



Some Say Audubon Programs are for the Birds...

Exactly. But our 2200 member courses know that our programs are also about **saving money**, reducing risk and liability, **improving course performance**, enhancing your image and reputation, and **attracting golfers**.

You already know that Audubon International programs help wildlife and lead to a cleaner, healthier environment, which is good for nature. But as our members will tell you, it's good for business too.

Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and Audubon Signature Program... naturally good for golf! Find out how to take action and join the growing number of members benefiting from Audubon International programs. Call or visit us today.

AUDUBON
INTERNATIONAL



Golfdom PRESENTS

EDUCATION AT THE EXPO



**A DON'T
MISS EVENT!**

OCTOBER 14-16, 2005

The Industry's Largest Showcase For ...

Outdoor power equipment distributed through dealers, retailers and distributors for consumers, professionals and rentals.

Users of lawn and garden products/outdoor leisure items distributed through home centers, dealers and retailers.

Light construction and landscape equipment used by general contractors, landscapers and golf course superintendents.

REGISTER ONLINE AT
WWW.EXPO.MOW.ORG



The First 50
Registrants Receive a
2005 Golfdom Cap!

EDUCATION AT THE EXPO: OCTOBER 15, 2005

An All-Star Cast of Industry Experts Providing Outstanding Presentations!



ROBERT BRAME



PAUL B. LATSHAW



BOBBY WEED



MARK WILSON



LARRY AYLWARD

Robert A. Brame is director of the United States Golf Association Green Section's North-Central Region. In his talk, Brame will provide a year-end review of the region from an agronomic standpoint.

Paul B. Latshaw is in his third year as certified superintendent of Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio. In his talk, Latshaw will provide the ins and outs of tournament preparation, whether it's for the PGA Championship or the member-guest.

Mark Wilson is the certified superintendent of Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, where he has been for 17 years. Wilson, known for his strong management style, will speak on the art of employee motivation.

Bobby Weed is the president of Weed Golf Course Design in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. Weed, a former superintendent, will speak on the trials and tribulations of project management.

Larry Aylward is the editor-in-chief of *Golfdom*. He will speak on how to deal with the media. Aylward's basic message: Don't ever run from a reporter, but be careful of what you say.

ENTERTAINMENT AT THE EXPO:



LIVE!

**The Charlie
Daniels Band**

Saturday, October 15 - 6pm

Sponsored by Ariens

EXPO
The International Lawn, Garden
& Power Equipment Exposition

2005

Golfdom

WWW.EXPO.MOW.ORG



Status Quo

As shocking as sky-high gas prices may be, it's environmental issues that are driving equipment makers to revise their strategies

BY THOMAS SKERNIVITZ, MANAGING EDITOR

When it comes to more fuel-efficient equipment options, superintendents are doing more crying than buying.

A recent *Golfdom* survey of 150 superintendents found 52 percent are worried that increasing gas prices will have a major impact on their maintenance budgets. Another 28 percent were only slightly worried.

But the heightened concern hasn't impacted the major equipment manufacturers. There hasn't been a run on what few non-gas mowers are available. Nor has there been a backlash against gas-guzzling products.

"As far as our golf and turf sales, we really haven't seen any effect from the increase in fuel prices the last year or so," says Tracy Lanier, the golf and turf product manager for John Deere Co.

More telling, the Big Three — Jacobsen, John Deere and The Toro Co. — haven't significantly modified their immediate plans in response to the dilemma.

"Certainly there's noise out there because of (increasing gas prices), and Toro is certainly working on other fuel choices. But everything



When it comes to mowing a course, "there's nothing as efficient as a gas engine," according to The Toro Co.

