WASHINGTON, D.C. — The national and international negotiations over Plant Variety Protection (PVP) that have sharply divided the American seed industry should be decided later this month, according to sources inside and outside the government.

"We're trying to bring the U.S. law into conformity with the new UPOV [International Union for the Protection of Varieties] treaty," said U.S. Department of Agriculture Plant Variety Protection Office Commissioner Ken Evans said.

The U.S. PVP law was first adopted in 1970 and UPOV was first passed by 21 countries in 1978. UPOV was rewritten in 1991. To be a signatory, the United States must come into compliance with that 1991 version.

The purpose of UPOV is to ensure quality control; truth in advertising, by letting consumers know what they're buying; and enforcement, ensuring the seed in a bag is exactly what its label says. Evans explained that at the request of Sen. Bob Kerry, D-Nebr., his department last fall drafted new PVP legislation.

"We hope for passage of a new PVP act by the time of our convention — June 20," said Leslie Cahill, vice president of governmental affairs for the American Seed Trade Association here.

With a Senate vote expected to be in hand in May, "my understanding is that by the end of June, it will be introduced into the House as well," said Tom Salt, plant variety protection examiner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Once the U.S. law passes the Senate and House, then the Senate can take the final step of ratifying the UPOV treaty.

"To enforce the treaty at least five member countries have to submit legislation to continue on page 41

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Kirby Markers sold to Witco Industries

CARMEL, Calif. — Jack Kirby, inventor and chairman of the board of Kirby Markers, Inc., has announced he has sold his company to Witco Industries, a Delaware Corporation. The terms of the sale were not disclosed.

Witco Industries, Inc. announced it will move the company from here to Carlsbad, Calif., by the end of April. The Kirby Marker System will be manufactured by Plastics Engineering and Development, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary. The company will be located at 6108 Avenida Encinas, Carlsbad, California 92009. The new telephone number will be 1-800-925-4729.

Kirby will remain a consultant to the company, and Sales and Marketing Manager Buster Newton will assume the same position with the new company.
Terra acquires Sure-Grow Solutions, Inc.

SIOUX CITY, Iowa—Terra International, Inc. has acquired Sure-Grow Solutions, Inc. of Taft, Texas. Purchase of the farm service center, formerly owned by Loree and Betty Svadlenak, took effect April 16.

The location provides growers with access to Terra’s fertilizer, crop protection products and agricultural services. Under the new ownership, Terra will maintain the tire and spray equipment department.

According Loree Svadlenak, he, Leslie Turner and Pat Gibson will remain with the company, and the Taft location’s phone number will not change.

Polyon sales spur Pursell expansion

SYLACAUGA, Ala.—Pursell Industries, Inc. has begun construction of a new plant to increase production of its patented polymer-coated fertilizers, which are marketed under the Polyon trademark.

Increased demand for the Polyon technology prompted the construction, according to Jim Pursell, chairman and CEO.

“This new facility is three years ahead of our initial plan,” Pursell said. “The sales of Polyon have gained significant market share worldwide and have far exceeded our expectations.”

Grass Craft Airborne

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year. The market—considering landcapers, cemetery and golf courses—has a saturation point of probably 25,000. We should do at least 1,000 this year.

“And I did over 300 units in Asia last year. I have a distributor in California [Agra Pacific in Riverside] that handles all my Asian business.”

According to Hughes, the most unique feature of the Airborne Mower—aside from its domestic manufacture—is its aerodynamically designed molded deck, made of virtually unbreakable polyethylene. The hover mower also features a metal-to-metal mounting system and sun-resistant white coloring.

The price tag? $649.

Grass Craft claims the Airborne to be the lightest hover mower in the industry at 32 pounds. Other features include a safety shut-off system and hand-mounted controls.

The engine, from Tecumseh, features 3.5 hp, two-stoke power and a solid-state ignition system. Tecumseh has 6,000 service centers nationwide, said Hughes.

The blade is steel, specially treated with black oxide and designed to resist rust, flexing and shattering. Optional is the newly developed nylon-based safety blade for buyers who don’t want to use steel.

Kelty named senior VP at Scotts

MARYSVILLE, Ohio—Dr. Michael P. Kelty has been promoted to senior vice president, technology & operations of The Scotts Company.

Prior to his promotion, Kelty was vice president, technology and operations. In addition to Kelty’s previous responsibilities for research, development, engineering, and quality assurance, he will also assume direction of all manufacturing of fertilizers, seed, organics, and soils.

He also has responsibility for the activities of Republic Tool and Manufacturing Co., a Scotts subsidiary.

Kelty has been employed by The Scotts Company since 1979 when he joined the company as regulatory affairs advisor, and later assumed the position of director, advanced technology.