Mower makers shelve new technology
By ANDREW OVERBECK

While mower manufacturers continue to develop GPS, electric motors and autonomous capabilities, they have yet to incorporate these technologies into any new products. Instead of testing the waters with risky and expensive technology, manufacturers have concentrated their short-term efforts on improving and tweaking existing products.

"A lot of the excitement over new technology was fed by the Internet euphoria that you could do anything," said John Wright, director of marketing for Toro. "A lot of companies have spent money trying to do anything and it didn't pay off. Superintendents have told us that they don't want more technology. They want stuff that works and makes their jobs easier — not more complicated."

Toro and other manufacturers have not given up on the promise of new technology (see story page 11), but they are cognizant that any breakthrough product will have to offer

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Rutgers gains rights to Purelntro technology
By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Rutgers University has reached an exclusive agreement with Japan Tobacco to develop and commercialize transgenic turfgrass varieties using a pioneering plant transformation technology.

Japan Tobacco's Purelntro employs plasmids derived from Agrobacterium tumefaciens, a bacterium that has the unique ability to insert a portion of its DNA into the cells of plants. According to officials at Rutgers, Purelntro technology is more precise than the Scotts Co.'s "gene gun" and it will allow turfgrass producers more access to transgenic varieties.

"Agrobacterium has been used by researchers for years in transforming dicots but it has never been used in monocots," said Jim Costagano, manager of technology and licensing at the Center for Turfgrass Science and the Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment at Rutgers.

Dr. William Meyer, a plant scientist at Rutgers, received permission from Japan Tobacco in 1997 to begin work with Purelntro in turfgrass and was