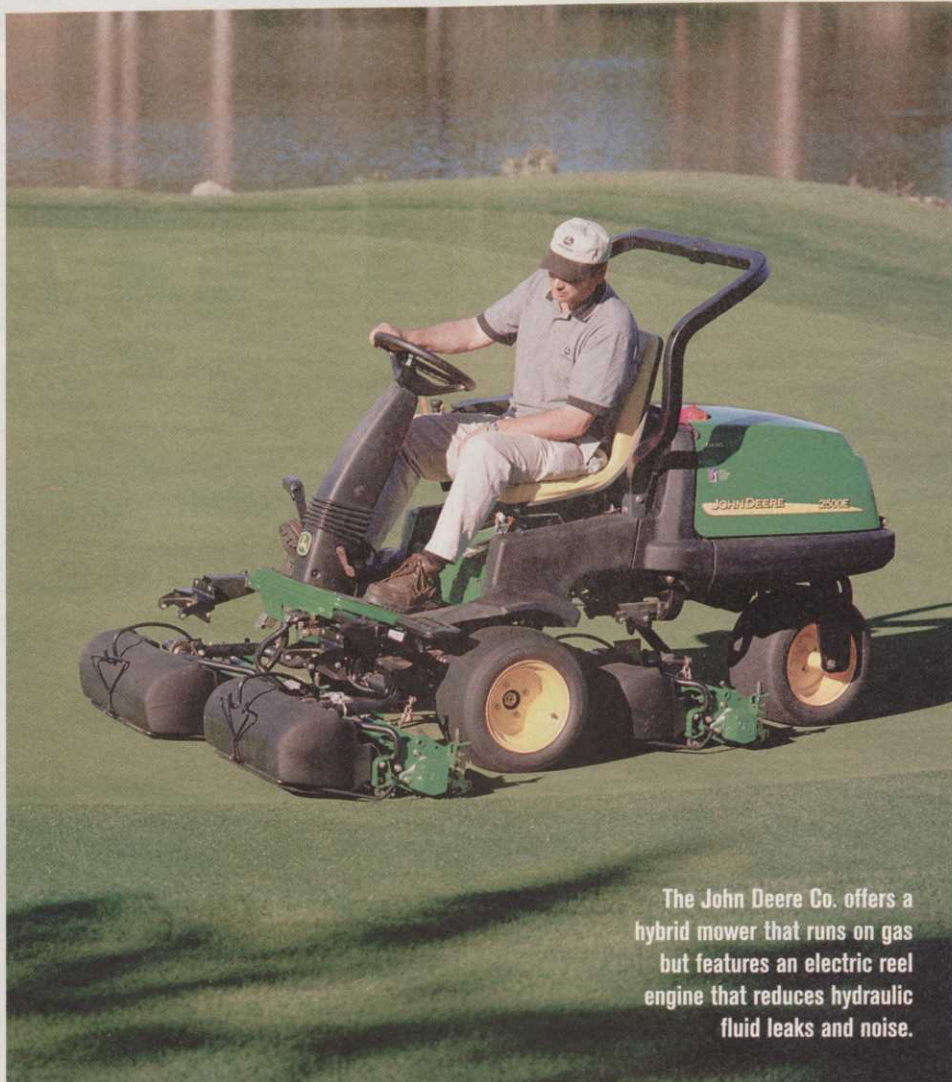
has tradeoffs," says John Wright, Toro's director of investor relations. "There's nothing as efficient as a gas engine. And gas would probably have to go up considerably for someone to say, 'Oh, my gosh, we have to all use batteries.'"

Continued on page 34

“These (pieces of equipment) don’t consume a ton of fuel.”

RYAN WEEKS

JACOBSEN



The John Deere Co. offers a hybrid mower that runs on gas but features an electric reel engine that reduces hydraulic fluid leaks and noise.

Continued from page 33

Until then, according to Wright, fuel consumption simply comprises too little of a superintendent's overall budget to warrant major revisions. Over the lifetime of a machine, about 10 percent of cost goes toward gas, he estimates. Meanwhile, the purchase price, costs for repair and parts, and especially the labor expenses are significantly higher.

“While we certainly acknowledge that prices have gone up, it’s by no means anywhere near the largest portion of someone’s budget,” Wright says. “If labor had gone up the same percentage (as fuel), it would kill somebody.”

Ryan Weeks, Jacobsen’s director of product management, agrees: “These (pieces of equipment) don’t consume a ton of fuel. It’s not like they’re a semi (truck) and get 4

miles to the gallon. But we do recognize it’s a cost, and we are doing things to significantly reduce or even eliminate that cost from the golf course.”

Ultior motive

Although manufacturers have been working on hybrid alternatives for years, they’ve never used fuel efficiency as a motivator. Environmental concerns are foremost. And with homes increasingly being built along courses, reducing noise is another major factor.

