Spectrum Technologies ready with chlorophyll meter technology

BY ANDREW OVERBECK

PLAINFIELD, Ill. — Spectrum Technologies, Inc., based here, has been awarded an exclusive patent from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to complete the development of and commercialize a plant chlorophyll meter. The hand-held plant stress detection tool has the capability to detect stress up to 16 days before plant deterioration is visible to the human eye.

"Chlorophyll is indicative of plant health," said Mike Thurow, president of Spectrum Technologies. "The meter allows fast measurement that can tell us how turfgrass responds to stress, be it heat, moisture, disease, insects or traffic. The golf course market is the perfect market for it."

The device is smaller than a camcorder and has a laser sighting that is pointed at a spot on a green or fairway. "It is a user-friendly device," said Thurow. "You walk around the green and shoot 10 or 15 spots and get a good representative sample. It takes a second to measure and the read-out keeps an ongoing average."

"If a person takes weekly measurements with the meter they will begin to see trends. It has the potential to show us problems before we can visually see them. Once you can see the problems, you are already in trouble."

Spectrum Technologies is a 13-year-old company that focuses on products for nutrient management, integrated pest management and crop protection security.

NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

The Gandy Spiker/Seeder overseeds and aerates in one pass and has a 44-inch seeding width, with 1220 replaceable spikes, either 3/8 of an inch by 7/8 of an inch or 1-5/8 of an inch long. The spikes create 693 vents per square yard and are threaded into an 18-inch by 48-inch steel roller with rolled edges. Precise metering along with a rubber rotor and spread plate assures even seed distribution, including bentgrass. The unit can be used with almost any turf vehicle having a 12-volt battery. Two brushes are used, one for cleaning the drum and one to assure seed/soil contact. For more information, contact 1-800-443-2476 or www.gandy.net.

Harmony building new organic fertilizer facility

CHESAPEAKE, Va. — Harmony Products, Inc. is constructing a new organic fertilizer plant in Harrisonburg through its subsidiary, Harmony-Shenandoah Valley, LLC (HSV). The plant will have the capacity to produce approximately 65,000 tons of fertilizer a year. HSV will utilize Harmony’s patented technology to manufacture its organic based Bridge fertilizers, which combine organic materials with synthetic fertilizer materials to form a granular, homogeneous, organic base fertilizer. In addition, the facility will manufacture granular, organic fertilizers. The products will be sold to the professional and commercial markets.

“This project will help Harmony meet the demand for our products on a very cost effective basis," said Greg Gill, president of Harmony. The HSV plant will utilize poultry waste from nearby poultry growers as the primary feedstock for the manufacture of the fertilizer as well as fuel for a waste-to-heat conversion facility. The heat will be used to dry the finished product.

Rocco, Inc., a poultry processor located in Harrisonburg, will be a minority owner in HSV and will have an ongoing role in providing management expertise in the construction and operation of the plant. Rocco will also provide the conduit to local poultry growers, who will supply poultry waste. Funding for the project will be provided by a Rocco equity contribution, a matching grant from the Virginia Poultry Litter Transportation Fund and Duke Solutions, Inc.