

## AgriBioTech takes cost cutting measures

**Henderson, NV** — AgriBioTech Inc. (ABT), late in 1998, shut down seven facilities in four states, a move that's expected to save the seed company \$750,000 per year. The action led to the elimination of about 20 nonsales jobs in units in South Dakota, Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri.

"We expect better customer service, increased operational efficiencies and reduced cost, to the benefit of our shareholders," president and chief operating officer Kent Schulze said in a statement.

Also, on Dec. 23, 1998, the company said that it had completed the sale of the chemical and fertilizer division of Willamette Seed Co., with about \$20 million in sales, to Wilbur-Ellis Co., San Francisco. ABT kept the seed division of Willamette Seed CO.

ABT announced that it had increased equity by about \$18 million through an \$11.2-million private placement and a \$6.7-million voluntary warrant exercise. It has also received commitments for at least \$25 million of long-term debt, which it expected to close before Christmas.

## Repeat of hopper invasion in SW not likely in '99

A grasshopper isn't your everyday turf or landscape pest, but millions of them in a particular area can devastate plants, any plants. The summer of 1998 saw grasshopper populations rise so dramatically in some areas of the Southwest that they damaged turf and ornamentals.

"They'll eat anything green, killing grass, landscape plants, trees and shrubs," said Dr. Cliff Hoelscher, an extension specialist with Texas A&M University. "We've had 60 counties in Texas that have had an unbelievable problem." And Hoelscher wouldn't rule out similar problems in the Southwest this growing season, although conditions shouldn't be as favorable for infestations.

The El Niño, blamed for about every unusual weather occurrence last year, is getting the blame for the grasshoppers too — at least in part. Scientists theorize that the wet '98 spring in the Southwest in 1998 spurred plant growth and allowed the hungry hoppers to multiply.

"Grasshoppers are going to move around and find the greenest, most lush things," said Dr. John Jackman, an entomologist with the Texas Agricultural Ex-

tension. "As they move off dry pastures to find something to eat, they are concentrated."

There are ways to combat more localized infestations. One is to try to exclude them from a property or plant material. Since grasshoppers like tall vegetation to hide in, mowing a barrier 20 feet wide around a property will reduce their num-



bers significantly. Also, a plastic, small-mesh product called Row Cover can be used to cover valuable plant material.

For the few grasshoppers that cause more annoyance to property owners than landscape damage, Hoelscher suggested that landscape managers can prepare a bait made from Sevin XLR and wheat bran bait. Sevin XLR is labeled for turf and ornamentals, and the label lays out the bait recipe. Hoelscher recommended that molasses be added to the bait to keep it from drying out too quickly during hot, dry weather.

"The bait needs to be placed in open areas," says Hoelscher. "You can't put it in the grass because the hoppers can't find it. If you have open areas in ornamental beds it works quite well there."

For a more info on grasshopper control, obtain the pamphlet Grasshopper Integrated Pest Management, free from the U.S. Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS), 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737. Ask for technical publication 1809. **LM**

## Milliken teams up with Emerald Isle

**SPARTENBURG, SC**— Milliken Chemical, headquartered here, announced in January that it is acquiring the products and brands of Emerald Isle, Ltd., Ann Arbor, MI. The acquisition includes a long-term agreement to codevelop new products for the turf and ornamental market.

"It's a good strategic fit," said Lawrence Kind of Milliken Chemical. "Milliken Chemical and Emerald Isle can combine worldwide distribution and excellent quality products for strong future growth."

Added Bill Middleton, CEO of Emerald Isle: "We see this as an extraordinary opportunity to collaborate with really top-quality people."