“(Saving gas) would be third right now,” Lanier says.

Manufacturers are busy heeding California’s strict emissions standards and expecting other states to emulate them, according to Weeks. Already, he says, New York state offi-

Continued on page 36

The next generation of Bentgrass has arrived!

LebanonTurf delivers again with three more practical innovations. Choose **Declaration Creeping Bentgrass**, **Independence Creeping Bentgrass** or **Legendary Velvet Bentgrass**, and be guaranteed superior overall turf quality. With improved disease resistance and fewer inputs required, you can deliver the performance today's players demand....for less.



2003 NTEP Fairway trial - 20 locations

- #1 for overall turf quality out of 28 varieties
- #1 overall for Dollar Spot resistance
- #1 overall for brown patch resistance
- #2 overall for pink snow mold ratings
- #1 overall for fine leaf texture
- Tied for #1 overall for summer density



2003 NTEP Fairway trial - 20 locations

- Tied for #4 overall for fine leaf texture
- Ranked #1 for resistance to Poa annua invasion
- Tied for #3 for Brown Patch ratings at VA site
- Highly ranked for divot recovery

2003 NTEP Greens Height trial - 23 locations

- Tied for #1 for overall turf quality
- Tied for #1 overall under reduced fungicides
- Tied for #1 overall for spring density
- Tied for #2 overall for seedling vigor

2003 NTEP Greens Height trial - 23 locations

- Tied for #3 for overall turf quality
- Tied for #2 overall for copper spot ratings
- Tied for #2 overall for Brown Patch resistance
- Tied for #2 overall for Pythium Root Rot ratings
- Tied for #2 overall for seedling vigor



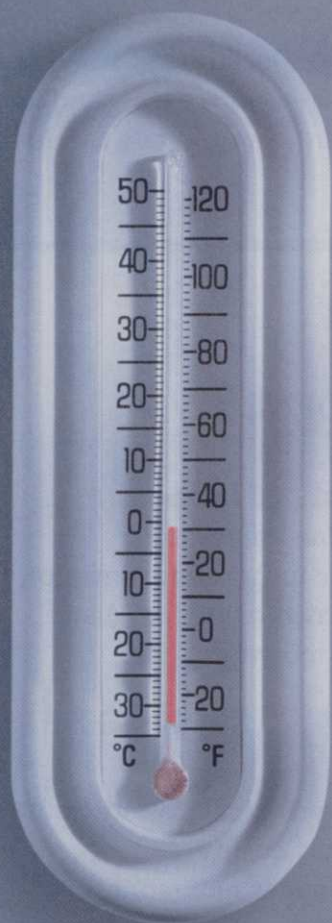
2003 NTEP Greens Height trial - 23 locations

- Tied for #1 for overall turf quality among Velvet bentgrass varieties
- Tied for #1 overall for fine leaf texture
- Tied for #1 overall for seedling vigor
- Ranked #4 overall for dollar spot resistance
- Tied for #1 for Brown Patch ratings
- Tied for #1 Velvet for Copper spot resistance

Upgrade to one of the new cutting edge bentgrasses from the innovators at LebanonTurf. View all the new data at the www.ntep.org web site. To learn more, contact your local LebanonTurf distributor, or call 1-800-233-0628. To receive a one pound sample of any of these top varieties, visit www.LebanonTurf.com. Get started with the next generation!

LebanonTurf

syngenta



The champion
of winter.

Medallion® fungicide is the emerging standard for snow mold control. Make one application before snow cover, and your course is protected from both pink and gray snow mold all winter long. That's the power of Medallion.

Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using these products. ©2005 Syngenta. Syngenta Professional Products, Greensboro, NC 27419. Heritage®, Medallion®, and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.

Status Quo

Continued from page 34

cials are seeking more environmentally friendly machines for municipal areas, "and they're actually offering subsidies to anyone who can help them do that."

Deere's response to the problem is the 2500E Hybrid Tri-Plex Greens Mower. Although the machine is powered by a gas or diesel engine, it features an electric reel motor that, according to Lanier, eliminates 102 hydraulic leak points, lowers sound levels by 4 dBA and increases fuel efficiency by 10 percent.

