SUPPLIER BUSINESS '99

Rolling through '99 news of industry consolidation and reorganization managed to make multiple headlines. Indeed, changes were abundant in the past year, as many companies made moves to improve market share, enter new markets and introduce new technologies.

AgriBioTech retooled its upper management in June and sowed the first seeds of consolidation in the formation of its new wholesale division, Independent Seeds. Scotts Co. announced a switch from direct selling to distribution and is working to improve its position in the seed market. Seed Research of Oregon teamed up with Advanta Seeds to form a new research and marketing agreement in order to make up for its lack of cool-season turfgrasses varieties.

On the new technology front, ideas and products were introduced this year that not only make more sense for superintendents, but also for the environment. Take, for example, the Dry Sprayer produced by Turf Solutions of Jacksonville, Fla., that reduces the time and labor of overseeding. Or consider the alternative energy break-through by Metallic Power's Zinc/Air battery that runs longer, is cheaper and more efficient than a conventional lead/acid battery.

This year's lesson: Don't be afraid to make the move to improve.

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.

The Dry Sprayer improves seed-soil contact by using air-blast technology to blow seed into the turf canopy.

Metallic Power gets boost for zinc/air power

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.

The agreement gives SRO an instant fix to what it saw as an inadequate cool-season sorghum, tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, and we will also be getting into genetic engineering," said Mike Robinson, president of SRO.

The research agreement between SRO and Advanta will manifest itself in new products down the line, according to Robinson.

“There are 160 varieties of perennial ryegrass and they are relatively similar,” said Robinson. “We would like to come up with something that is unique and there is a lot of work going on in Europe at the moment.”

The agreement gives SRO the option to development new and improved turfgrass varieties through conventional breeding and biotechnology.

“We are entering into cooperative breeding projects, primarily in perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, and we will also be getting

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SUPPLIER BUSINESS IN REVIEW

MAY / OCTOBER

New technologies, techniques paving the way...

Dry Sprayer takes overseeding to the next level

By ANDREW OVERBECK

The Dry Sprayer improves seed-soil contact by using air-blast technology to blow seed into the turf canopy.

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Metallic Power gets boost for zinc/air power

By MICHAEL LEVANS

Zinc pellets charge the zinc/air fuel cell.

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ABT changes
Continued from page 31

which many industry experts
think grew too much too fast,
financially solvent again.
"We are working to create
a profitable and productive
future for our customers and
the company and put the
growth and consolidation
challenges behind us," said
Budd.

Budd’s task is to make ABT,
who share senior responsibili-
ties and consult on strategic
planning and decision mak-
ing.

"Ask the microbes in your soil,
they’ll tell you. LiquiGreen"
is a slow release, non-burning
organic source of nitrogen that is safer
to use and delivers more consistent results.

• Thatch is minimized.
• Root mass increases by up to 40%!
• Plants are more resistant to disease.
• Weather and even drought will take
  less of a toll.

Apply LiquiGreen and immediately, billions of
microbes in the soil begin to convert LiquiGreen
to available nitrogen. The slow
release formula keeps a consistent
level of nitrogen in the soil, longer.
More available nitrogen in the soil
creates thicker and healthier turf.
Healthier plants stand up better in high traffic areas -
like tee boxes, greens and fairway landing areas. Plus,
LiquiGreen has a salt index that’s 8-9 times less than
other nitrogen sources; you could virtually triple the
rate without burning! It also stays put. There’s very
little leaching with LiquiGreen; no nitrates will be
showing up in the water table.

The end result! LiquiGreen helps you grow consist-
tently, healthier plants that benefits your course as well
as the environment! Ask any microbe....

"LiquiGreen, of course!"

"Can you spare some for a fellow microbe."

"What are you using?"

IT GOES FARTHER, LASTS LONGER & IT’S MORE
ACCURATE THAN ANY YOU’VE TRIED BEFORE.

Ind. Seeds
Continued from page 31

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Dry Sprayer
Continued from page 31

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