

Pursell expands plant capacity, all markets on the move

By MICHAEL LEVANS

SYLACAUGA, Ala. — Pursell Technologies Inc. (PTI), the supplier of the Polyon fertilizer coating technology, has quadrupled the capacity of its existing plant that handles production for the company's golf, agricultural, horticultural and consumer market segments.

According to David Pursell, president and chief executive officer of PTI, the company has added higher-capacity equipment, enhanced existing equipment and constructed new rail lines and shipping facilities as part of the expansion.

"In the first and second quarter of the year, the spike of need

shoots up," said Pursell. "Since we're supplying all of these markets, we need to handle large volumes of product. You can handle it two different ways: through capacity or through storage/inventory. You want to maximize your inventory turns, so if you have a lot of capacity you can run your inventory 'just-

in-time' and ship it out the door. If something doesn't move you just have to sit on inventory for a long time."

Although this recent re-investment is directly linked to the growth of all its market segments, it's been Pursell's consumer business that has seen

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the biggest spike.

"On the consumer side, Pursell Industries [a separate company that manufactures for the consumer side] has formed a partnership with Bayer, which is getting ready to enter the U.S. lawn and garden market. Pursell Industries has inked an exclusive supply agreement to handle all of Bayer's controlled release," said Pursell.

To help pave the company's entry into this new segment, Bayer plans on spending more than \$20 million on consumer advertising.

"With consumer, golf and our other segments growing, we have to keep up with the demand of Polyon. So, instead of going to a new location and building a new plant, we decided to reinvest in the site we have. We have one plant that we're pumping all this product through. The more product you put through, the lower your cost becomes," said Pursell.

The company's next plant will probably be built on the West Coast in the next 18 months, Pursell added.

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In other Pursell news, the company is getting ready to ink arrangements with distributors and formulators in the European golf market. "We've been a little more reactionary than proactive on the European front," said Pursell. "The golf side is growing over there, but slow release, except in horticulture, is truly in its infancy."

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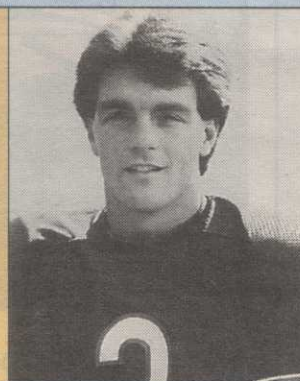
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China looking more green

GUANGZHOU, China — China's turf business is expected to grow by 40 percentage points annually over the next few years according to a study by Han Liebao, head of the lawn research center of the botanical college at China Agriculture University.

Growth projections are based upon the increasing number of golf courses, airports, highways and parks that are being built. Han estimates that China currently needs around 300,000 tons of grass seed annually.

Local planters are working hard to meet the demand and are reaping the benefits. A square meter of sod can generate up to 5,000 yuan (\$600) which is two to three times more income than a comparable crop of rice.

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