New technologies, techniques paving the way...

Dry Sprayer takes overseeding to the next level

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Turf Solutions has developed the Dry Sprayer, a machine using new overseeding technology that dramatically increases the speed, accuracy and germination time over standard overseeding techniques. Adapting air-blast technology commonly found in agricultural equipment, the Dry Sprayer blows seed directly into the turf canopy.

“We have modified this ag-based small crop machine into one suitable for turfgrass applications,” said John Wicker, vice president of Turf Solutions, the service arm of local distributor Southeastern Turfgrass Supply. “We built our first machine three years ago and we do the final assembly, modifications and shipping out of Jacksonville.”

The Dry Sprayer features a 1,000-pound ground-driven hopper-unit that distributes seed via a clutch-driven paddle to tubes that run down to the 16-foot boom. The seed, which is blown at a speed of 65 mph, then hits diffusers that run along the length of the boom, orienting the seed downward and blowing it into the turf canopy.

“The ground-driven distribution system ensures even application of seed and forces it through the thatch layer providing better seed-soil contact,” said Wicker. “This leads to better germination, uniform coverage and a reduced outlay of seed by 10 to 15 percent.”

The Dry Sprayer is ideally suited for fairway applications and can cover 120 acres in one day. “We typically make two passes with split applications and with three or more machines we can easily do a course in one day,” said Wicker. “One machine on a course could easily handle 25 to 30 acres a day, a significant time savings over traditional overseeding.

Metallic Power gets boost for zinc/air power

By MICHAEL LEVANS

SAN DIEGO — Metallic Power Ltd. has been awarded a $350,000 contract from the California Energy Commission’s South Coast Air Quality Management District to demonstrate a prototype zinc/air fuel cell-powered riding electric greensmower by January 2000.

The company will collaborate with the Toro Co. on the project.

"With this contract we’re now on a rapid trajectory to develop the zinc/air fuel cell technology," said Jeff Colborn, Metallic Power’s chief executive officer. Founded in 1995, the company has won more than $1.5 million in government research and development contracts.

The zinc/air fuel cell combines zinc pellets, approximately 1 mm in diameter, with oxygen. The reaction takes place in the presence of potassium hydroxide, the liquid electrolyte found in alkaline disposable batteries.

Zinc pellets charge the zinc/air fuel cell.

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Golf Course News

ABT consolidation, integration continues

ABT reschedules management, moves towards consolidation

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HENDERSON, Nev. — AgriBioTech Inc. (ABT) marked the completion of the acquisitions phase of its three-pronged business plan by completely reshuffling its upper management.

Citing a need to shift gears into integrating and consolidating the 34 companies that ABT acquired since 1995, the company’s board of directors decided in late February to replace Dr. Johnny Thomas, chairman and chief executive officer. Kent Schulze, president and chief operating officer resigned in late March.

The board felt that former Lofts Seed president Richard Build and others would be better suited to operate the company as it moved into consolidation.

Budd, who joined the board of directors when Lofts was taken over by ABT in January 1998, is now chairman and chief executive officer and is joined by a new executive officer and is joined by a new executive officer.

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Seed Research and Advanta sign new wholesale business unit

By ANDREW OVERBECK

Salem, Ore. — AgriBioTech’s integration efforts continue to take shape with the formation of Independent Seeds as the company’s new turf, forage and international wholesale business unit.


“This business unit will have a separate and distinct product line that will be marketed through existing wholesale distribution networks that not only make more sense for superintendents, but also better suited to operate the company than the former independent entities. The company’s board of directors decided in late February to replace Dr. Johnny Thomas, chairman and chief executive officer. Kent Schulze, president and chief operating officer resigned in late March.
Zinc/Air battery
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With a liquid electrolyte from a “vending-machine-sized” recycling/refueling unit. At the time of refueling, the zinc oxide byproduct produced by the reaction is pumped into the unit and is turned back into zinc pellet form.

According to Colborn, this refueling takes approximately five minutes, while the recycling inside the “vending machine” is continuous.

“Aside from the recycling advantage, there’s up to seven times the energy per pound in zinc/air versus lead/acid,” said Colborn. “We’re not promising that at the beginning, but we are promising nearly double the range of the lead/acid system as development continues.”

Metallic Power is taking product development one step at a time.

“It’s not going to happen tomorrow,” said Colborn. “We’re producing Alpha prototypes this year. Next year we’re planning a field demonstration with 50 units. The following year we go into production.”

SRO deal
Continued from page 31

Advanta.”

While SRO will benefit from Advanta’s strong technological knowledge and research and development capabilities, Advanta will gain a powerful marketing arm.

Advanta found it tough going as a new entry in the North American market. “They decided that in order to be a player in this market they had to go through another company,” said Robinson. “SRO offers them a large distributor base, a distinct market presence and, in turn, will be easier to move both the existing and the new products that come out of our agreement into the marketplace.”

SRO has taken over all of Advanta’s varieties and customer base and has hired Advanta salesman Scott Harer to handle Advanta’s Royal product line and the new products that emerge from the joint research efforts.

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