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Sandoz pops Nader for wrongful report

DES PLAINES, Ill. — John A. Licata, director of environmental, health, safety and quality assurance for Sandoz Crop Protection Corp., took no time to fire off a poignant response to a recent anti-pesticide report.

The highly-publicized report was issued by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen's Congress Watch on the lawn care industry. Licata's letter to the author of the report points out inaccuracies in the group's criticism of the herbicide Banvel and, along the way, gives us a good model to follow when undue criticism rears its ugly head.

Licata writes that Banvel is not restricted in California and that "there is no substantiation that dicamba, the active ingredient in Banvel, is

associated with an increased chance of miscarriage." He points out that fetotoxicity was slightly increased in rabbit studies—which is not unusual—and that the study's author considered it insignificant when making the report.

Also, concerning remarks that the product is a threat to groundwater, Licata says that "...because of its rapid degradation and the soil absorption of the degradation products, dicamba is not normally detected in surface or groundwater. It has not been detected at levels above the EPA's health advisory level."

Besides Banvel, Sandoz also produces Bonzi growth regulator, Mavrik Aquaflo and Pentac for the lawn and landscape markets. □



A.A.N. director of government relations Ben Bolusky (at podium) offers the association's support of "oasis legislation" in Washington, D.C. At right is Indiana Congressman Jim Jontz, who introduced the act.

NURSERIES

Nurserymen like oasis ideas

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) has come out in favor of the Urban and Community Forestry Act of 1989.

The bill has become

known as "oasis legislation" because it supports the practice of tree planting to help cool urban areas.

Ben Bolusky, A.A.N. director of government af-
continued on page 26

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There's a new name in the winner's circle at Doral

Taming the famed Blue Monster course is the only way a golfer gets into the winner's circle at Doral. It's no different for turf professionals. Steve Kuhn, superintendent for all five of Doral's courses, occupies a permanent spot. John Deere, a new name at this prestigious Florida resort, just moved in.

"I've used John Deere tractors before so I know something about their quality," says Kuhn. "Most of us in this business knew that when John Deere got into more specialized turf care machines they would come out with something good.

"I bought a John Deere 280S Aerator on the spot—which is unusual for me. Since then, we've saved time and money using it to aerate all five of our courses. We can finish a course in 10-12 hours now where it used to take us 3-4 days.

"We also use a 151 Vacuum to pick up clippings and debris around the hotel. I like the fact that it has its own engine, so we can pull it with any of our vehicles. It also has a filtering system that makes it less disturbing for our operators and guests."

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A.A.N. from page 22

fairs, said the bill was "strong, immediate action that communities can take to green up and cool off our cities, and a sound approach to restoring the health of our urban environments."

The bill, introduced by Congressman Jim Jontz (D-Ind.), will serve to complement the Global Releaf Program, a campaign to plant 100 million trees in American cities and towns by 1992.

The bill will promote tree planting in urban areas and increase research and educational efforts to improve the public's understanding of tree and forest ecology in urban areas. It also will provide for increased technical assistance and a competitive grants program to support urban and community forestry projects.

With A.A.N.'s backing, a large number of trees are expected to be acquired from private nurseries.

The association will also provide private nursery advice to the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council. □

AWARDS

NRVMA calls for 1989 nominations

CENTERVILLE, Del. — The National Roadside Vegetation Management Association has issued a call for entries in its 1989 *Excellence in Roadside Vegetation Management* awards program. The deadline for entries is July 15.

Established in 1985, the awards program recognizes the achievements of professionals who are responsible for vegetation management along the nation's roads and highways. Profiles of some of last year's winners appear in this issue of *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*.

The competition is open to all individuals or organizations involved in roadside vegetation management. Entries may be

submitted in one of two categories: roadside industry (state depts. of transportation and county or city road depts.) and roadside support (academic or industry contributions). Individuals may nominate their own operation or submit nominations on behalf of colleagues or business associates.

For additional entry details and a nomination form, write: NRVMA Awards Program, c/o McCullough & Assoc., P.O. Box 24, Eureka, IL 61530, or call (217) 356-9507. □

EQUIPMENT

OPEI: Consumer mag went too far

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute is not happy with Consumer Reports magazine's recent survey of lawn tractors.

"They went too far," says John Liskey, OPEI's director of statistical and technical services.

"They got a little bit of information and they just carried it to extremes."

The survey appeared in the consumer monthly's June issue. Twenty-two lawn tractors were tested for the report. All were 12-hp, with bagging attachments.

"Although some tractors go beyond the industry's voluntary safety standard requirements, the design shortcomings in other models heighten the risks inherent in any grass cutting machine," said the report.

For three models, the report determined it was too easy to kick the gearshift lever into gear accidentally when climbing on or off the tractor.

Weaknesses found in other tractors included: susceptibility to bucking and rearing; inadequate "deadman" controls; separate controls for speed and direction; slow stopping (3 seconds or more) blades; and noise pollution.

One of the Institute's major objections to the report was its stability test.

Continued on page 27

INDUSTRY

Future Farmers to emphasize turf

BLACKSBURG, Va. — The Future Farmers of America (F.F.A.) is planning to alter its annual contest for high school students to place more emphasis on the turf/landscape market by 1991.

