

John Deere shuts Gator plant in Virginia

MOLINE, Ill. — In a move to cut costs and improve efficiency within its Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division, Deere and Co. is closing its two-year-old Gator utility vehicle production facility in Williamsburg, Va. The company also is shutting down its leased Great Dane commercial mowing equipment factory in Jeffersonville, Ind.

While the Gator plant in

Williamsburg was virtually brand new, the decision was made to consolidate utility vehicle production at the company's Horicon, Wis., and Welland, Ontario, Canada, facilities.

"This is part of a bigger effort within the company to reduce assets," said corporate public relations manager Ken Golden. "We had never become fully operational in the [Williamsburg] facil-

ity. We are fully operational at these other locations and have a mature workforce, long supply relationships and logistics in place."

According to Golden, the decision to consolidate manufacturing has nothing to do with how well the Gator line is selling.

"The John Deere Gator continues to be a strong product and we will be bringing out dif-

ferent models," he said. "This is a function of a company that is attempting to rationalize its manufacturing locations that can handle more capacity."

"At the Horicon facility, for example, workers building riding mowers are laid off five months of the year because of the seasonality of the business," Golden continued. "We are putting Gators in there so we can utilize that workforce



all year long."

The manufacturing realignment will reduce the division's workforce by 300 employees and save \$25 million beginning next year. In the last 12 months, the business unit has eliminated more than \$400 million in inventories and wholesale receivables. The two plants are scheduled to close by Oct. 31.

— Andrew Overbeck

Novozymes buys Jeffreys

SALEM, Va. — Novozymes Biologicals has purchased biological product manufacturer George A. Jeffreys and Co.

George A. Jeffreys and Co. was founded 40 years ago and has specialized in enzymes-enhanced biological products for environmental and agricultural applications. The company also is involved in research and development in the microbial field.

"Jeffreys will accelerate our growth through new products, new customers and new manufacturing capabilities," said Ted Melnik, president of Novozymes Biologicals.

Jeffreys currently employs 17 people and has laboratories and manufacturing operations in two locations in Salem. Melnik said he does not plan to eliminate any jobs, but some positions will be transferred to Novozymes Biologicals' new \$12 million, 20,000-square-foot administration and research and development facility when it opens this fall. Former Jeffreys president Jim Toby will become a part of the Novozymes Biologicals management team.

Jacklin's latest

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tolerate lower mowing heights." Brede also unveiled Jacklin's newest creeping bentgrass series T-1 and T-2.

"We have been working on these since 1994," he said. "We have L-93, Southshore and Putter, but we wanted to develop our own to fill the void in the lack of new bentgrass varieties."

"T-2 has high Poa resistance because it out-competes it," Brede continued. "We introduced plugs of this experimental bent into plots of Poa to see how well they did. They also perform well under stress and have good disease resistance. You can really torture them."

The new bentgrass variety will be ready for the 2004 season, but Brede said there is a limited amount of T-2 that Jacklin is giving away to superintendents who would like to try it out. ■

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