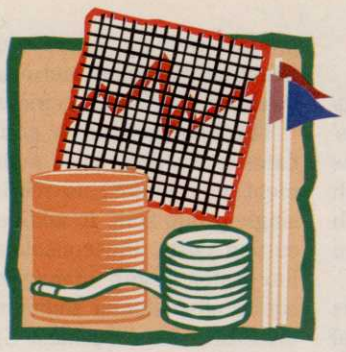

SUPPLIER BUSINESS '99

Rolling through '99 news of industry consolidation and reorganization managed to make multiple headlines. Indeed, changes were abundant in the past year, as many companies made moves to improve market share, enter new markets and introduce new technologies.

AgriBioTech retooled its upper management in June and sowed the first seeds of consolidation in the formation of its new wholesale division, Independent Seeds. Scotts Co. announced a switch from direct selling to distribution and is working to improve its position in the seed market.

Seed Research of Oregon teamed up with Advanta Seeds to form a new research and marketing agreement in order to make up for its lack of cool-season turfgrass varieties.

On the new technology front, ideas and products were introduced this year that not only make more sense for superintendents, but also for the environment. Take, for example, the Dry Sprayer produced by Turf Solutions of Jacksonville, Fla., that reduces the time and labor of overseeding. Or consider the alternative energy breakthrough by Metallic Power's Zinc/Air battery that runs longer, is cheaper and more efficient than a conventional lead/acid battery.

This year's lesson: Don't be afraid to make the move to improve.

MAY / OCTOBER

New technologies, techniques paving the way...

Dry Sprayer takes overseeding to the next level

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Turf Solutions has developed the Dry Sprayer, a machine using new overseeding technology that dramatically increases the speed, accuracy and germination time over standard overseeding techniques. Adapting air-blast technology commonly found in agricultural equipment, the Dry Sprayer blows seed directly into the turf canopy.

"We have modified this ag-based small crop machine into one suitable for turfgrass applications," said John Wicker, vice president of Turf Solutions, the service arm of local distributor Southeastern Turfgrass Supply. "We built our first machine three years ago and we do the final assembly, modifications and shipping out of Jacksonville."

The Dry Sprayer features a 1,000-pound ground-driven hopper-unit that distributes seed via a clutch-driven paddle to tubes that run down to the 16-foot boom. The seed, which is blown at a speed of 65 mph, then hits diffusers that run along the length of the boom, orienting the seed downward and blowing it into the turf canopy.

"The ground-driven distribution system ensures even application of seed and forces it through the thatch layer providing better seed-soil contact," said Wicker. "This leads to better germination, uniform coverage and a reduced outlay of seed by 10 to 15 percent."

The Dry Sprayer is ideally suited for fairway applications and can cover 120 acres in one day. "We typically make two passes with split applications and with three or more machines we can easily do a course in one day," said Wicker. "One machine on a course could easily handle 25 to 30 acres a day, a significant time savings over traditional overseeding

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The Dry Sprayer improves seed-soil contact by using air-blast technology to blow seed into the turf canopy.

Metallic Power gets boost for zinc/air power

By MICHAEL LEVANS

SAN DIEGO — Metallic Power Ltd. has been awarded a $350,000 contract from the California Energy Commission's South Coast Air Quality Management District to demonstrate a prototype zinc/air fuel cell-powered riding electric greensmower by January 2000.

Zinc pellets charge the zinc/air fuel cell.

The company will collaborate with the Toro Co. on the project.

"With this contract we're now on a rapid trajectory to develop the zinc/air fuel cell technology," said Jeff Colborn, Metallic Power's chief executive officer. Founded in 1995, the company has won more than $1.5 million in government research and development contracts.

The zinc/air fuel cell combines zinc pellets, approximately 1 mm in diameter, with oxygen. The reaction takes place in the presence of potassium hydroxide, the liquid electrolyte found in alkaline disposable batteries.

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JUNE / OCTOBER

ABT consolidation, integration continues

ABT reshuffles management, moves towards consolidation

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HENDERSON, Nev. — AgriBioTech Inc. (ABT) marked the completion of the acquisitions phase of it's three-pronged business plan by completely reshuffling it's upper management.

Citing a need to shift gears into integrating and consolidating the 34 companies that ABT acquired since 1995, the company's board of directors decided in late February to replace Dr. Johnny Thomas, chairman and chief executive officer. Kent Schulze, president and chief operating officer resigned in late March.

The board felt that former Lofts Seed president Richard Budd and others would be better suited to operate the company as it moved into consolidation.

Budd, who joined the board of directors when Lofts was taken over by ABT in January 1998, is now chairman and chief executive officer and is joined by a new

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ABT launches new wholesale business unit

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SALEM, Ore. — AgriBioTech's integration efforts continue to take shape with the formation of Independent Seeds as the company's new turf, forage and international wholesale business unit.

John Zajac

Allied Seed Company, Burlingham Seeds, Clark Seeds, Olsen-Fennell Seeds, Oseco, Inc., Peterson Seed, Seed Resource, Van Dyke Seed, W-D Growers Idaho, Wilber's Seed, Willamette Seed Company, W-L Research and Zajac Performance Seeds have been combined to form Independent Seeds.

"This business unit will have a separate and distinct product line that will be marketed through existing wholesale distri-

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AUGUST

Seed Research and Advanta sign marketing and research agreement

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CORVALLIS, Ore. — In an effort to improve and enhance its current cool-season turfgrass offerings, Seed Research of Oregon (SRO) has acquired the North American turfgrass marketing program of Netherlands-based Advanta Seeds Inc. In addition, SRO has assumed responsibility for Advanta's turf and forage seed production. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Mike Robinson

The two companies have also agreed to participate in a cooperative research program to develop new and improved turfgrass varieties through conventional breeding and biotechnology.

"We are entering into cooperative breeding projects, primarily in perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, and we will also be getting into genetic engineering," said Mike Robinson, president of SRO.

The research agreement between SRO and Advanta will manifest itself in new products down the line, according to Robinson.

"There are 160 varieties of perennial ryegrass and they are relatively similar," said Robinson. "We would like to come up with something that is unique and there is a lot of work going on in Europe at the moment."

The agreement gives SRO an instant fix to what it saw as an inadequate cool-season grass program. "With all the species that we work with and the expansion of our warm-season grass program it is hard to keep the intensity up," said Robinson. "We were toying with two new breeders before we talked with

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