Dow AgroSciences snaps up Rohm and Haas' agrochemicals business

By ANDREW OVERBECK

INDIANAPOLIS — With Dow AgroSciences absorbing Rohm and Haas' Agricultural Chemicals business for $1 billion, the consolidation cycle in the agrochemicals industry has claimed another victim.

"Everyone is trying to get their businesses bigger," said John Roberts, an analyst with Merrill Lynch in New York City. "It is a business that is research and development intensive and [deals like this] spread the costs over a much larger sales base. It is an economy of scale and productivity-driven rationalization."

GETTING BIGGER

The acquisition of Rohm and Haas' agrochemicals division, which had sales of $331 million in 2000, will boost Dow AgroScience’s annual sales to $3 billion, making it the world’s largest agrochemical concern. Rohm and Haas was the 15th largest firm.

Under terms of the agreement, Dow AgroSciences will acquire Rohm and Haas’ fungicide, insecticide and herbicide lines, trademarks, and licenses to all agricultural uses of its biotechnology assets. Turf and ornamental products included in the deal are Dimension, Eagle, Fore and Dihane fungicides and Goul and Kerb herbicides. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2001.

"These product lines complement our portfolio by adding high performance, brand name products for specialty crops as well as turf and ornamental businesses around the world," said A. Charles Fischer, president and CEO of Dow AgroSciences.

ROHM AND HAAS PULLS OUT

The transaction also marks the end of Rohm and Haas’ 70-year run in the agrochemicals business. "This is a strategic decision," said George Bochanski, a spokesman for Rohm and Haas. "Over the last 20 years, agrochemicals has been a growing business, but as a percentage of total sales its numbers have been slipping. On top of that, we have made significant investments in other areas of chemistry, primarily electronic materials and polymers."

"We realized that we would have to make a significant investment in agrochemicals," he added. "That was an investment that we were not prepared to make."

Syngenta rolls out Touchdown Pro, takes on Roundup

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Syngenta has rolled out a patented new formulation of glyphosate that is aimed squarely at Monsanto’s Roundup herbicide. The company claims that the non-selective, foilar systemic herbicide utilizes a diammonium salt of glyphosate that allows for faster and more complete penetration and absorption of the herbicide.

Due to previous patent restrictions, this is the first year that Syngenta has been able to sell Touchdown Pro in non-agricultural markets. "The adjuvants in the formulation allow for the increased effectiveness," said David Ross, Ph.D. "The adjuvants don't cause injury to the plant, allowing cells on the plant surface to fully uptake the herbicide and translocate it more effectively."

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Griffin unveils new Concorde formulation

VALDOSTA, Ga. — Griffin has received registration for a dry flowable formulation of its chlorothalonil fungicide, utilizing spray dried technology. Concorde DF can be applied to virtually all turf grass species and varieties, plus over 75 ornamental plants.

Griffin has long been a leader in spray dried technology, developing the technique for the crop protection market 10 years ago, with the introduction of Kocide DF copper fungicide. Using this technology, Griffin has developed Concorde DF, which has quicker dispersion, better blooming and improved suspension characteristics.

"The mixing and handling characteristics of Concorde DF are improved," said Owen Towne, global business director for fungicides.

Concorde DF contains uniform and evenly distributed granules as a result of the processing technology. During the manufacturing process, the active ingredient and specially selected formulation ingredients are patented and dried in a tower spray drier. The resulting product pours dust-free.

In field turf and ornamental trials, Concorde DF has demonstrated disease control characteristics that are equal to, in many cases better than, existing brands of chlorothalonil, under a variety of growing conditions, said Towne.

As a contact fungicide, Concorde DF can be applied all season to control 14 fungal turf diseases, including brown patch, dollar spot, leaf spot, melting out, anthracnose, rust and red thread. Concorde DF also controls algae and can be tank mixed with systemic fungicides. It has a multi-site mode-of-action that doesn’t encourage fungicide resistance, making it ideal for all turf disease programs.

BASF enters strobilurin fray with Insignia

RALIEGH, N.C. — BASF has entered the strobilurin fungicide market with the introduction of Insignia. When the broad-spectrum fungicide comes to market in 2002, it will compete directly with both Bayer’s Compass and Syngenta’s Hericid.

"This new class of fungicides are respiration inhibitors in fungal cells and act on a specific site of action within the fungus," said Jeff Barnes, biology project leader for fungicides. "The result is a fungicide that is very active at low use rates in turfgrass and is safe both to plants and animals."

Insignia will control 15 diseases including brown patch, pythium blight, gray leaf spot, and Rhizoctonia brown spot.