

NEW WEAPON against Turfgrass Seed "Pirates"

Now by "gene mapping" a turfgrass seed sample, researchers can positively identify seed varieties through DNA sequencing.

This new method recording a seed's genetic code is far more reliable and consistent than electrophoresis, the only analytical method available up until now. And since no two seed varieties have the same genetic makeup it makes identification accurate and positive.

This new process has been developed with a specific purpose in mind. On the turfgrass market there has recently been widespread "pirating" of patented seed varieties. Such illegal practices takes the form of seed marketed in plain bags with the "claimed" variety name simply stenciled on the front as opposed to the "designer" bag used to package and market legitimate turfgrass seed.

Since the plain bag purports to contain a named seed variety, one of two scenarios presents itself. First, if the bag does contain the claimed name variety which legally belongs only to the patent licensee, it probably represents larceny.

Second, if the bag does *not* contain what is claimed by the stenciled variety name, the way is open to charges of misrepresentation and fraud. Either way the law is flouted and actually broken by a criminal act.

The new gene mapping technique will tell law enforcement officials "what's in the bag." The analytical method

was developed by Native Plants, Inc. of Salt Lake City, Utah, an organization most respected in agricultural and biological research.

Lofts, Inc., an industry leader in turfgrass marketing, has contracted, at great expense, to have leading varieties recorded for genetic identification.

"We at Lofts, are very concerned about what's happening in our industry. We're embarking on a very intense and costly project with Native Plants. These tests will stand up in the court of law and we intend to prosecute those found guilty of the illegal sale or misrepresentation of patented varieties.

Of course putting an end to these illegal practices will benefit us, but it's also going to benefit the entire turfgrass industry," says Rich Hurley, Vice President of Lofts Inc.

Now, with gene mapping, the weapon is at hand to stop pirates in their tracks. Illegal seed will be traced to the source of harvest and supply, perpetrators identified and prosecuted.

The action Lofts and Native Plants have taken against turfgrass seed pirates will be applauded not only by seed marketers who stand to lose their patent rights, but by research universities who lose their earned royalties, and by the turf professional who loses the integrity of his seed purchase. ■

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Through a new "gene mapping" process, the true contents of illegitimate bags of seed like this will be positively identified and traced.