

the 'job-on-the-line' sod

marketing; no distribution chain exists like in the seed industry, Fender said.

He said about 55 percent of the nation's sod producers have 200 or fewer acres. Another 25 percent sod 500 or more acres and the remaining 20 percent are 200 to 500 acres, he said.

"There are real market geography-limiting factors that make the market what it is: a large number of sod producers serving small areas," Fender said. Those factors are a short "shelf life" and high cost of transport.

He said 200 miles is "the peak-end average of how far sod can be shipped.

"Some companies will ship it further but the combination of cost (because of the weight) and that it starts to decay ... limits this option."

After the sod is harvested, you have 12 to 48 hours to laying it in the ground.

The distance factor can be beat if the sod producer can hire refrigerated trucks.

Foster Turf of La Quinta, Calif., shipped 130,000 square feet (about three acres) of bentgrass aboard 18 refrigerated trailer trucks to the Tanglewood Park course in Clemens, N.C. — a three-day trip.

Jeff Cole, Foster's marketing director, said the trucks are normally used to transport

produce and therefore were equipped with vacuum chambers that can reduce the temperature of the product to basically whatever you desire.

"We wanted the sod at 40 degrees," Cole said. "Our ground temperature is 80-85 degrees. If we harvest that, it's still going to take a long time for the sod to go down in temperature, so it isn't nearly as fresh using a truck that's only refrigerated as it is if you put it in a vacuum chamber."

"We're seeing more and more mixtures and blends (of different types of grasses) in sod," said ASPA's Fender. "People are also experimenting broadly with all kinds of mediums for planting grass. An outfit in

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ASPA will direct sod inquiries

The American Sod Producers Association has agreed that readers may write (no calls, please) and request the names and contact persons of sod growers by state or states and ASPA will send them a computer list of those producers.

"Some superintendents will be knowledgeable enough to not only say 'I want bluegrass' but to say 'I want "X" brand of bluegrass.' We know only the types of grass a producer grows, not the brand within that variety. But we will provide contact information," said ASPA's Doug Fender.

ASPA's address is 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Ill. 60008.

Contact Person	Phone
Tom Albert	207-697-3555
Steve Okula	704-884-4290
John Huber	219-552-0552
Dale Habenicht	815-472-2364
Chris Adkins	301-928-3253
Edward Zuckerman	209-646-8355
Rich Morrison	215-598-7155
Mark Thomas	615-433-0016
Gary Lucks	919-491-8561
David Wallace	401-789-8177
Alan Anderson	203-529-6869
Jeff Cole	619-399-1222
Tom Nauman	319-386-5775
Fred Pittillo	704-685-3642
Skip Deubel	800-243-7582
Jack Kidwell	804-733-7170
Ted Thompson	412-961-0238

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