

# YOUNG MAN IN A HURRY

Clarke Fenimore, right, is the young Kentucky equipment distributor that's in a hurry. Below, he and his partner, Doug Wearren, left, check newly arrived equipment.



**F**REE ENTERPRISE is still alive. Put together hustle and salesmanship — which add up to hard work — couple these with ability and the old formula for success in America still holds.

These account for a fast start for one young Kentucky distributor — 32-year-old Clarke Fenimore. He's been in business a year, and if he keeps running he'll build a million dollar corporation in "five — no," he says, "make that 10 years for the record."

Whether he does or not naturally depends on many factors. But regardless, the fact that a young man can sell his way into his own business — without funds — and do it in the span of a year is a plus for the commercial turf industry.

Fenimore did have many things in his favor. He had a sizable reputation as a salesman of commercial turf industry products. (He worked with U.S.S. Agri-Chemicals with headquarters at Atlanta, Ga.) His territory comprised Kentucky and part of Indiana, the territory where he now distributes. Thus, he knew his customers and he had friends — one of whom became his partner — in the industry.

Further, he went into business for

himself partly because he found himself among the unemployed. He had originally resigned from U.S.S. Agri-Chemicals to manage a garden center chain, slated to garner the bulk of this kind of consumer business in the Louisville trade area. It didn't pan. The chain project never left the starting gate. And Fenimore found that he needed a job. Which was how Ky-Inna Turf Supply came into being.

Douglas R. Wearren, only 35 but a well-known landscaper and nurseryman operating in seven states, suggested that Fenimore sell chemicals and fertilizers as a distributor. This he did, starting with products of W.A. Cleary Corp., Diamond Shamrock, Velsicol, Gordon Chemicals, Agrico, and IMC Fertilizer.

In lieu of money, he used credit of these corporations and his name and reputation (plus credit rating of Doug Wearren).

Now he and Wearren have a corporation. Neither has put any personal funds into the venture. However, because sales were booming early last year, they did form a corporation with a third partner who put money into the venture. Insurance policies on each of the three principals provided protection

against loss. Unfortunately, and sadly for all concerned, the new partner William Kelly, a well-known concrete paving contractor, was shortly after killed in an auto accident. Insurance money permitted Wearren and Fenimore to repurchase his stock.

About this time, Fenimore started adding equipment to his lines. To name a few, he handles National Mower, Hahn West Point, Smithco, Roof, Terrain King, Roseman, Lewis Ball Washers, Drip, Cyclone Seeders, Locke, Bolsey-Devere, Simplicity, and Jacobsen's small tractors. A newly opened division is tied to commercial turf irrigation.

Though Fenimore relates his experiences in a somewhat light and airy manner, there is no mistaking the drive behind his operation. Both he and Wearren have some very definite ideas on marketing. They are putting their experience and knowledge on the line along with long hours and hard work.

Fenimore believes in working closely with customers who in turn work with them. Goal of Ky-Inna (pronounced Kentucky anna), he says, is to package chemicals and equipment to fit a customer's need. At the same time, they like to carry

lines which are nationally advertised. This gives them an intro to new business and at the same time helps familiarize the customer with the product. Because Ky-Inna warehouse and offices are located in a rural non-commercial area, overhead cost is low.

The firm handles the bulk of its own transport. Company trucks make regular pickups in Houston and similar points and weekly trips to Chicago. Six vans purchased from a Louisville transfer company make it possible to drop both van and supplies at customer headquarters. In this way, unloading can be done as the load is used or at least at the convenience of the customer. Further, as Fenimore notes, the advertising on the side of each van doesn't hurt the image of the business. He has good reason inasmuch as one of the vans has, for the last several weeks, been on the grounds of Colonel Saunders' new \$3 million international headquarters building at Louisville. Wearren, Fenimore's partner, has the landscaping contract.

Fenimore's business is unique in another way. He does not operate a service shop. Practically every commercial turf customer, he says,

is equipped to do his own service and repair work. What this kind of customer wants—and wants fast—is immediate delivery on parts. This Ky-Inna is prepared to do. The firm maintains a complete parts inventory.

The type of customers sold by Ky-Inna dictates the success of this operation. There are no walk-in customers. Fenimore sells golf courses, industries with factory lawns to maintain, governments including state, county, municipal and federal, and garden centers. No discount houses are included in the garden center trade.

Of particular interest to the commercial turf industry is the key buying influence for each market. When it comes to golf courses, Fenimore says he wants to deal with the superintendent—and him only. "We never go over the head of the superintendent," he says. A course management defeats itself if it does not let the super make 100% of the buying decisions on both equipment and chemicals. Management must let the superintendent "run the course" because he is the one responsible for the turf.

For industrial accounts, Fenimore and his salesmen (the firm has six



Fenimore parks a new rotary mower unit.

full-time employees) try and work closely with the man responsible for overall turf maintenance. Industry titles vary here, so some discretion is necessary to reach the key buying influence.

For government bodies, a main-

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tenance superintendent with a title having something to do with grounds will be a key person to contact. Likely he will make recommendations and a purchasing agent will put the order out for bids. In any case, the firm will probably work with several persons in getting the business.

Federal accounts are different. Personal contact is a must.

A management key in building business for a new firm is a uniform markup. Fenimore believes this has aided the fast start Ky-Inna has enjoyed. Because they do not

headquarter in a congested area and have less than imposing warehouse space, they do keep overhead low. Everyone pays the same price, and this in itself, Fenimore believes, helps business.

Where the firm goes depends not only on management but on the total economy of the area. Fenimore no doubt will continue to push. He is a young man in a hurry but he still finds time for living. Besides a family, Alberta, his wife, and two daughters, he is active in civic events. He is a registered football official and was among 20 of some

400 picked to handle the state play-offs this past season. He is also a volunteer fireman (and drives the aerial ladder truck as well as climbing it at times).

Likely his interest in athletics officiating is a follow-up of his college days when he was the college radio voice of the Western Kentucky Hill-toppers, a team recently in the NCAA playoffs. (Incidentally, he attended all playoff games.) He also, while in college at Western Kentucky, was a dorm counselor, worked in the college Public Relations office, college post office, was a member of the Circle K Pershing Rifles Drill Team, Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, in which he helped organize and was the 1st Noble Ruler. Somewhat incidental to all this activity was the fact that he also earned an agri-business degree.

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## Here's How to Whip Selected Turf Pests

Entomologist Dave Shriver of the University of Maryland has released information, in view of changing pesticide-use regulations, on control of insect pests on commercial turf-grass.

To better understand how control can be achieved, he has classified the pests in either above-ground or below-ground categories.

For below-ground pests, such as whitegrubs and wireworms, the critical control need is to get the pesticide into the soil. For above-ground pests, such as sod webworms and billbugs, the grass blades and ground surface should be treated to get a minimum of wash off or soil penetration. The above-ground pests, he added, can be further classified into those that inhabit the thatch near the soil surface, but feed on grass blades (such as sod webworms and chinchbugs) and those that move and feed upon the grass blades (such as aphids and billbugs).

Here is Shriver's control information for these selected insect pests:

APHIDS		
Insecticide	Formulation	Amount/ 1,000 sq. ft.
Diazinon	AG 500WP	1.25 fl. oz.
	50% WP	1.25 oz.
Malathion	57% EC	1 fl. oz.
	25% WP	5 oz.

Remarks: Do not use granular formulation. Mix the suggested amounts in 10-15 gallons of water as a spray. Do not water in treatments. Do not