

SOD PRODUCER NEWS

U.S. Dept. of Labor prosecutes sod grower for hiring practices

The Department of Labor recently cited and assessed a penalty of \$8,000 to Warren's Turf Nursery Inc. for the way it obtains workmen for its nurseries.

The action centers on Warren's Sullivan, Wisconsin nursery, one of the firm's largest with more than 1,000 acres. The nursery annually hires 25 to 30 itinerant workmen from Mexico for the growing season.

The Department of Labor filed a complaint against Robert Milam, Warren manager at Sullivan, and assessed him with a penalty of \$7,000 for not registering as a labor broker. A citation was also issued against the Warren Corp. with an assessment of \$1,000 for hiring an unregistered labor broker, who is the firm's own manager, also Milam.

"The immigration people have made things very difficult for us," said Ben Warren, president of the company. "They have entered our bunkhouses, without warrants, at 3 or 4 am. They have driven over newly irrigated sod fields, doing serious damage, in their zeal to arrest 'wet backs.' They have demanded proof of citizenship from native born Americans, a practice which I understand is illegal."

Warren was also critical of trade associations whom he says have done nothing to help. "So far neither the Sod Growers Association or the American Association of Nurserymen have done anything except feel sorry for us. They act like they think 'Warren is guilty of breaking the law so we can't help them.' We have broken no laws."

William Harding, legal counsel for the American Sod Producers Association, said, "The decision made by ASPA was that the resolution of the problem would come about quicker through legislation than through litigation. Our primary thrust is to get the legislation changed." He said the litigation would take a long time.

Lofts Seed and Southern Turf establish Sunbelt Seeds, Inc.

Lofts Pedigreed Seed, Inc., NJ, and Southern Turf Nurseries, Tifton, GA, have formed a new company based in Tucker, GA, called Sunbelt Seeds, Inc.

Peter Loft, chairman of Lofts, and Charles Nash, president of Southern Turf, said the company initially will specialize in marketing programs to the southern recreational turf market, particularly golf courses during the overseeding season. Sunbelt Seeds will also provide supplemental seed treatment for disease control as well as a blending service for those requiring special blends of seeds to fulfill their seeding needs.

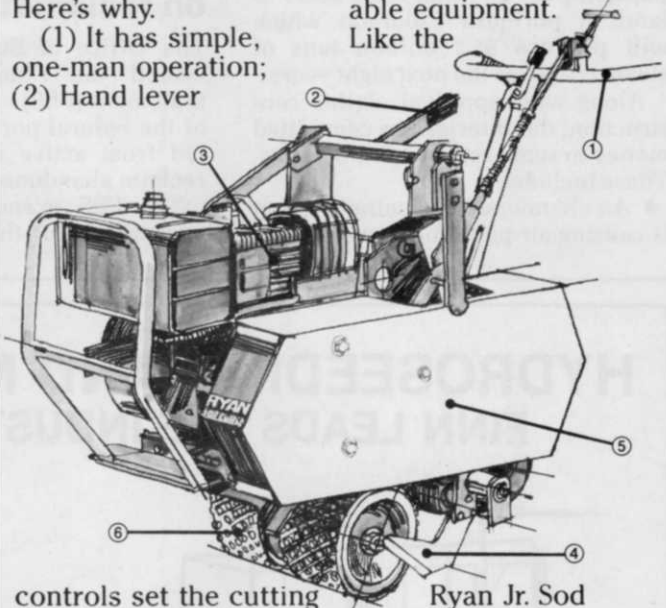
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