FLOWTRONEX ADDS RO, OXYGENATION TO IWM OFFERING

By ANDREW OVERBECK

DALLAS — Flowtronex PSI Inc. has added reverse osmosis and oxygenation systems to its growing stable of Integrated Water Management solutions. In addition to its line of pump stations, the company sells irrigation, pH control, irrigation and filtration products.

The new reverse osmosis (RO) product has been developed in conjunction with Water Equipment Technologies, a Florida company also under the ITT umbrella. The RO system is made up of a semi-permeable membrane that blocks the transport of salts or other solutes.

RO systems were developed for large-scale projects that needed to turn salt water into irrigation-quality water, but they have typically been too expensive for smaller applications. However, as cost has come down, golf courses have made use of the technology. Systems are in place at multiple courses in Florida that have turned both high-chloride and brackish water into a suitable irrigation supply. The systems are capable of producing 400000 to 1,000,000 gallons per day (gpd).

They are now getting the RO units down cost-wise where it is not only an effective means of removing sodium from water but it can be used in brackish water, poor well water or even effluent water depending on what part of the country you are in," said Flowtronex irrigation national sales manager Alan Olson. "In the past they were used when it was impossible to grow grass without it, now they are being used where you are valuing the improvement in grass quality that you get from higher quality water."

While cost for an RO system depends on the size, capital costs for brackish water RO ranges from $0.60 to $0.90 per gpd of capacity for equipment, installation and commissioning costs. Operating costs range from $0.70 to $0.85 per 1,000 gallons of product water based on a power cost of $0.08/kwh and membrane life of five years.

"Since most municipal supplies range from $1.50 to $3.50 per thousand gallons these plants are a very competitive alternative to purchasing water," said Water Equipment Technologies general manager Jorge Menningmann. "They also have an advantage over reclaimed wastewater by providing a consistent product, capable of producing 400,000 to 1,000,000 gallons per day (gpd)"

Flowtronex's new ultra-efficient oxygenation system.
BASF set to grow
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to tie these two divisions back together and have one specialty group."

Briggs has already made inroads by integrating the mostly post-patent chemistry from TopPro into the BASF product line. The turf and ornamental products include Curasan and Propiconazole fungicides, Vansage and Basagran herbicides and Amdro Pro fire ant bait.

While work on selecting which products will be pulled forward is ongoing, Briggs said the new portfolio will be comprehensive. BASF is strong in herbicides and TopPro has one of the broadest turf fungicide portfolios," he said. "BASF is awaiting two new fungicides [Insignia and Emerald]. So if you take what BASF has coming in 2003, and the post-patent chemistry from TopPro, we will have the market needs covered."

According to Briggs, approval from the Environmental Protection Agency is expected on Insignia and Emerald by midsummer. The products will likely not be available until the 2004 season. Another significant boost to BASF's product offering is slated to come with Bayer ES's divestiture of its fipronil products, which include insecticides Chipco Choice, Top Choice and Firestar. Briggs said the deal would allow the licensing back of the products, including the trade names, to Bayer ES. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission approved the deal Feb. 14, and at press time both parties were waiting to hear from the European Commission.

"Fipronil will really complete the line," said Briggs. "It is a very effective insecticide."