinking of buying new equipment, either now or in 2005, you should take advantage of the reformed law. Regardless of how you have traditionally obtained your machinery — lease, cash purchase, financing — there are ways in which the new rules can help make your money go further.

But what if it's not in your course's budget to buy more equipment in the 2004 calendar year? That shouldn't stop you. Your equipment distributor can help you finance the purchase transaction and set it up with skipped payments or a no-payment-until-next-year plan. So you'd vir-

tually have no cash out of pocket now and you would still receive the tax benefits.

The significant advantages of the new tax law, combined with historically low interest rates, present the best time to implement a viable acquisition strategy.

In addition, financing through a conditional sales contract allows you to qualify for the enhanced tax benefits.

Everybody wins

Although the new law represents tremendous monetary benefits, it may still be a tough sell job for some golf courses, particularly if the financial people don't want to change their acquisition plans.

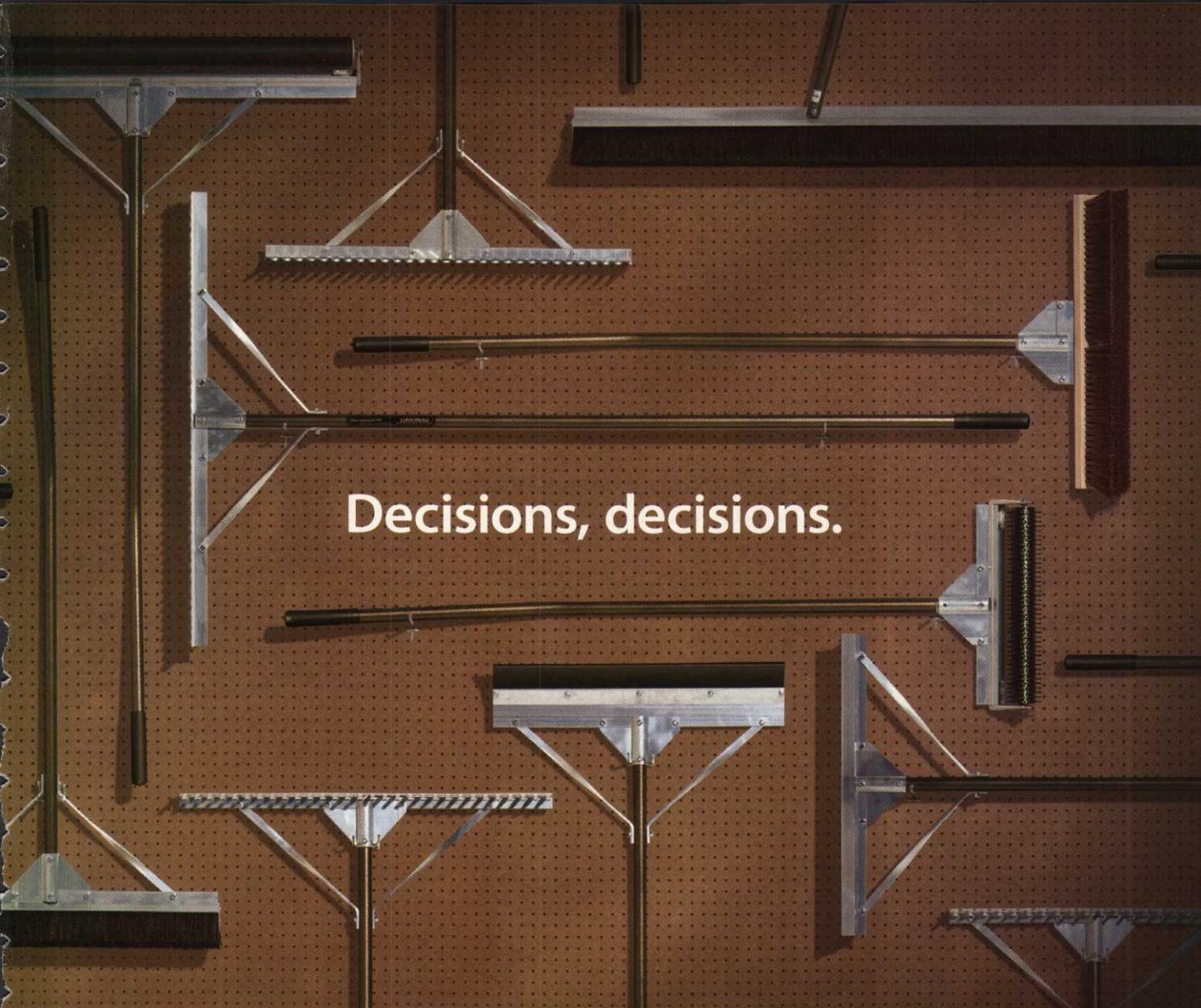
On the other hand, this is a chance for superintendents to work with the number crunchers and develop mutually beneficial strategies. The key is to make sure the finance people are aware of this new tax situation — then demonstrate how it specifically affects your golf course and promotes ownership's goals of quality and professionalism.