"We have had insufficient emphasis in the turf area," notes Dr. Alan R. McDaniel of Virginia Tech, the man in charge of the contest re-evaluation. "Today, agriculture is not your traditional crop and animal production. Only one person in six in the agriculture industry is directly related to food production."

McDaniel says that the new emphasis on turf-related studies will definitely have an impact on the industry in the future. "It represents an introduction to horticulture, landscaping and turf at the high school level," he says.

Helping McDaniel restructure the F.F.A. contest is assistant Frank B. Flanders of the University of Georgia. Also on the advisory board are Bob Brophy of Cushman; Richard Anderson and Ron Lytle of Kubota; Thomas Carter of Jacobsen; Andy Seckinger of Chipco Specialty Products; and Brian Corsini, Carl Meyer and Andy Klapis of the American Association of Nurserymen and the Wholesale Nursery Growers Association.

"The F.F.A. has noted a tremendous decline in students who want to study strictly agriculture," says Brophy. "Most of the emphasis is now in urban horticultural areas. We gave them parameters of what the industry is looking for." □

NEWS from page 26

The test consisted of placing tractors on a 15° slope with a 175 lb. rider, grass catcher in place with 25 lb. weights in each bag. The engines were set at full throttle with the gear shift lever in the highest gear. The clutch was released quickly to determine the extent of front wheel lift-off. Four of the machines experienced "extreme" front wheel lift-off.

"To get the exact scenario," explains Liskey, "you have to make an awful lot of assumptions. That people stop on 15° slopes, with a loaded bag, run the engine at full throttle and pop the clutch. It would have been nice if they had talked to the industry a little bit more prior to discussion of some of the points relative to safety recommendations."

Liskey said the institute would be responding to the report. □

MARKETING

Survey explores buying habits

OAKLAND, Calif. — Most California gardeners spend between \$50 and \$299 a year on garden supplies and plant material, according to the University of California Cooperative Extension.

The UCCE recently conducted a survey to determine the buying habits of home gardeners around the state.

The survey results show that gardeners who shop at full service garden centers spend the most money. Almost 54 percent of these shoppers spend \$150 or more in an average year, while only 37.5 percent of those who shop at other businesses for their supplies spend that much.

The decorative value of gardening was ranked as the most important reason to garden. □

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ATHLETIC TURF

LOTS OF HOLES...Fifty-three cleat marks per square foot. That's what you should expect if you have a heavy-traffic football field. That's the number of holes put into a professional football field between the hash marks, according to Sports Turf Managers Association president **Steve Cockerham**. Of course, because the hash marks are closer together in professional football than in college and high school, that number would be high for most fields. The answer to these high-wear areas? "The new ryegrasses just may be something that we can consider as an athletic turf, at least here in Southern California," Cockerham said at an STMA meeting in Anaheim recently.

CHANGES FOR THE CHIEFS...Chip Toma has been named head groundskeeper for the Kansas City Chiefs, effective July 1. Toma takes over from his father **George Toma**, who will remain as head groundskeeper for the Royals and also consult for the Chiefs. George will also be doing more consulting and speaking nationwide. "I'm definitely going to finish my career with the Royals," he promises. "They've treated me like a king."

Chip visits the Orient in August to help the Asian Games Committee and conduct athletic turf seminars in Hong Kong and Taiwan. "China is hungry for information," says Chip. "They're competent people, and they want nice fields, but they don't yet have the know-how or proper equipment."

BRONCOS SEED NEW FIELD...If all goes well, the Denver Broncos' new practice field will begin to take seed sometime in mid-July. **Ross Kurcab**, practice field manager, will use a 70/30 blue/rye turf mix after construction crews install an underground heating system. "The bluegrass comes through the winter better," says Kurcab, "and the rye gives us the aggressiveness we need. Our goals for this field are safety and playability." The team expects to be using the new practice field and facility by March of 1990.

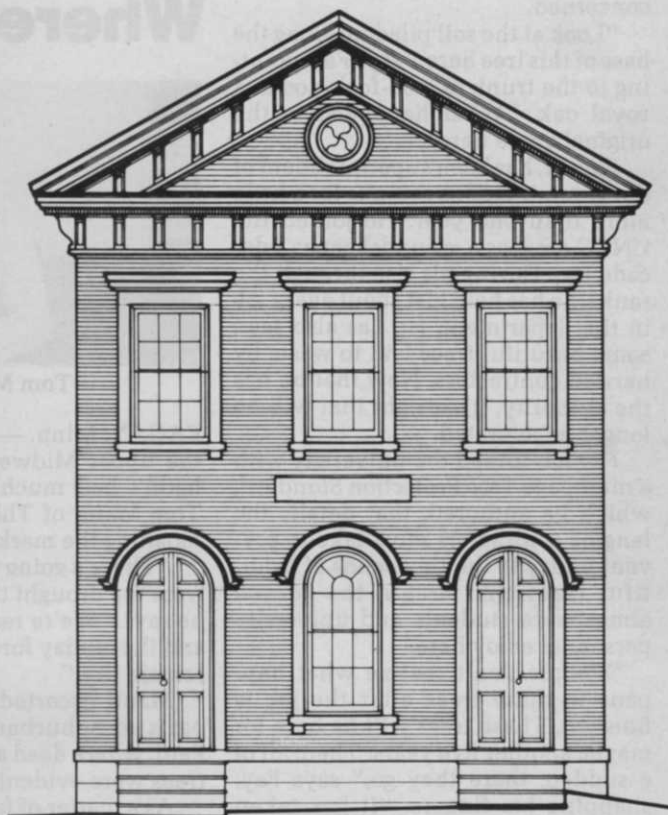
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Setting standards

