



Agri-Turf Entry Reshapes Distributor Landscape

Under the leadership of Rich and Lon Records, Agri-Turf Distributing is a distributor that many believe can become a significant player in the Western U.S. **By Brad Harbison**

When Rentokil Initial acquired Western Exterminator in 2012, it not only reshaped the PCO market, but it altered the landscape of the specialty chemical distribution community. As part of the deal, Rentokil acquired Target Specialty Products, the distributor owned by Western Exterminator serving western and central regions of the United States. Target was merged with Ehrlich Distribution, the East Coast-based distributor owned by Rentokil, and the combined distributorship currently operates under the Target Specialty Products name/brand.

Several key Target executives and sales representatives — including Vice President Rich Records — did *not* join the newly merged company, instead reforming in September 2013 (officially opening in January 2014) as Agri-Turf Distributing, under the leadership of Records, Agri-Turf's president. Almost exactly one year later, Rich's brother, Lon Records, came on board as CEO (*see right*). With an experienced and proven management and sales team, Agri-Turf is a distributor that many in the pest control industry believe can become a significant player in the western U.S. "Having been in this industry since 1975, we have so many relationships that it became clear it was the right thing to do," said Rich Records. "We knew we would have customers from day one. We were encouraged from our customers, from the supplier community and from the business community."

Agri-Turf's main distribution center is in Santa Fe Springs, Calif. A second office and warehouse is located in Fresno, Calif. The company's name — Agri-Turf — combines its two main functions: **Agri**, for agricultural chemical sales; and **Turf**, for turf and ornamental sales. Rich Records said launching the business has been a significant undertaking, particularly securing funding, finding the appropriate office location, and obtaining permits, licenses, etc., but he said his team came through. "When you work together for so long — 35 plus years — there is a level of character and trust and integrity that will lead to success," he said. In 2014, Agri-Turf was busy introducing itself and building brand awareness. "We are going back to the marketplace and letting them know who we are here," Records said. "Our long-term goal is simple — to add value to customers and suppliers. Geographically, everyone has visions of grandeur, but we have plenty to do in our markets in Southern California and Central California. A lot of opportunities will come up and you never know what those will be." **PCT**

The author is Internet editor of PCT.

LON RECORDS JOINS AGRI-TURF DISTRIBUTING

In September, Agri-Turf Distributing President Rich Records announced that his brother, Lon Records, had joined the distributor as its chief executive officer (CEO). In this role, he will be responsible for reporting to the board and will concentrate his efforts on market development, supplier relations and the long-term growth of the company.

Records began his career as a sales representative for Chevron (Ortho) in the late 1960s. In 1972, he joined Target Specialty Products as a sales rep in Gardena, Calif. Within a few years he was promoted to sales manager, then branch manager, and he later became president in 1982, a position he held until 2012.

Following Target's sale to Rentokil in 2012, Records was out of specialty chemical distribution for two years, due to a non-compete clause. During this period, Records told PCT he stayed busy with



Lon Records

volunteer work, but he was eager to get back working in distribution. "I just like doing what I'm doing and I enjoy the industry. I enjoy working with our team and with our customers."

Under Records' leadership at Target, the company placed high value on training, service and support, which is the value proposition Agri-Turf is built upon, Records said. "You've got to train your customers so they know how to use products safely and effectively, and you've got to get them what they want, when they want it and where they want it. And then, you've got to give them support when they have issues either with federal EPA, state EPA, departments of transportation, trade commissioners, fire departments, health departments, whatever. We have regulatory compliance in our corporate DNA. We have very close working relationships with the regulatory folks at all levels."

Records said he and the team at Agri-Turf are excited to re-connect with the specialty chemical industries and build the Agri-Turf brand. "When you have been in the business for 35-plus years you develop relationships at all levels whether it's shipping, receiving, customer service, administration, marketing or whatever department. There's a lot of trust there and there's a great deal of integrity. People appreciate that." — *Brad Harbison*



The Agri-Turf Distributing management team includes (from left to right): Chuck Synold, Rick Foreman, Rich Records, Donna Browne and Tom Boyd.