For Immediate Release
For more information, please contact:
Mr. Frank Dobie - 330.239.2383

University of Maryland Graduate Receives Musser Foundation Award

Dr. John Kaminski, a recent graduate from the University of Maryland in Plant Pathology, has been chosen to receive the **Musser International Turfgrass Foundation** *Award of Excellence* for 2005.

The annual award is presented to an outstanding doctoral student of turfgrass science who has made significant and innovative contributions to turfgrass science research. This year's award winner also receives a $20,000 cashaward.

A native of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Kaminski earned a B.S. degree from Penn State University in 1998. He earned his M.S. and Ph.D at the University of Maryland where his work involved the investigation of the biology of *Ophiosphaerella agrostis* and epidemiology of bentgrass dead spot.

Kaminski is currently an Assistant Professor of Turfgrass Pathology at the University of Connecticut. His appointment is 70% extension and 30% research and he serves as the Director of the UConn Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Center.

Since 2000, Kaminski has published 60 peer-reviewed scientific papers, progress/field day research reports, abstracts, extension publications and popular articles. His speaking activities included various guest lectures at the University of Maryland as well as invited speaking engagements at the 2001 International Turfgrass Research Conference and Rutgers Annual Turfgrass Management Symposium.

John began working in the turfgrass industry as an intern at Desert Mountain Properties in Scottsdale, AZ. While attending Penn State, he also interned at Congressional Country Club and the Valentine Turfgrass Research Facility.

During his graduate studies at the University of Maryland, John worked under the direction of Dr. Peter Dernoeden. His involvement in the turfgrass science program included conducting basic and applied research, assisting in turfgrass disease diagnostics and guest lecturing in the areas of turfgrass science and plant pathology.

John's M.S. and Ph.D. work involved a detailed examination into the biology of *Ophiosphaerella agrostis* (a newly described pathogen) and epidemiology of bentgrass deadspot (discovered in 1998). John's initial work defined the geographic distribution of the pathogen and various aspects of the pathogens growth and reproduction. The final phase of his research involved a closer look at the environmental conditions favoring disease development. In addition to his applied research, he conducted studies to assess the genetic diversity of *O. agrostis* and also developed a molecular technique that allows for the rapid detection of the pathogen within infected plants.

Peter Dernoeden, Ph.D. at the University of Maryland indicated that "John has been the most remarkable graduate student that the U. of Maryland turfgrass program has ever experienced. He has a superior intellect, he is self-motivating and an intense researcher, and he has an outstanding work ethic. His accomplishments as a graduate student have been truly exemplary."

John Kaminski's career goals are to:

(1)   Develop a productive and successful turfgrass pathology research program at the University of Connecticut.
(2)   Elucidate unknown biological and epidemiological aspects of important turfgrass pathogens and their respective diseases.
(3)   Develop improved chemical and cultural techniques for managing turfgrass diseases.
(4)   Standardize and simplify the methods used to identify turfgrass diseases.

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation is dedicated to fostering Turfgrass Management as a learned profession. Named in memory of a Turfgrass scientist, Professor H. Burton Musser, The Foundation acknowledges and rewards those individuals who have demonstrated excellence in the Doctoral phase of their turfgrass science education and research. These students, the Foundation believes, will be the leaders of turfgrass development and management in the years to come.