**Scotts acquires 80 percent of SSI, 'gene gun' license**

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Company announced that it has acquired an 80 percent interest in Sanford Scientific Inc. (SSI), a leading research company in the rapidly advancing field of genetic engineering of plants. SSI holds the exclusive license to use biologic ("gene gun") technology in the commercial development of genetically transformed turf grasses, flowers and woody ornamental plants, which include rhododendrons, azaleas, roses, shrubs and decorative trees.

In addition, SSI has developed and licensed a broad portfolio of genes and genetic process technology with significant commercial potential.

This technology augments Scotts' genetic improvement program by allowing researchers to create desirable varieties of plants with value-added traits far beyond the capabilities of conventional plant breeding techniques. Targets of Scotts' research effort include disease and insect resistance, herbicide tolerance and other consumer-relevant traits, such as turf grasses that require less mowing and flowers with novel colors and fragrances. Scotts estimates that it will commercialize certain genetically transformed plants within a few years.

Scotts acquired its interest from SSI founder and president Dr. John Sanford, who with his wife, is retaining a 20 percent interest and will remain with SSI. Sanford led the team of Cornell University scientists who invented the gene gun technology.

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**Terra takes two in the UK**

SIoux City, Iowa — Terra has completed the acquisition of two nitrogen manufacturing plants in the United Kingdom for Imperial Chemical Industries PLC. The plants, located in Billingham and Severside, England, account for almost half of the UK ammonium nitrate production capacity.

With this acquisition, Terra now operates seven nitrogen fertilizer manufacturing facilities: four in the United States, one in Canada and two in England.

"Terra is excited about this expansion of our business into Europe," said Burton Joyce, Terra's president and chief executive officer. "We've gained good facilities, a skilled and dedicated workforce, and a substantial share of a new market for the company. We're all looking forward to the development of our new business Terra Nitrogen UK."

Terra Distribution also continued to increase its fertilizer product offerings in 1997 with the addition of blending facilities located in pivotal geographies. The company said that these facilities allow Terra to meet customers' specific fertilizer needs by providing secondary and micronutrient packages, custom blends and impregnation of

**Continued on page 72**

**Ransomes' updated E-Plex II plays in Sweden**

By TREVOR LEDGER

HARROGATE, England — In an atmosphere of takeover "wariness" Ransomes has launched its all new "E-Plex II" electric greens mower replacing the original E-Plex which has proved so popular, in Sweden especially.

While expanding financial gymnastics kept the city folk guessing, Ransomes presented its latest family addition at BTME '98 Harrogate.

The 48 volt battery Pack offers enough power for approximately 3.5 hours usage which will see a maximum of 20 greens mowed on a single charge. The second generation of Ransomes' electric mowers includes refinements learned of experience; for example, the drive has a distinct hydrostatic feel to it and you can have power steering if you so wish.

The popular perception of Sweden as an ecological trailblazer is upheld with its devotion to electric equipment — over the last three years, 65 percent of Ransomes greensmower sales in Sweden have been E-Plexes. There is no danger of fuel or oil spills, there are no emissions, there is little noise and the running costs have been quoted at around 12 pounds per year.

In the UK, courses have been a little slower to warm to the E-Plex than in Sweden, but there are takers. Gleneagles uses one to mow around the Hotel alarmingly early every morning and is sensitive to its guests comfort; an un-named course in Essex had a noise abatement order slapped on it by disgruntled neighbors and has made the switch to electric. With the takeover deal final, Textron now holds 100 percent of the electric greens mower market.

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