"What this allows us to do ... is that

we can throttle back our engine because we're not dependent on reel speed," Lanier says. "The customer can still mow all his greens with the same machine because we're not dependent on battery power."

Apparently customers are pleased. "It's hard to keep up with demand for it," Lanier says. "We're virtually shipping every one we've built."

Electric stigma

Meanwhile, the industry's lone all-electric mowers aren't selling quite as well, according to the machines' maker. Jacob-

Fertilizer Prices Yet to Sink In

Fortunately for fertilizer manufacturers such as The Andersons, superintendents — at least for now — appear to be an empathetic bunch. Despite fertilizer prices that have jumped by at least 15 percent this year and more than 25 percent over the last 18 months, there's been no major consumer backlash, according to the Toledo, Ohio-based company.

"(Superintendents) understand that fertilizer costs are related to natural gas," says Mike Bandy, marketing manager for The Andersons. "No one likes higher prices, but we haven't seen any real balking in terms of product consumption."

How long the calm will last is uncertain. The Andersons had not been expecting such a large increase in gas prices this year. In addition, the company was hoping to see a dip in natural gas prices this summer, but that has not yet occurred.

"We built in as much (of the rising costs) as we could in the pricing we did in the fall," Bandy says. "But prices went up more than we were expecting, so we were forced to do a price adjustment in April to further reflect where (costs) are right now."

"We're concerned about it longterm. We don't want to see the superintendents' cost go up, so we're trying to be as efficient as we can. But there is a limit as to what we can do."

Natural gas represents 70 percent to 90 percent of the cost to make nitrogen fertilizer, according to The Fertilizer Institute. Compounding matters, two other fertilizer components — phosphorus and potassium — have increased in price.

"Natural gas isn't the only driver for fertilizers," Bandy says. "The phosphorus is probably related to energy costs in general, and the potassium pricing is probably more of a competition situation within the potassium industry."

On top of all that, The Andersons has to ship products to and from each of its three main plants in Maumee, Ohio; Bowling Green, Ohio; and Montgomery, Ala.

"Most of our fertilizer and raw materials are not sourced close to our manufacturing facilities, and they are obviously very bulky products and very expensive to ship," Bandy said. "Conversely, we are a nationwide distributor and we ship products all across the nation and there are additional costs, primarily in the form of freight charges for trucks to ship products to our distributor customers."

Unfortunately, the increased costs represent a "change that will probably not be reversed," Bandy says. That may force The Andersons to change. "What it probably is forcing us to do is relook at our formulas and make sure we're as efficient as can be," he adds.

— By Thomas Skernivitz

sen's riding greens mower, the E-Plex II, and its walk-behind greens mower, the E-Walk, have yet to sway superintendents.

"To be honest, I don't fully understand why the electric greens mowers haven't taken off like wild-fire," Weeks says. "It seems logical that customers would get on board with this technology, especially when it's very environmentally friendly and the machine is obviously dead silent.

"But the adoption rate on the riding greens mower and even the walking greens mower hasn't been what I think it should be. The percentage of the electric

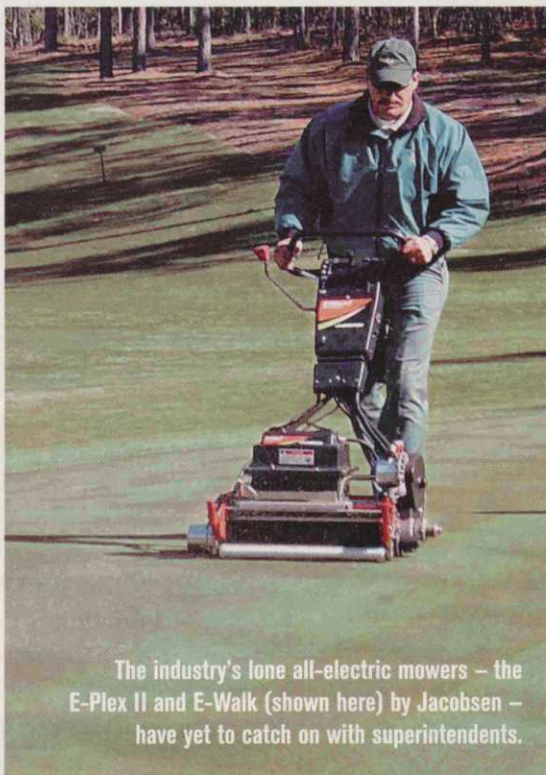
walkers that we sell relative to our overall percentage of our walking greens mowers is not even 10 percent."

The easy explanation behind stagnant sales is the perception that electric mowers are less powerful — a belief that Jacobsen's competitors are quick to highlight.

"The problem with a straight battery-powered machine is that it just can't perform the same functions as a standard hydraulic greens mower," Lanier says. "That's the downside of a total electric battery-powered machine. You only have a certain amount of power stored in this battery, and once it's gone, it's gone. You have to recharge it."

Not to fear, according to Jacobsen. Most courses, Weeks says, typically have an arsenal of at least two riding greens mowers and possibly six walking greens mowers per 18 holes.

"Sometimes," says Weeks, "we get a golf course that says, 'Well, I can't cut 18 holes with that riding greens mower on that one charge.' Well, nobody cuts 18 holes with one riding greens mower regardless of what you're using because you don't have that much time in the



The industry's lone all-electric mowers — the E-Plex II and E-Walk (shown here) by Jacobsen — have yet to catch on with superintendents.

morning to get all the greens cut."

Jacobsen's all-electric sales could also be suffering because of the golf industry's traditionalism and conservatism.

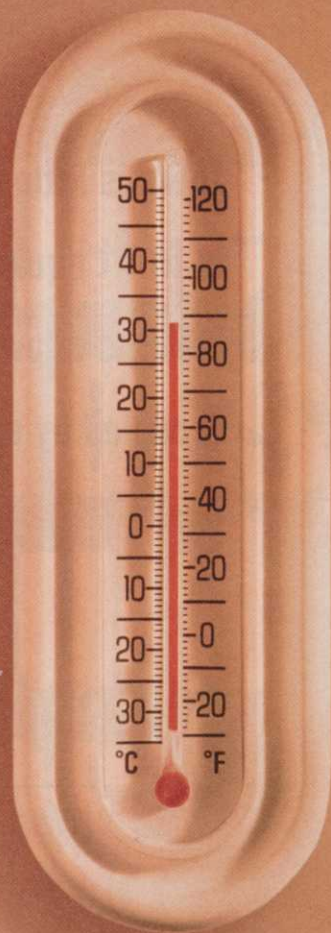
"The overall product lifecycle in the golf industry seems to be a hair slower than most industries," Weeks says. "And you have to recognize that superintendents, if they screw up one or five of their greens because they try out a new technology that doesn't work out, could lose their jobs over it. So they're rather slow to switch and they like to see a lot of proof before they consider it."

Jacobsen plans more aggressive educational and marketing campaigns to remedy the situation. "We're doing things to insure that the nightly charge isn't really what (superintendents) need to be concerned with in terms of getting that mower around the course," Weeks says.

Equally frustrated

Equipment manufacturers are no more pleased than superintendents about increased fuel prices, according to Wright. Toro, he notes, has had to

Continued on page 38



Becomes the hero of summer.

Newly labeled for anthracnose, Medallion now offers a unique mode of action to complement Heritage® fungicide in your rotation program. Resistance management is always a challenge. Medallion has proven to be highly effective in controlling this tough disease.



To learn more, call the Syngenta Customer Resource Center at 1-866-SYNGENTA or visit www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com.

Continued from page 37
work through price hikes of several of its manufacturing components, including steel, resins and rubber.

There is little that the Big Three can do to limit equipment price hikes because theirs is a low-volume industry that's occupied by even smaller suppliers.

"Those things are a lot bigger than fuel prices," Wright says. "We've felt it just as much as any superintendent."

In turn, superintendents have already seen equipment price increases. "I think everybody has had to nudge them up a little bit," Wright says. And there is little that the Big

Three can do to prevent that, he adds, because theirs is a low-volume industry that's occupied by even smaller suppliers.

"The people that supply a fairway mower with a motor aren't also supplying General Motors," Wright says. "So while there are three players that are trying to become more efficient in how they make things ... it gets tougher to fight price increases when it's more of a niche market."