Superintendents can use their agronomic and operational expertise to clearly explain the need for specific pieces of equipment. Chances are the financial people will be impressed with their business logic. Most people would rather defer their tax liability for as long as they possibly can. The longer they defer it, the more money that stays in the cash account.

Irrigation components may also qualify under this program. As long as the irrigation equipment meets a golf course's requirements as a capitalized asset and is installed by Jan. 1, you can take advantage of these benefits. Before, irrigation systems were depreciated up to 10 years. Now, you can depreciate a full 50 percent in the first year alone.

Most of us don't need another deadline, but this is understandably a good one. If you're thinking about acquiring new equipment, seriously consider doing it before Jan. 1. Consult your accounting professionals about the specifics for your situation, and work with your equipment distributor on an acquisition plan and flexible financing options. In any case, the time is now. Your course — and its bottom line — could look a lot better next April 15. ■

McPhee is the senior marketing manager of golf services for The Toro Co.



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PREPARING FOR

The Big Chill

Superintendent offers tips to control winter damage

BY DALE MORRISON

There are many products superintendents can use to prevent winter damage to turf. But sometimes having too many options is confusing. From antitranspirations to keep-it-green products to covers that breathe and covers that don't breathe, a superintendent must find the right combination to keep his grass protected. This takes trial and error, luck and sometimes even some magic.

The most important aspect of putting the grass to bed is to make sure it's as healthy as possible before winter strikes. I accomplish this by applying fertilizers and fungicides, aerating and reducing water in the fall, which forces roots to reach deep for moisture and in turn helps to protect them from freezing temperatures.

Second, I keep my winterizing procedure simple. Here it is in a nutshell:

Greens: The way I put my greens to bed is to first apply a fungicide combination to the greens using more than 100 gallons of water per acre. I spray each nine with a different combination in order to see the difference in spring greenup. I apply the fungicides at the highest rate along with 4 ounces of iron per 1,000 square feet. I apply 1.5 pounds of nitrogen from organic fertilizers after spraying, along with other granular applications of a nutrient product. Finally, I cover everything except the tips of the plant with topdressing, which usually results in a smooth, true-green surface in the spring. However, if I notice a delay in greenup in the spring, I go in and remove excess sand with power brooms. But the sand usually gets worked in from winter and spring rains.

Tees: I apply a dormant fertilizer application that has a high potassium and phosphorus base. I spray a bactericide with iron. I only topdress tees that are exposed to the elements.

Fairways: I apply 1 pound of nitrogen in mid-August. Then I aerate, spike and drag the fairways with a flex drag. I then apply another pound of nitrogen in mid-to-late October when the soil temperatures are below 50 degrees Fahrenheit. I apply pentachloronitrobenzene (PCNB) in mid-November with 4 ounces to 5 ounces of iron in the mix. All grasses are mowed at summer heights one last time before the PCNB application is made.

Other notes: There's a good chance the course will have snow cover because I live in central Wisconsin. That's good, because the snow can insulate the turf. Still, while there are sections of the course that are snow-covered for more than 60 days, there are other sections that aren't covered and have no protection from the wind.

Also, I don't shovel snow off any greens because heavy equipment on the course can cause more damage than leaving the snow lie.

