

industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Becker Underwood acquires Rejex-it

AMES, IA — Becker Underwood Inc., Ames, IA, recently acquired the Rejex-it® Wildlife Management Products division from PMC Specialties. This acquisition comes on the heels of others Becker Underwood has made involving Lan Colorant Products, Sequestrene and Sprint chelated iron products from Novartis, Turf Health Care and NutraSol. Rejex-it products are EPA-registered animal aversion products which modify or deter animal encroachment problems.

Netafim USA and Motorola unite

FRESNO, CA — Netafim USA's open field controls will be brought together with Motorola's advanced wireless irrigation remote technology now that the two companies have formed an alliance.

Netafim USA, the largest and fastest growing business unit of the Netafim International Group, the inventor of advanced micro-irrigation technology, views Motorola's new technology advancements as completing its offering in open field controls, open field fertigation, greenhouse applications and phytomonitoring.

Riverdale, DuPont sign deal

GLENWOOD, IL — Riverdale Chemical Co. signed a letter of intent with the DuPont Company to market formulations of two chemical active ingredients to professional turf managers in the United States.

[CLIPPINGS]

AgriBioTech files for bankruptcy

LAS VEGAS, NV - AgriBioTech Inc. and its operating subsidiaries filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy last month in order to implement an operational restructuring and financial reorganization.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Richard Budd offered six reasons as to why AgriBioTech has suffered significant losses and a lack of current liquidity:

- ▶ Oversupply of seed with a downturn in industry pricing;
- ▶ Difficulties with integrating the operations, culture and accounting systems of 34 companies into single operational units;
- ▶ Delays in bringing seed to market;
- ▶ Reduced revenues;
- ▶ Higher-than-expected expenses;
- ▶ Slow cash collections from a weak agricultural economy.

STOCK PRICE SLUMP

According to a story from *cnetnews.com*, a record trading volume of 6.3 million

shares of AgriBioTech's stock were traded on the basis of some negative comments about the company posted on a Yahoo! message board. After trading at around \$9.25 a share in February 1999, the stock fell to as low as \$1.40 per share in January. Trading was halted at \$2.25 per share on Jan. 24, 2000 by Nasdaq, pending the announcement of the company's intention to file for bankruptcy.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

AgriBioTech intends to conduct business as usual during the restructuring. To ensure that it has the short-term working capital needed to operate, the company is negotiating for debtor-in-possession financing from its current lending group, led by Bank of America N.A. The company intends to pay employee salary, wages and benefits throughout the reorganization process.

New 2, 4-D study refutes original's findings concerning cancer in dogs

SWANSBORO, NC - A study published in 1991 by the Journal of the National Cancer Institute showed an association between cancer in dogs and use of the herbicide 2, 4-D, but a recent re-analysis of that study does not support the conclusions found in that original study.

The new study, conducted by John B. Kaneene, D.V.M., M.P.H., Ph.D.; and RoseAnn Miller, B.S.; of Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, did not find a dose-response relationship between numbers of 2, 4-D applications and canine malignant lymphoma (CML). That finding contradicted the original study findings that owners of dogs with CML were twice as likely to treat their lawns with 2, 4-D four times a year or more than owners of dogs without cancer.

The National Cancer Institute and antipesticide activists cite the original study as a reason why 2, 4-D should be banned, and some veterinarians advise that dog owners not use 2, 4-D. The 2, 4-D Task Force has sought a response to the original study ever since discovering there was no evidence in the toxicology of 2, 4-D that suggested it caused cancer in laboratory animals.

E*Garden launches Web site for Green Industry

RALEIGH, NC - An auction for surplus and rare merchandise and an upcoming wholesale store are just two of the many features of E*Garden (www.egarden.com), a new business-to-business e-commerce Web site focused on the lawn and garden industry.

E*Garden also features news, information and resources for companies in the lawn and garden trade. Longer-term plans call for the Web site to offer a full range of procurement, payment and distribution services for lawn and garden companies.