GREENSBORO, N.C. — On this hot May day, there's more action going on outside the University of North Carolina Greensboro's Physical Activities Complex than there is within. The students left last week, while the construction crews remain, putting the finishing touches on the landscape of the new \$15.7 million building.

Therein lies the problem.

Apparently operators of the contractor's large equipment have damaged four large, stately oaks adjacent to the building. The obliterated grade, excessive compaction, slit roots and chipped bark on the trees is serious enough to kill them.

Chris Fay knows this, and he's concerned.

"Look at the soil piled up along the base of this tree here," says Fay, pointing to the trunk of a 50-foot, doomed royal oak. "What happened to the original grade here?"

Fay, 31, has been superintendent of the grounds on this campus for a little more than one year. He joined the UNCG crew as a groundskeeper a decade ago. During his rise through the ranks, he has held just about every job in the department. He has also seen some beautiful trees laid to waste by harried contractors. Now that he has the authority, it's a sight that will no longer be tolerated.

Fay has armed the university with a nine-page *Tree Protection Standard*, which he authored, that details the lengths contractors must take to prevent injury to the thousands of beautiful trees that create the serene atmosphere students and university personnel enjoy here.

"People don't realize what happens to these trees after the job is finished. These trees will be here for maybe another five years. Then, all of a sudden, there they go," says Fay, snapping his fingers. "It has taken people a long time to realize that it's the damage done now, during construction, that is killing them."

Fay's Standard calls for construction crews to set up barriers around a tree's drip lines. There are specifications for excavation, grading and fertilization. Even the designer's role is outlined: "It shall be the designer's full responsibility to insure that the contractor complies with the spirit and intent of this standard throughout the construction project." In addition, Fay photographs trees before, during and after a construction crew has gone

to work near it.

Because the Standard is so new, Fay hasn't attempted to enforce it yet. Still, he feels it is only a matter of time.

"I'm the guy that has to live with this after they're gone," he says, looking out across the landscape of the complex. Sometimes you've got to get downright ugly with people before they do the right thing. I say that if you can't go full speed ahead in protecting the tree—if you're going to end up changing the grade around its base, cutting extensively around the roots—take the tree down and put a new one in."

If you're a tree on this campus,



Chris Fay

Fay's action on your behalf couldn't have come at a better time. UNC Greensboro is embarking on a massive facelift, spending more than \$53 million on new buildings, improved athletic fields and the removal of several campus streets, which will be replaced by turfed areas. Construction crews will be a familiar sight on campus well into the 1990s.

—Will Perry

Where's the water?



Tom Mann

EAGAN, Minn. — Meanwhile, out in the upper Midwest where they still hadn't had much water this spring, Tom Mann of The Caretakers is bemoaning the market.

"There's going to be a lot of fallout from the drought this year and next," he says. "We're really minus on rain, and the 30-day forecast calls for us to remain dry."

Mann escorted reporters around parts of suburban Minneapolis/St. Paul, where dead and dying grass and trees were evident.

As a matter of fact, The Caretakers put a good bit of change in the coffers last fall by hauling water from Eagan (which is supplied by an aquifer) to other less fortunate suburbs. "Most of our properties are irrigated, so we spent last June 15th to August 21st hauling water," Mann notes.

Yet, competition is changing rapidly with the addition of a new I-494 bridge linking the fastest-growing suburbs of the Twin Cities.

Eagan's growth itself is attributable to the nearby international airport. "We've got lots of corporate headquarters around here, yet it's get-

ting tougher all the time," says Mann, a former president of the Minnesota Professional Lawn Care Association. "When the bridge opened, that meant a lot of competitors came marching into the area."

He says that dealing with problems associated with the lawn care/landscape business are sometimes discouraging, despite having strictly corporate accounts.

"We feel we function best with a corporate-type client," he says. "The client needs the help. Plus, you have a height of flexibility."

What is the main ingredient still missing from Minnesota landscapes? Color.

"We're basically green on brown. Sophisticated landscapes are a rare bird around here. We sorely need a few companies to add color to their environments.

And when that time comes, The Caretakers will be there.

—Jerry Roche

Using the ballfields

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — Not far from Mann's operation lies the quiet yet thriving community of Eden Prairie. And because this, too, is a fast-growing area, John Skranka, landscape manager for the entire school system, has his hands full: 240 acres, eight building sites, eight soccer fields, four football fields, three baseball fields and four softball fields.

But he's got an ace in the hole: