Rutgers researchers closing in on herbicide to eradicate poa trivialis

BY PETER BLAIS

MARTINSVILLE, N.J. — One superintendent’s wonder turf is another’s weed. That’s the case with poa trivialis, commonly referred to as rough stalk bluegrass.

While poa triv is fast overtaking ryegrass as the seed of choice for winter overseeding in the South and West, Northern superintendents are looking for a way to eradicate it from their cool-season turf courses.

A solution may be at hand, according to Dr. Richard Hurley, Loft Seed Inc.’s director of research.

Rutgers University researchers are closing in on a herbicide that could eradicate poa trivialis and leave other cool-season grasses standing. Hurley said during the company’s recent 17th Annual Field Day at its research farm here.

“Poa trivialis can be a problem most everywhere,” the Lofts executive said. “The seed is found in the soil, so it is bound to grow.”

“The problem is that it has shallow roots. That causes it to turn brown when the weather warms up come summer.”

“We don’t have it, yet. But someday there will be a herbicide to take out poa trivialis.”

Rutgers is one of about 10 universities nationwide with turf breeding programs, Hurley said. Approximately 35 schools are active in turfgrass research.

Development of many of the new tall fescues and perennial ryegrasses began 25 years ago at those schools and private breeding farms, Hurley explained.

Researchers found those grasses during collection trips to old turf stands in parks and cemeteries. The hardest survivors were cross-bred and blended together to become today’s most popular grasses.

Searches have intensified the past five to Continued on page 40

Leaving "Big Red" for "Smaller Red"

BY RAL PHILLIPS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Sometimes security and economies of scale don’t measure up to opportunity and challenge.

Gary Shampeny, the new vice president of sales & marketing for Bunton, spent eight years at Toro before moving to Louisville early this year. Not everyone would forsake the imposing industry position of Big Red to scramble up the ladder with a smaller company. But Shampeny clearly relishes the chase.

“I tell the boys back in Minneapolis. If I were still up there, I’d have it made,” Shampeny said with a laugh. “I have a lot of respect for Toro. It’s a great organization. But I wanted to be involved with every aspect of an organization. Involved in every way.

“Let’s face it: There are five players in this business, and we’re number one. So we have to approach things a little differently. But it’s a challenge I enjoy.”

Bunton has been around for a long time, specializing in smaller reel products. But the broad-based successes of Jacobsen and Toro have left smaller companies like Bunton searching for ways to compete with an ever-diversifying iron market.

The current course involves marketing agreements with other manufacturers, including a pair of British firms. Bunton doesn’t make cultivation equipment, overseers, aerators or top-dressers, but Charterhouse and Hyater do.

“You can’t build everything, you just can’t,” said Shampeny. “Jake pretty much makes everything, maybe not the greens aerator. But Toro has created these types of relationships for quite some time.”

“With Charterhouse, we’re just building on their strength, which is big reels; while they build on our strength, which is small reels. We do build all of our own rotary equipment. And as volume permits and funds become Continued on page 39

Warren teams with Southern Turf Nurseries

ATLANTA, Ga. — Warren’s Turf, Inc. headquartered in Crystal Lake, Ill., has acquired most assets of Southern Turf Nurseries, Inc. effective May 1.

Vendors should continue to contact local management for orders and send invoices to that address, according to Herb Hadley, general manager of sod operations. Hadley advised anyone with questions to call Corporate Controller Mark Rundle at 1-800-435-6144.

In a joint announcement from Southern Turf’s Atlanta headquarters, Mike Holmes, C.E.O. of Warren’s, and Dr. Tim Bowyer, C.E.O. of Southern Turf broadly reviewed the background for the move, and discussed future implications.

“This marriage of turfgrass companies, both sharing the highest standards of product quality and service, creates one of the largest and most geographically diverse full service turf oriented companies in the U.S., and probably the world,” noted Bowyer.

“Warren’s and Southern Turf facilities in New York, Indiana, Texas, Northern California and Continued on page 40

ASPA’s Summer Convention set for July 14-16

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — An expanding variety of new and improved turfgrass sod production equipment will be displayed and demonstrated here at the American Sod Producers Association (ASPA) Summer Convention, July 14-16.

Hosted at the Thomas Bros. Grass Co. Nashville farm, the convention will feature two full days on the farm. The static displays, seed test plots and equipment areas will be opened Thursday and Friday, with bus transportation scheduled to meet the needs of members.

In addition to the business of farm operations, other highlights will include an educational session on Wednesday focusing on the issuance of credit; the annual business meeting featuring reports from the leadership; the election of new officers and trustees; and banquets at the famed Opryland Hotel.

For immediate registration information, contact the ASPA office at 768-705-9898.

Continued on page 40

Research grants totaling nearly $20,000 have been awarded to four university research bodies by the ASPA. The projects were selected by the Research Committee from Continued on page 40

July 1993 37