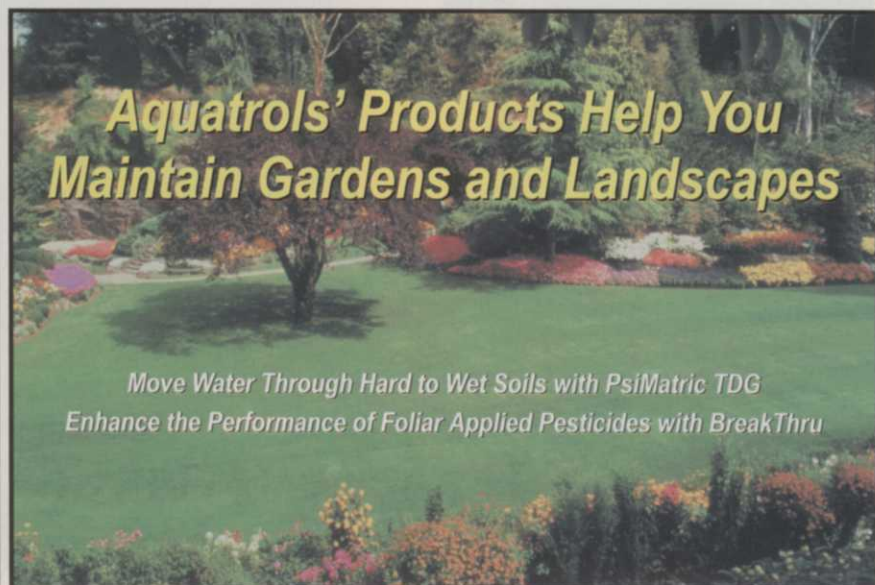
"Through E*Garden, manufacturers and distributors of lawn and garden merchandise can more efficiently and profitably sell their products," says Linda Watson, president of E*Garden, Inc. "Independent retailers and lawn and garden professionals can use E*Garden to buy all of their lawn and garden merchandise from a wide range of suppliers at competitive prices."

The auction allows sellers to post items in the Auction Service, where buyers can place bids on the items and e-mail questions to the seller. Sellers can see the best current bids at any time. When the auction period is over, E*Garden notifies the seller and winning bidder(s) via e-mail and puts them in touch with one another.

E*Garden is working to create financing and shipping partnerships, which will allow the transaction to be done through the site.

"Internet analysts expect business-to-business transactions on the Internet to grow to approximately \$1.3 trillion by 2003 — dwarfing what consumers will

spend online — and E*Garden is positioned to lead the lawn and garden industry's move into e-commerce."



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Circle 112

Ferris-Simplicity merger spawns new product line

PORT WASHINGTON, WI — Simplicity Manufacturing Inc. purchased Ferris Industries, Munnsville, NY, only a couple months ago, but already the company has taken advantage of its newly formed association by coming out with a consumer line of commercial mowing equipment.

The new line is called Derby because of the mowers' emphasis on speed. "This line is geared toward busy young professionals who want to cut grass fast with commercial-tough equipment," says Jim Weir, president of Simplicity.

Simplicity, known for its dominance in the consumer mowing sector, acquired Ferris with an eye for expansion to the commercial side.

"Ferris was a great fit because they are an innovative leader clearly ahead of their time," Weir says. "We also think that they will help us strengthen our relationship with dealers."

Simplicity and Ferris will continue to maintain their own individual Web sites which, unlike other sites, are designed to allow people to find the company's dealers. Weir hinted at delving into selling equipment directly from the site, however. "We're going to begin selling a limited amount of equipment on our Web site this spring, but we're going to include the dealer in the process," he says. "We'll sell to

customers but the dealers will set everything up and contact and interact with them."

An addition to Simplicity's plant is currently being built to meet the increased demand for its products, but Ferris will continue to stand by itself, says

Weir. "Ferris is a vast, nimble and innovative company, and we want to keep it that way. The reason we acquired them is because they didn't have the capital to support their growth."

Weir says that Simplicity will eventually incorporate

some of Ferris' technology into its own machines, including the IS® independent suspension system. "Simplicity is known for offering the best cut, and that information will be translated to Ferris for a solid combination."

—Jason Stahl

People & companies

The **Toro Company** named **Dave Armentrout** general manager of its recently acquired distributor, Chicago Turf and Irrigation.

Greenman-Pedersen named **John Spiegel** vice president and director of land development services.

Attachments manufacturer **ATI Global**, Delhi, IA, changed its name to **Attachment Technologies**, Inc. Attachment Technologies is the parent company of Bradco and The Major, providers of construction attachments.



Angela Ramos and Sandra Casserly have joined **Van Waters**

& Rogers' Professional Products & Services business unit as turf and landscape specialists.

Jerry Pauley and Lee Bloomcamp were named

territory sales representatives for **Zeneca Professional Products**. The company also named **Bill McClellan** as its North American technical manager for professional pest control and turf products, **Kathy Cantagallo** as contract technical sales manager and **David Ross** as national accounts manager.

