

Regulations open doors for solid research

By Curt Harler/Managing Editor

This month's issue has two articles linked by the simple fact they both explore technologies and techniques that hardly existed when most of our readers were in college a decade or two ago.

In both articles, the authors cite the pressures of legislation and regulation as keys to the interest in the technologies.

William D. Middleton looks at foliar feeding, more formally termed fluid nutrition and foliar formulation chemistry. He says root uptake capacity is limited by seasonal growth patterns and further reduced by both high temperature and low mowing heights. So while significant improvements in conventional root uptake fertilization technology have been made, they cannot overcome the seasonal limitations inherent in the root systems of intensively-maintained turfgrasses.

Middleton maintains that one way to overcome that hurdle is with foliar feeding. He says true foliar produce plant responses at surprisingly low dosages and those responses often last longer than those produced by

traditional liquids and water solubles.

Ben Hamza and Amy Suggars look at the introduction of biostimulants. Biostimulants have received a jaundiced eye from some researchers but have generated solid enthusiasm from others, especially in the user community. As Hamza and Suggars note, biostimulant manufacturers put a lot of emphasis on what their products can do to make life easy for turf managers.

Face it: those manufacturers are in business to market a product, not to write journal articles. Many researchers felt the industry did not provide empirical evidence to support its claims, but industry spokespeople simply pointed to their happy customers to back their claims.

The jury is still out, Hamza and Suggars say. Their article is a good look at exactly where the biostimulant market sits today.

For those readers looking for fertile ground for research – either in-house or towards an advanced degree – either of these subject areas merit exploration. Serious research into either practice all but guarantees a budding scientist a respectable and fruitful career.



Curt Harler
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