Composting makes sense; but will it make money?

By HAL PHILLIPS

Spurred on by necessity, the commercial composting industry is poised to make a lasting impression on golf courses interested in organic fertilizer, peat-subsititutes and mulch products.

• In the case of J.C. McMaster, an impression has already been made. More than 160 golf courses in Texas and the Southeast have used McMaster’s Rice Husk Compost in no-till mixtures designed to meet those guidelines recommended by the United States Golf Association Green Section.

• During a recent symposium in Ohio, researchers reported instances where composted materials actually contributed to disease suppression in bentgrass.

• And as landfill space dwindles across the nation, Ohio-based D.M. Scott Co. and Pennington Seed of Madison, Ga., have each created composting stations where grass clippings, leaves and brush are removed from municipal dumps, decomposed, and sold to golf courses, farms and landscaping operations.

What we’ve seen across the nation is an effort to reduce the amount of leaves and brush, yard trimmings and grass clippings in the country’s landfills,” explained Dr. Clark Gregory, better known as “Compost Man” to his faithful followers. “Municipalities have a responsibility to deal with this stuff when it’s left on the sidewalk.

“Projects like these are especially interesting for golf courses because these materials tend to help water quality because of the slow-release nature of the product. Eventually, they could reduce dependence on inorganic fertilizer.”

Golf courses constitute an intriguing case Continued on page 46

ConSyst passes muster with EPA — finally

By HAL PHILLIPS

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — For the people at Regal Chemical Company, the long wait is over. Four-and-a-half years after submitting the fungicide ConSyst for federal inspection, the Environmental Protection Action finally granted approval in June. The EPA has never been known as streamlined bureaucracy, but the wait on ConSyst may have graduated from merely annoying to ridiculous.

“It was just one big paper trail,” said Regal Vice President Will King. “I really shouldn’t have taken more than about one and-a-half years. But these things happen.”

“At one point we were about three months away from approval and the data requirements were changed. That added about six months to the process.”

ConSyst is designed to exhibit both contact and systemic actions in a single product. It is labeled for use on all types of ornamental

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The Irrigation Association’s 1992 International Exposition and Technical Conference — scheduled for Nov. 1-4, in New Orleans — will feature a variety of technical sessions covering topics of relevance to those involved in agricultural, turf and landscape irrigation.

Topics covered in agricultural sessions include: "Sorge Flow: The American Irrigation Success Story" by Joe Denggeler of the Texas A&M Extension Service; "Agriculture: The Dilemma of Water Conservation vs. Irrigation Management" by Shlomo Pichan of Orange Enterprises; and "Soil-wick Self Regulating Sub-surface Irrigation" by Samir Ismail of the College of Agriculture, Alexandria, Egypt.

In sessions devoted to turf and landscape, topics include: "Alternatives for Conserving Landscape Water Dollars" by Robert Beccard of Aqua Engineering; "The Use of Emitter Lines in Landscape Irrigation" by Tom Bressan of The Urban Farmer Store; and "Gray Irrigation Water Conservation vs. Irrigation" by Samir Ismail of the College of Agriculture, Alexandria, Egypt.

The conference will also host three business seminars designed to be beneficial to everyone. They include: "Stress Management" by Dr. Chrisman Wilson of the Psychology Department at Tulane University, "Building a Winning Team" by independent consultant Jim Whitt, and "Motivation" by Dr. John Keller.

For more information about the programs and registration, contact Martha Lindauer at 703-524-9544, or fax your correspondence to her at 703-524-9544.

The Irrigation Association is also hosting a series of educational programs in conjunction — but preceding — the Association’s 1992 Technical Conference in New Orleans.

On Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30 and 31, the IA will host a two-day School of Irrigation which will cover the basics of water movement, infiltration and evapotranspiration rates for irrigation design.

The registration fee for IA members is $150. The fee for non-members is $175.

The IA will also offer a one-day Micro-Spray Design Workshop on Saturday, Oct. 31. The course is being taught by Dr. Charles Burt of Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo.

The registration is $150 for IA members and $200 for non-members.

Finally, the IA will offer a full-day Water Auditor Training course on Oct. 30. The session covers the basics of landscape irrigation water auditing. The course, which addresses evaluating the performance of irrigation systems, will cost IA members $150 and non-members $200.

All the above courses can be used to help irrigation professionals participating in the Association’s School of Irrigation.

For more information or to register for a course, contact Denise Stone at 703-524-1200.

EPA gives the 'OK' on ConSyst

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turfgrasses and many ornamentals. Designed to be both curative and preventive for a broad spectrum of disease, ConSyst is also fungistatic to pythium species.

However, the product was useless until June, when the EPA freed it from 54 months of bureaucratic bondage. Yet it was another branch of the federal monolith that pushed the waiting game into another overtime period.

"We had several (EPA) project managers overseeing ConSyst — they kept switching project managers," King explained. "In fact, last year the particular project manager was called away by Desert Storm and that set us back."

"What can you do about that?"

GREENSBORO, N.C. — The EPA has also approved a new formulation — for turf — of Ciba-Geigy’s systemic fungicide, Subdue.

The new incarnation is called Subdue+ WSP.

Said Owen Towne, Ciba-Geigy project manager: "The new formulation offers an alternative that features less potential applicator exposure and easier container disposal. We listened to turf managers’ concerns, and we think Subdue+ WSP’s package helps the industry address those concerns head-on."