Roeland Kapsenberg was appointed by **Barenbrug USA** as its new president/CEO of Barenbrug North America. **Ron Dodds** was named territory manager for the company's Forage product line.

Tom Taylor has rejoined **Woods Equipment Company** as marketing manager, Agriculture and Turf Business.

Rohm and Haas Company named **Gray C. Wirth** strategic market manager for turf and ornamental products.

David Mutter joined **Environmental Industries of Calabasas**, CA as vice president of sales and marketing. The company promoted **William H. Arman** to corporate vice president of human resources.



Harmony Products promoted **John Moriarity** to vice president of sales and marketing.

Sweepster of Dexter, MI named **Patrick Robertson** vice president of manufacturing.

Sumitomo Chemical, the parent company of Valent USA, purchased the Ag Specialties Business of Abbott Laboratories. The acquisition will provide Sumitomo with naturally occurring biopesticides, plant growth regulators and other products for agriculture, public health and forestry.

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Church leaves TruGreen-LandCare

LOMBARD, IL — Bruce Church, of TruGreen-LandCare (formerly D.R. Church Landscape Co.), announced that he is leaving the company to explore new opportunities.

Church, a founding member of LandCare USA, which was acquired by the TruGreen Division of ServiceMaster in 1998, will hand over his duties as district manager to John Joestgen. Church will remain TruGreen-LandCare as a consultant until March 3.

[CLIPPINGS]

Surfin' Turf

Dressed for success

NEBS.com, a small business management resource <http://www.nebs.com>

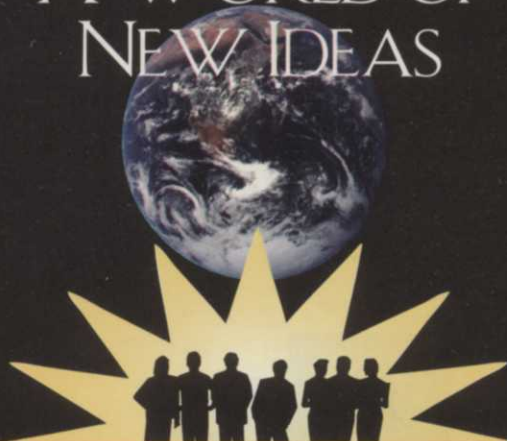
Perhaps you've been thinking that forest green t-shirts and pleated khakis might make your crew the envy of the fashion world. Or maybe you want to make the switch to bright orange t-shirts for your crew's safety.

Whatever your desire, you can get it done at www.nebs.com, a Web site that has recently added Company Colors™ work wear to its online cata-

log that makes customizing and proofing uniform orders as easy as a stroll down a runway.

Anybody who knows how to work a mouse can customize a product by selecting its style, color, logo, embroidery typeface and thread color. Once the design is complete, the screen displays a visual representation of the finished item. Among the clothing items offered are industrial work pants, coveralls, jackets, work coats, sweatshirts, t-shirts and hats.

A WORLD OF NEW IDEAS



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Circle 116

It's (not) in the hole!



(L to R) Mike Ochoa, Irritrol Systems' director of sales and marketing; Mark Dailey, top prize winner from San Antonio, TX; and Rick Parod, vice president of The Toro Company.

ORLANDO, FL - Irrigation contractor Mark Dailey found himself doing his best Carl Spackler from *Caddyshack* imitation recently when he out-putted seven other finalists for a chance at becoming a millionaire at Irritrol Systems' \$1 Million Putt Competition. Even though he wasn't able to say, "It's in the hole," on the 35-footer that would have put him in Bill Gates' company, he did walk away with \$15,000.

Dailey's \$1 million putt attempt marked the culmination of a year-long Irritrol promotion that was open to landscape and irrigation contractors nation-

wide. Eight contractors were selected by random drawing to compete in the two-day putting event. In addition to receiving

an all-expenses paid trip to Orlando, the eight finalists took home cash prizes ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000.

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A source of disappointment...

to the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation was the group's listing in our Green Book 2000 printed in December 1999. It turns out we listed the old address. The correct address for the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation is P.O. Box 3388, 1100-H Brandywine Blvd., Zanesville, OH 43702-3388, telephone: 888/683-3445, fax: 740/452-2552, email: kthompson@offinger.com, contact: Kevin Thompson, managing director. We apologize for the error.