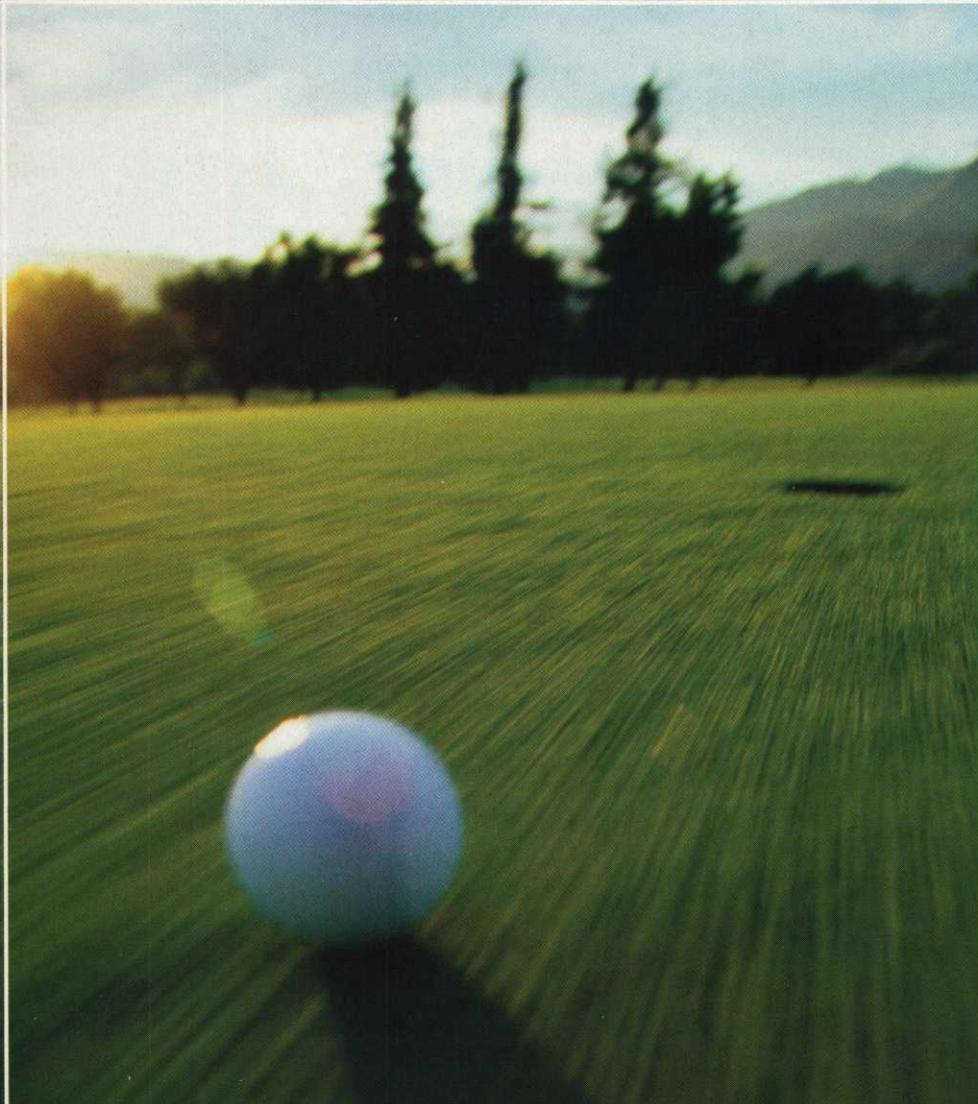
The best way to prevent winter damage is to keep the maintenance simple. Also, having confidence in a crew that I can count on no matter what winter provides gives me peace of mind.

I almost forgot: If all my scientific preparation fails to protect the grass and lessen winter damage, I have a back-up plan — it's called the Magic Bone. Found on the property many moons ago, this deer jawbone hangs above the pump station and has a bird's-eye view of the entire course. Sanctified by the crew and decorated with several turkey feathers, the Magic Bone watches over each blade of grass, keeping the ruthless turf reaper at bay. ■

Morrison is certified superintendent of Trappers Turn Golf Club, a 27-hole public course in Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

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Augusta, Congressional, Oakmont, Winged Foot and Riviera

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"Did you ever see an unhappy horse? Did you ever see a bird that has the blues? One reason why birds and horses are not unhappy is because they are not trying to impress other birds and horses." — Dale Carnegie

A golf course owner with a degree of reputation took me on a line of questioning a short time ago. The essence of his question list had to do with his wonder about why his professional grass growers, more than any other subset of his organization, are by far the most worried about reputation.

This came on the heels of a meeting where the grass guys had all the info about who was doing what and where they were doing it. And the turfheads were madly trying to figure out where they fit in the big game of who would say what.

The easy explanation for this is that the work of keeping the green is often compared from place to place, which is nothing new.

Looking deeper at the attitude of repute can tell so much. Some suggest that the best time to assess a reputation is during times of difficulty — nothing brings out the true persona like the response to a crisis.

The daily job of preparing a golf surface can definitely provide calamity. Think about it: How often do we hear stories of dead grass or bad greens vs. great conditions? Superintendents worry about that match up and the impact it will have on their reputations.

Then there is the issue of response and how it leads to building or destroying a reputation when you're "on the record" — be it with media, the members or just a casual conversation.

Conventional wisdom dictates avoiding "no comment" responses and discourages someone from taking a defensive position at all costs.

In fact, public apology in response to the accusation of misconduct is often touted as one of the most important ways to protect a reputation, but it's seldom used.

Regarding Your Reputation . . .

BY DAVE WILBER



AT FIRST GLANCE,
IT MIGHT SEEM
LIKE WE BIRDS
AND HORSES ARE
TRYING TO IMPRESS
THE OTHER BIRDS
AND HORSES — AND
NO ONE IS HAPPY

Why does the phenomenon of stonewalling persist in response to negative information? Why do people continue to use this approach, when public relations gurus discourage this response?

Some say a person will go as far to invent a response to protect his or her reputation. An example is the invented "employee mistake" when something goes wrong with a piece of equipment. Reputation is placed above the truth — and many times without much pause in doing it.

Am I suggesting that reputation is a character issue? Yes, especially when the chips are down. When a superintendent gets fired for doing something really stupid, how often do we hear comments like, "Well, we really don't know the whole story," or "Actually, he quit." Often what isn't said contains the worst damage.

In the end, many times it comes to a simple decision of fessing up or stonewalling. Our owner, who didn't understand the turfgrass-flavored issues of reputation, certainly understood that concept. He also understood that the superintendent's reputation comes almost entirely at the hands of others and, worse yet, golfers.

At first glance, it might seem like we birds and horses are trying to impress the other birds and horses — and no one is happy. Looking deeper, the successful superintendent knows that people on the inside of the business of growing grass are talking, but it's really the clients and customers who hold the important court.

Developing a solid character with them helps as they seek the truth. That way the right people are impressed.

Dave Wilber is a Sacramento, Calif.-based independent agronomist who's in the field daily.

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Golfdom



Retaining Great Employees

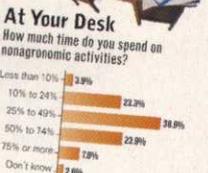
The manager faces a new opportunity. The business is booming, and there's a lot of money to be made. The manager is looking for ways to keep the best people. One way is to offer a salary increase. Another way is to offer a bonus. A third way is to offer a stock option. A fourth way is to offer a profit-sharing plan. A fifth way is to offer a 401(k) plan. A sixth way is to offer a flexible work schedule. A seventh way is to offer a sabbatical. An eighth way is to offer a reduced workweek. A ninth way is to offer a part-time position. A tenth way is to offer a contract position.



MANAGEMENT CREDO: Never ask of someone that you are willing to ask yourself when you are in his or her situation.

become less, but one month ago, when the market was still very strong, many managers were looking for ways to keep the best people. One way is to offer a salary increase. Another way is to offer a bonus. A third way is to offer a stock option. A fourth way is to offer a profit-sharing plan. A fifth way is to offer a 401(k) plan. A sixth way is to offer a flexible work schedule. A seventh way is to offer a sabbatical. An eighth way is to offer a reduced workweek. A ninth way is to offer a part-time position. A tenth way is to offer a contract position.

SCORECARD



Do They Get It? What percentage of mid golfers at your facility understand that golf courses used for major tournaments are always brought to "tournament conditions" and that those conditions are not sustainable for more than a few days?

FACILITY FOCUS

Course Branches Out with Sticks for Kids

Two-year-old Bradlee Williams is one of the youngest members of the Sticks for Kids program at the 15-hole course in the city of Louisville. Bradlee is one of the 15 boys who are part of the program. The program is designed to help young boys learn the basics of golf. The program is run by the Louisville Golf Association (LGA). The program is a partnership between the LGA and the city of Louisville. The program is a success story. It has helped many young boys learn the basics of golf. It has also helped many young boys become members of the LGA. The program is a great example of how a golf course can give back to the community.



GET INVOLVED: Participating courses must have active junior programs as well as used clubs for the kids and an active marketing agenda to promote the program.

The Sticks for Kids program was established to help young boys learn the basics of golf. The program is run by the Louisville Golf Association (LGA). The program is a partnership between the LGA and the city of Louisville. The program is a success story. It has helped many young boys learn the basics of golf. It has also helped many young boys become members of the LGA. The program is a great example of how a golf course can give back to the community.

