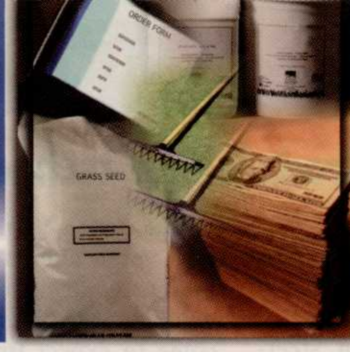
SUPPLIER BUSINESS



BRIEFS

SPINDLER ENTERPRISES ACQUIRES BIOPRO PRODUCT LINE

LAKELAND, Fla. — Spindler Enterprises has purchased the BioPro line of fertilizers, micronutrients, biotstimulants, soil amendments and pond bacteria from TerraBiotics. Company president Jim Spindler has been involved in the management of the BioPro line for more than six years. Spindler Enterprises specializes in the marketing of liquid turf, ornamental and sod growth products, bacteria for improving pond water quality and agronomic consulting services.

JUNK JOINS SEED RESEARCH

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Nancy Junk has joined the Seed Research of Oregon sales staff as a regional sales manager. Based in St. Joseph, Mo., Junk comes to Seed Research with more than two decades of sales experience in the seed industry, having spent the past seven years as director of operations for Forage Genetics International (FGI). Junk started in the seed business in 1980 with Seed Corp. of America, a turfgrass company in Baltimore.

MCDERMID HEADS TO PARKWAY

HOUSTON — Cameron McDermid, a 12-year veteran of the turf chemical and fertilizer industry, has joined the Parkway Research sales team as the central Texas territory manager. According to the company, Cameron is the first of several sales team expansions planned for this year, including southeast Florida and the Hilton Head Island area.

GOWAN NAMES PETERSEN

YUMA, Ariz. — Martin Petersen has joined Gowan Co. as managing director. Petersen will focus on expanding Gowan's international business, working closely with Margarita Internacional. Over his 20-year career in the crop protection business, Petersen has worked for Helena Chemical and Bayer CropScience.

Laskowski returns to Lastec, looks to expand niche

By ANDREW OVERBECK

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Jeff Laskowski has returned as CEO and president of Lastec, a company he co-founded with inventor Dan Tekulve in 1990. The two pioneered the concept of high-end rotary mowing with the introduction of the Articulator and received a patent for the mowing deck's drive system.

In 1998, Laskowski merged the $5 million company with its parent firm Wood-Mizer, which makes portable saw mills, and then decided to leave and pursue other interests. After his father, Donald Laskowski, stepped down in early April, he decided to come back on board to once again run both companies.

According to Laskowski, he's got his hands full.

"The mower side of the business is profitable, but it has shrunk," he said. "The sawmill side is in the red for the first two years in a 25-year history. I would say some of it has to do the economy, but they took their eye off the ball and they need some direction."

On the mower side, Laskowski will concentrate on reasserting Lastec's brand in the marketplace and rebuilding its dealer network.

"We created the niche. Nobody had articulated rotary decks before we did," he said. "We used to supply Toro and John Deere with decks and now everyone is in the game with different configurations and different types of drive systems.

"But Lastec presents the greatest opportunity for the corporation," Laskowski continued. "We got into this market in the worst possible economy in the early '90s and we thrived. The economy doesn't matter if you offer a viable solution to a problem that exists at a reasonable price."

Jeff Laskowski plans to reassert the Lastec brand and improve distribution.

Strengthening Lastec's dealer network will be key to the company's success.

"The distribution network has been neglected a bit," Laskowski said. "We have an effective way of powering decks at a reasonable cost. What we haven't done is build a distributor network to take advantage of what we currently make and we haven't taken that advantage and put it in other niches. We can do four times more volume if we are better at building a distributor network and

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Lesco numbers up, golf sales slip

CLEVELAND — Lesco's first quarter 2003 sales were up 1 percent to $94.5 million with its lawn care business leading the way with a 4 percent sales gain. Golf sales, however, slipped 9 percent during the period.

Lawn care posted sales of $77.7 million, up from $74.7 million in 2002, while golf gross sales were $17.8 million, down from $19.6 million in 2002. Lesco officials blamed golf's sales decline on a late spring in the Northeast. Sales in the Northeast were down 40 percent and remained flat elsewhere across the country.

"Golf is having a tough time," said Lesco president and CEO Michael P. DiMino. "Every aspect of golf, not only our business – golf equipment, golf course construction, and rounds – is down. The weather in the Northeast did not help relative to that situation.

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Scotts and Monsanto resubmit RR bent petition

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. and Monsanto resubmitted their petition for Roundup Ready bentgrass to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) April 14. The companies originally submitted the petition in May 2002, but withdrew their application Oct. 3 after APHIS issued a "letter of deficiency" in September.

"We have not changed the petition," said John Bosser, senior specialist for environmental communication for Scotts. "We just provided the additional year's worth of data that they asked for."

According to Bosser, the requested data supports the performance of the variety and how it behaves in terms of growing characteristics. Bosser also said that since 1998, some 40 percent of petitions to APHIS have been withdrawn at some point and then subsequently resubmitted and approved by the agency.

No timetable has been set for APHIS approval or commercialization, but Scotts and Monsanto are moving ahead and plan to harvest their 400-acre test plot in Oregon in July.

"Once they complete their scientific review we will have seed available for commercialization," said Bosser.

As Scotts and Monsanto proceed with their approval process, Bill Rose's HybriGene is currently seeking an APHIS permit to grow its proprietary male-sterile glufosinate resistant creeping bentgrass outside in field trials (*GCN* March 2003).

Deere & Co. posts 80 percent second quarter gain

MOLINE, Ill. — Deere & Co. announced May 13 a worldwide net income of $256.9 million for the second quarter ended April 30, an increase of more than 80 percent over last year's second quarter net income of $141.8 million. For the first six months, net income was $324.9 million, more than triple last year's six-month net income of $103.6 million.

Sales volumes were up across all three major equipment divisions. The Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division, which includes the golf and turf business, increased sales by 12 percent. Sales for the first six months increased 19 percent, compared with last year, when the division implemented deep production and shipment cutbacks to reduce company and field inventories.

In other John Deere news, its Golf & Turf One Source division has been named the exclusive supplier of golf course maintenance equipment and financing to Evergreen Alliance Golf Limited (EAGL), a golf course management company servicing more than 40 courses around the country.

Through the agreement, John Deere Golf & Turf One Source will be supplying John Deere golf and turf maintenance equipment to the superintendents of each EAGL course, including all mowing, aeration and specialty turf products. John Deere will also provide exclusive financing to all EAGL courses.