Tiller Owners: Contact Kubota

TORRANCE, Calif. — Kubota Tractor Corp. is attempting to contact all owners of walk-behind tillers, model 6A, AT70, AT705, AT70S-L and AD70. These tillers have been the subject of an important safety campaign that is related to the operation of the power clutch lever. If you own one of these machines, contact your local Kubota dealer immediately to arrange to have it updated at no cost to you. Kubota offers a toll-free number to assist you in locating your nearest dealership (888-458-2682 ext. 1000).

Canziani joins Sustane Tech staff

CANNON FALLS, Minn. — Sustane Corp., a Division of Natural Fertilizer of America, Inc., has announced the hire of Paul F. Canziani of Fair Oaks, Calif., as western technical representative. Canziani will oversee Sustane’s product service, sales and marketing activities in states west of the Rocky Mountains and western Canada, working with distributors and customers.

Jacklin hires Rusconi, Johnson

POST FALLS, Idaho — Steve Rusconi, a graduate of University of Lecanto, Fla., has joined Aquatrols of America as a salesperson. His main responsibilities will be contracting acreage of turf type tall fescue, perennial ryegrass and bent-grass proprietary varieties for Jacklin and Medalist America. He will also focus on field consulting. In other Jacklin news, David Johnson has joined the company as a grower services field consultant here.

Niblett to rep Aquatrols in Fla.

CHERRY HILLS, N.J. — Alan Niblett of Lecanto, Fla., has joined Aquatrols as its Florida territory manager. Niblett, a graduate of University of Massachusetts, brings more than 22 years of experience in the turf industry. Niblett will work with turf professionals and support Aquatrols’ product distribution efforts in Florida.

BRIEFS

Toro to acquire Hardie Irrigation for $130m

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. has announced the purchase of James Hardie Industries Limited of Australia for more than $130 million, bringing the company’s total sales to $2.3 billion. The purchase price of approximately $130 million is subject to adjustment, based on changes in working capital and closing balance sheet audit adjustments. The purchase is expected to have a modest dilutive effect on earnings per share during the first year only.

“We are excited by the opportunities of joining forces with a worldwide leader in irrigation products and services,” said Kendrick B. Meltrose, chairman and chief executive officer of Toro. “James Hardie Irrigation Group’s core competencies complement Toro’s and the resulting synergy will greatly enhance our ability to serve our customers and grow our business profitably. Toro believes this acquisition will strengthen our ability to grow in this market, providing added value for Toro.”

Toro to head Commercial: Szafranski retires

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. has announced John Szafranski, vice president and general manager, Commercial Division, will retire Nov. 1, after 23 years with Toro.

Michael J. Hoffman has been named general manager, Commercial Business. In his new role, Hoffman has overall responsibility for the commercial business and direct responsibility for managing the marketing, sales, engineering and after-market parts and service functions. Previously, Hoffman was managing director for Toro’s recycling equipment business. Hoffman joined Toro in 1977.

Szafranski began his career at Toro in 1973 as a senior product manager for snow removal products with the Consumer Division. He was appointed vice president and general manager, commercial products in 1979, and has led the commercial division continuously since 1984.

Michael E. Anderson has been named managing director, recycling equipment business, replacing Hoffman. He had been director, marketing and service, commercial business. In his new role, Anderson will be responsible for leading the development and execution of the business strategy and operational plans.
Emerald Isle, Bio Turf Gro sign distribution pact

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Emerald Isle, Ltd. and Bio Turf Gro Products have signed a cooperative distribution agreement whereby Emerald Isle will distribute Bio Turf Gro's premium line of liquid micronutrients, foliar fertilizers, natural organic supplements and granular fertilizers through its network of independent T&O distributors.

The agreement will allow Bio Turf Gro Products greater distribution of its products which utilize a new chelating technology developed by Dr. Gene W. Miller, professor emeritus of Utah State University.

According to Mark G. Grigg, president of Bio Turf Gro Products, the firm's materials have performed beyond expectation in test markets. The products are ideal for golf course superintendents and other turf professionals who seek superior fertilizer efficacy and efficiency using environmentally responsible products.

"Emerald Isle is ideally positioned to help us dramatically expand distribution," Grigg said. "Their existing product line is largely complementary to ours, and Emerald Isle's committed distributors are capable of explaining the unique features, advantages and benefits of Dr. Miller's state-of-the-art fertilizing and complexing technologies." Bill Middleton, President of Emerald Isle, Ltd. explained, "We're excited about the very real potential for creating agronomic synergy and economic efficiency by combining some of our materials with theirs." Gary T. Grigg, CGCS, vice president of Bio Turf Gro Products and immediate past president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), said he is also pleased with the new distribution arrangements, "Because our companies share a unique philosophy of developing scientific and natural products, our combined efforts will help advance the science and art of turf maintenance," he said.

Toro/Hardie

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our shareholders.

Richard Parod, president of JHI, added: "Our product lines are complementary to Toro's, and the combination will create a highly effective supplier to the international irrigation industry."

JHI is the leading worldwide supplier of irrigation controllers and Toro is the leading world-wide supplier of irrigation sprinkler heads. Combining both groups will position Toro as a stronger, more cost effective competitor, according to Melrose.

Completion of the transaction is expected upon the satisfaction of customary conditions including regulatory approval.

JHI is headquartered in Laguna Niguel, Calif., and boasts production facilities in Texas, California, Florida and Australia. The company has approximately 1,100 full-time and temporary employees. JHI is positioned as a leading provider of irrigation products to the residential and commercial markets, with a core competency in the design and manufacture of valves and controllers, with strong market share positions worldwide in agricultural drip systems, garden hose, hose-end and micro-irrigation products.

The majority of JHI sales are to wholesale and retail customers in the U.S., with an additional established presence in Europe, Australia and Latin America. JHI has several product brand names including Hardie, Lawn Genie, Irritrol, Richdel and Hardie Pope.

Toro's irrigation division is headquartered in Riverside, Calif., with manufacturing conducted at the same facility.

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