The Company Line

■ PRODUCTS & SERVICES



▲ Bunker rake

Jacobsen offers its new Groom Master-II, which the company says offers more power and better traction than its predecessor, resulting in a vehicle that's easier to use and fatigues its operators less. The Groom Master-II is designed to excel at the tough tasks involved with maintaining bunkers, the company says. It features an optional three-cylinder, 19.2-horsepower Kubota diesel engine. Jacobsen also offers a model equipped with a gas-powered, two-cylinder Briggs & Stratton Vanguard engine. Available attachments include: hydraulic midmount cultivator; front blade; add-on fan rake; a rear-mount, stand-alone fan rake; drag mat; spiker; and mid-mount.

For more information, contact 888-922-8873 or www.jacobsen.com.

Liquid fungicide

Syngenta Professional Products has developed a new liquid formulation of its strobilurin fungicide — Heritage — for the turf market. Heritage TL (Turf Liquid) offers control of the same turf diseases as the original water dispersible granular formulation of Heritage but with enhanced efficacy and application flexibility, according to Syngenta.

"Heritage TL is a micro-emulsion concentrate (MEC), which means it has the same physical characteristics and properties of the Syngenta MAXX family of products," says Dave Ross, turf and ornamental technical manager for Syngenta. "The smaller particle size and greater amount of surfactant result in quicker uptake by the plant's foliage and root system. Initial university studies indicate the enhanced TL formulation of Heritage offers a

10-percent to 15-percent efficacy advantage over the granular formulation on selected diseases, like anthracnose and Pythium."

Syngenta said research shows Heritage TL has a faster and higher uptake into the leaf, coupled with a slightly less rain-fast leaf surface residue, which allows more uptake from the roots and subsequently greater delivery of active ingredient into the leaves.

For more information, contact www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com

Generic fungicide

Sipcam Agro USA offers Tee-Off 4.5F fungicide, which contains the active ingredient thiophanate-methyl in liquid flowable formulation. A systemic fungicide, Tee-Off provides both preventive and curative control of anthracnose, summer patch, gray leaf spot,

Golfdom



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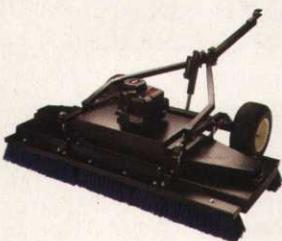
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brown patch, dollar spot, leaf spot and several other key diseases. It can be professionally applied to both cool and warm-season turf-grasses.

For more information, contact www.sipcamageousa.com.

▼ Topdressing trailer

Broyhill offers the GreensKeeper Brush Gas-Powered Trailer, a solution for fast topdressing incorporation, turf grain management and heavy topdressing incorporation after core aeration. Soft, pliable bristles are firm enough to do the job without damaging grass plants. Rapid



brush rotation contacts grass from all directions, causing turf to stand up.

A 3.75-horsepower Briggs gas engine drives rotating brushes with no hydraulics required. An electric lift cylinder raises and lowers brush pan. The trailer wheels are in front of the brushes, which eliminates tire tracks on brushed greens.

For more information, contact 800-228-1003 or visit www.broyhill.com.

Fungicide in a drum

A new mini drum container of Bayleton, WP fungicide is now available through all approved distributor partners, according to **Bayer Environmental Science**. The new mini drum will cover 25 acres of turf at the low labeled rate of application. The previous mini drum covered only 22 acres at the low labeled rate. "The mini drum will be more convenient for

superintendents, who are generally spraying large areas of fairways for disease control," says Eric Kalasz, business manager of fungicides.

For more information, contact 201-307-9700.

Turf research

Lebanon Turf recently presented a check totaling \$130,175.60 to William A. Meyer and Bruce B. Clark of Rutgers University to support additional turfgrass research. Lebanon Turf has cooperated with Meyer on turfgrass development projects that have led to the release of several turfgrass varieties.

This amount represents royalties for some of these varieties, including Rembrandt, Picasso, Masterpiece, and DaVinci Tall Fescue; Champagne, Bordeaux, Cabernet, and Sonoma Kentucky Bluegrass; Affirmed, Exacta, Churchill, and Charismatic

Perennial ryegrass; Oxford Hard Fescue, Pathfinder Creeping Red Fescue, Ambassador Chewings Fescue and Independence Creeping Bentgrass. Many of these varieties rank at the top of recent NTEP trials.

For more information, contact 800-233-0628 or www.lebanonturf.com.

Ice dispenser

Follett offers the Symphony Series 12 countertop dispenser, a space-saving ice and water dispenser that's ideal for smaller applications such as break rooms.

The dispensers store 12 pounds of ice, and require only 16 inches of counter space. Features include a stainless-steel exterior, and separate ice and water chutes.

For more information, contact 800-523-9361 or www.follettice.com/ice.

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