

Agronomist, researcher James 'Jack' Murray dead of cancer

BRADENTON, Fla.—James "Jack" Murray, former USDA research agronomist, died on May 15 at his home here after a long battle with cancer. He was 54.

Murray was an internationally-known expert in turfgrass breeding and management.

Throughout his professional career, Murray authored or contributed to 104 scientific publications, 47 technical reports and 26 work progress reports.

He served on many committees and organizations within the turfgrass community, including the Turfgrass Division of the Crop Science Society of America, the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation and the International Turfgrass Society.

Murray's research efforts led to the development of Belturf Kentucky bluegrass and Belair zoysiagrass. Belturf has

been used as a parent in producing improved Kentucky bluegrass cultivars like Adelphi, Majestic, Eclipse and America.

Murray also developed tall fescue with improved stress tolerance and improved tolerance of aluminum and acid soil conditions.

In the mid-'80s, Murray developed a zoysiagrass and tall fescue mix that provides a year-round green turf with less maintenance.

Murray investigated standard maintenance practices such as mowing and water and discovered methods to minimize



Jack Murray

maintenance costs while maintaining quality turfgrass.

Murray was a founder of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) and its first director from 1980-1988. The NTEP tests turfgrasses nationwide and provides the most comprehensive information on grass selection in the U.S.

Murray was also a charter member of the National Sports Turf Council.

A frequent speaker at local, state, national and international meetings, Murray provided consultation on the management of turfgrass at many sites, including the White House and Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. and the Laurel and Pimlico Race Tracks in Maryland.

Murray is survived by his wife Bobbie and son Paul. The family asks that donations be sent to the Hospice of Southwest Florida, 6055 Rand Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34238; or to the Woodland Baptist Church, 9607 State Rd. 70 East, Bradenton, FL 34202.

Penn State develops mulch from newspapers, magazines for golf, landscape markets

STATE COLLEGE, Pa.—A new landscape mulch made from chopped newspapers, magazines and other paper can be used in place of traditional mulch, says its developer, a professor at Penn State University.

The mulch consists of small green pellets that resemble rabbit food. It's spread over areas such as golf courses and lawns where grass seed is applied. The pellets expand when wet, so only a thin layer is needed to cover a large site.

The new product, for which a patent is pending, is called Pennmulch. Agronomy instructor George Hamilton developed it.

"Traditional mulches present problems," says Hamilton. "Hydromulching requires an expensive machine and a high-volume water source. Straw often contains weed seeds, tends to blow away, and is difficult to store and handle. In addition, soil micro-organisms that break down straw also deplete soil nitrogen."

Pennmulch pellets can be spread by hand or by using conventional spreaders. It can also be used in combination with a starter fertilizer.

"Although it was designed for use in

grass seedbeds," Hamilton continues, "we're looking into other uses, such as vegetable gardens and ornamental plantings."

Pennmulch is being manufactured by Penn Mulch Inc., Pittsburgh. Last fall, 50 tons were produced and about 40 tons were sold to turfgrass and landscape companies.

"We're researching new sources of paper, developing a low-cost pneumatic spreader to apply the mulch, and variations of the product containing fertilizer and grass seed," Hamilton explains.

"Material-wise, it's more expensive than hydroseeding or straw," he admits. "But as we increase production facilities in the next six months, the cost should come down. Plus, depending on the site you want to use it at, there could be considerable labor savings in applying it."

Pennmulch is being distributed mainly throughout the northeastern section of the U.S., but can be freighted anywhere in the country.

To find out more about the product, call Penn Mulch Inc. at (800) 792-5537.

Deadline Sept. 23:

New worker law hits golf courses

LAWRENCE, Kans.—The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America says the new Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides will have an impact on the operations of many golf courses.

In its publication *Government Relations Briefing*, the GCSAA noted that the Worker Protection Standard covers all golf courses that produce turfgrass or ornamental plants, whether for use exclusively on the golf course or for general public sale.

"It requires employers to provide workers with personal protection equipment, safety training and warning signs to protect laborers from hazards stemming from exposure to pesticides," the *Briefing* article said.

The new federal standards will take effect Jan. 1, 1995, but pesticide safety training materials must be developed and distributed by Sept. 23 of this year.

The bill stipulates that a worker may enter an area treated with a pesticide during the restricted entry interval on the label if four conditions are met, one of which is disallowing any hand labor. For more information, contact GCSAA's government relations program at (913) 832-4470.