Nonetheless, Toro is always trying to defray customer expense, Wright says. Currently a lean manufacturing system is being implemented to eliminate waste in the production process and, in turn, reduce the amount of time between customer order and delivery.

"Toro is working hard at managing the commodity and fuel increases out there, whereas the gas companies are probably not doing anything," Wright says. "When was the last time Amoco was trying to save you a dime?" ■

Got Ball Mark Problems?

Aronimink Golf Club, Newtown Square, PA
Atlanta National Golf Club, Alpharetta, GA
Carolina Country Club, Raleigh, NC
Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, Lemont, IL
Cherry Hills Country Club, Englewood, CO
Country Club of St. Albans, St. Albans, MO
Desert Highlands Country Club, Scottsdale, AZ
Elgin Country Club, Elgin, IL
Flint Hills National Country Club, Andover, KS
Karsten Creek Golf Club – OSU, Stillwater, OK
La Jolla Country Club, La Jolla, CA
Medinah Country Club, Medinah, IL

Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, PA
Norwood Hills Country Club, St. Louis, MO
Palos Verdes Golf Club, Palos Verdes, CA
Quintero Golf & Country Club, Peoria, AZ
Raccoon Run Country Club, Warsaw, IN
TPC at Boston, Norton, MA
TPC at Summerlin, Las Vegas, NV
The Country Club at DC Ranch, Scottsdale, AZ
The Vintage Club, Indian Wells, CA
White Columns Country Club, Alpharetta, GA
White Manor Country Club, Malvern, PA
Yellowstone Club, Big Sky, MT

**We Don't. Thank You,
Call 1-866-443-4222**
www.greenfixgolf.com



GREENFIX
BALL MARK
ELIMINATION
SYSTEM
® OFFICIALLY LICENSED PRODUCT

A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss, Neither Should Your Greens.

Cure and prevent putting green moss infestations with Junction* Fungicide/Bactericide.

Changes in turf maintenance practices have made moss encroachment one of the major problems that golf course superintendents face today.

Left unchecked, moss can out-compete desired turf species and literally choke the life out of your greens. But, there is a proven and simple answer to this prolific problem.

Research has shown that Junction Fungicide/Bactericide, used in a control program, can both cure and prevent moss infestations. And, while dealing with moss, Junction also provides cost-effective control of a wide spectrum of fungal and bacterial diseases.

So, don't let moss suffocate your greens. Take back control of your greens with the Junction Moss Management Program. For more information about Junction call **1-800-419-7779** or visit our web site at **www.sepro.com**.



SePRO Corporation 11550 North Meridian Street, Suite 600, Carmel, IN 46032

Trademark of SePRO Corporation. Always read and follow label directions. ©Copyright 2004 SePRO Corporation.

Junction*
Fungicide/Bactericide



SOMETIMES A GREAT **Notion**

Have you given any thought to implementing an **employee think tank** that could improve your operation's productivity and make your employees happier?

By Becky Mollenkamp



For as long as anyone could remember, Elmcrest Country Club had left its greens mowers sitting out all winter, taking up a huge amount of space in the storage facility. The bad habit finally ended when the course mechanic suggested that certified superintendent Rick Tegtmeier buy a rolling rack featured in a catalog. The new cart allows one person to move 10 mowers without a two-wheeler and creates streamlined storage for the equipment.

"He came up with a quick solution to an age-old problem we've always had," says Tegtmeier, whose course is based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Workers often see problems and opportunities that their bosses miss. And it doesn't take much prompting to get employees to offer their two cents.

Why take time to get employee input? A study by Development Dimensions International shows that organizations with high employee involvement experienced a 70 percent improvement in customer service and a 65 percent improvement in overall productivity. Oh, yeah, worker satisfaction grew by 45 percent.

To create your own employee think tank, experts suggest implementing a formal system that focuses on small ideas, includes quick follow-through and recognizes employees for their efforts.

Tegtmeier has a weekly staff meeting at which the group discusses problems and brainstorms solutions. He says the crew comes up with usable ideas nearly every week.

"They are the ones out there doing it; I'm just the manager," he says.

Continued on page 42