

Sod improved by growth regulator

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Dr. J.R. Hall III of Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University reports encouraging findings on improved rooting and sod strength through the use of growth regulators.

"Some of the growth regulators appear to provide increased rooting at sod installation if applied prior to harvesting," says Hall, who is in the second year of a two-year research program with Dr. Wayne Bingham, root specialist.

Hall's earliest hypothesis is that the regulators slow leaf growth, thereby conserving carbohydrates needed for root system regeneration.

Products being tested include Embark, Event,

Limit, Telar and Cutless.

"In last year's test," reports Hall, "Embark and Event actually reduced sod strength, but increased sod rooting 40 to 50 percent. The ones that were increasing sod strength were combinations of Embark and Telar and combinations of Limit and Event."

Hall says sod rooting was increased 30 to 50 percent with combinations of Embark and Event, and Event and Cutless.

"We've repeated the study this year," says Hall, "so we're hoping we can reproduce those results."

Hall and Bingham will present their findings at the October meeting of the American Agronomy Association in San Antonio. □

SEED

Bogus signatures extinguish hopes of anti-burn crew

ALBANY, Ore. — A much-ballyhooed grass seed field burning petition failed in July when it was discovered that thousands of the submitted signatures were those of unregistered voters.

According to Sue Proffitt of the Secretary of State's office in Salem, 7,614 signatures were declared invalid.

The initiative, sponsored by End Noxious Unhealthy Fumes (ENUF) would have established an immediate ban on field burning. Another failed initiative, sponsored by Oregonians Against Field Burning, sought to place on the ballot an initiative which would phase out the practice over time.

The failures provide the seed industry with some temporary shelter from the snares of further government intervention in a

business which provides thousands of jobs to citizens in the Northwest.

Field burning, the last step in the grass seed harvesting process, involves burning off old grass stalks to kill pests and bacteria. It has long been proven the most effective way of preparing a harvest site for the following year's planting.

Steve Tubbs of Turf Merchants, Inc. in Tangent, says the failure of the petition "gives us another year to work on the alternatives to field burning. We know it's going to come back," says Tubbs, "and we're working to have a lot more to show the next time, as far as finding our own solutions."

Bill Meyer, president of research for Turf-Seed, Inc., believes the failure of petitioners to obtain suffi-

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NEWS BRIEFS

ACROSS THE WATERS...Landscape contractors in England and Wales recently received a boost when legislation was passed requiring municipalities to accept bids. Many municipalities had been doing their own landscape maintenance. According to European sources, the new law has meant an opportunity for some municipal landscape managers to open their own private landscaping companies and submit bids to the government. Such a trend could increase the 2,600 private landscape contractors now operating in the U.K.

BUILD NUMBERS IN...F.W. Dodge reports that non-residential building contracts are expected to decline 10 percent this year. The research firm also forecasts a 17 percent decline in commercial and manufacturing buildings, a seven percent gain in educational building contracts, and a one percent drop in hospital and health construction. Residential construction is expected to dip by seven percent, with a three percent drop in single-family houses and a 20 percent decline in multi-family housing.

BIOLOGICAL STEPS...Mycogen Corp. has received a U.S. patent for bio-nematicides that are toxic to animal and plant parasitic nematodes. The company says the patent is based on several novel strains of the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.) bacterium discovered by Mycogen scientists. The bacteria produce proteins that are highly toxic to certain nematodes but are essentially non-toxic to mammals, birds, fish and beneficial insects.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE...A horticultural "oils task force" has been formed to deal with potential data requirements expected in the EPA re-registration process. The task force is manned by members of major horticultural oil producers. Horticultural oils are gaining wider acceptance in the landscape market as non-synthetic insecticides.

WELCOME TO THE FOLD...Two new green industry organizations have popped up recently: the Green Industry Council of Greater Los Angeles and the Lawn Care Association of Pennsylvania (LCAP). The former was necessitated because of "a wave of new and unfair regulations," according to a memo from president **Mickey Strauss**. The latter had its first meeting Aug. 30 at Toftrees Hotel Resort in State College. For more information, contact the GIC of L.A. at 3558 Overland Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034 and the LCAP at P.O. Box 13848, Reading, PA 19612.