

Production Issues, continued from Page 1

4. Disease Control: Although disease control has not been a constant issue, it has been problematic in areas where there has been too much rain. Remember, it is important to educate end users about preventative controls. Proper irrigation, fertility, placement, and preventative chemical applications are necessary for good transition from farm to job site. Refer to Sod Solutions' Best Management Practices sheets and/or Technical Bulletin on summer stress for more information.

5. Weed Control: Although there is a selective application that can take bermudagrass out of zoysia (Fusilade) spot-spraying (non-selectively), as in St. Augustinegrass production, is most effective. Selective applications help; however, higher rates can slow growth

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Above - Hunting Billbug larvae

of EMPIRE, but may not eliminate the infestation of bermudagrass.

If you have turfgrass production or maintenance questions, or issues related to Sod Solutions varieties, please contact Joel Lane, Tel. 941.631.4343 or Roberto Gurgel, Tel. 281.224.1431.

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Above Right
Joel Lane, Field
Technical
Representative,
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for Common
Issues

Production Issues, Solutions

Proper Mowing, Pest Control Topical in Summer

New Print Ads Promote Brands in Fresh Ways

By Sis Reda - Director of Marketing

As part of our commitment to marketing the turfgrass brands, Sod Solutions has designed a new series of full page print ads for Palmetto St. Augustine, EMPIRE Zoysia and Celebration Bermudagrass. Some of the ads have already appeared in national and regional publications, and include:

"All Your Landscapes Tell A Story" (EMPIRE). This full page ad focuses on the advantages of EMPIRE that are particularly valuable to landscape professionals; and positions EMPIRE as a turfgrass selection that helps to create a high quality landscape.

"The Antidote to Clowns" (Celebration). The full page ad features Celebration's distinct advantages versus other bermudagrasses. The eye-catching photo, bright colors and humorous tone of the ad will appeal to sportsturf managers, specifiers, superintendents and other turfgrass management professionals.

"Better Bermudagrass in Florida" (Celebration). Localized graphics and copy remind readers that Florida is not just known for high quality native citrus crops, but also for superior turfgrasses. Celebration is a bermudagrass "from Florida, for Florida".

"Legacy" (Palmetto). This ad likens the high quality of Palmetto to a craftsman's tool; a superior tool that, when properly used, will help a turfgrass professional develop an ideal outcome for almost any landscape.

The ads will run throughout 2003. Copies are enclosed with this newsletter. If you would like to order any ads for local use, please contact Sis Reda via telephone, 843.849.1288.

Production issues vary from farm to farm. However, through visits to farms and conversations with producers, I have identified some issues that seem to be common:



1. Height of cut: Proper mowing height is vital to turfgrass health. EMPIRE Zoysia, in particular, responds best when mowed 1"-1.5." Thatching is reduced, chemical applications are easier, and aesthetic quality improves.

2. Insect Control: Proper monitoring and control of pests reduces time, labor, and chemical costs. There are many options for control, but producers who use recommended treatments experience fewer ongoing problems than those that use "alternative" treatments, i.e. less expensive/residual products. Refer to Sod Solutions' Technical Bulletin on Hunting Billbug control for recommendations.

3. Spray Volumes: This topic relates to insect control. If spraying for soil-borne insects (white grubs, such as billbug and June beetle larvae, and mole crickets, etc.) or those that are in thatch or the crowns of plants (chinch bugs, billbug adults, etc.), it helps to increase spray volumes. Minimum spray volumes of 50 gal./acre are most effective. If labels specify, irrigation following application will help put products into contact with target pests. (Continued on Page 4)

sodsolutions.com

Sod Solutions

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We've Updated Our Web Site Again:
New Photos, New Articles, New Radio Ad.
Visit Soon to See It All!
www.sodsolutions.com

Sod Solutions Expands Technical Staff

Gurgel Brings Breeding, Agri-Chemical Expertise

We are pleased to announce that Roberto Gurgel joined Sod Solutions on June 1 in the position of Agricultural Engineering Specialist. This new position has been created to provide additional professional horticultural expertise and other support to the licensed producers.



Roberto will assist producers with technical and production questions and issues. He will also be responsible for activities related to turfgrass breeding and production for Sod Solutions. Roberto is based in League City, Texas, and will work with producers in Texas, Arkansas, Arizona, Louisiana, California, Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Alabama. His work will augment the activities of Joel Lane, our experienced Field Technical Representative, who is primarily responsible for production, technical and customer relations activities in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia.

Roberto has extensive experience in horticultural breeding and the development of new technologies for turfgrass production. Prior to joining Sod Solutions, Roberto worked with Itogross Agricola LTDA of Sao Paulo, Brazil, where he was responsible for the collection and maintenance of more than 60 varieties of turfgrass; and for field testing and evaluation of new herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers. Roberto identified and co-developed EMPIRE and EMPRESS Zoysias for release. Prior to working with Itogross, he was responsible for distribution and sales of fertilizers with a large cooperative in southern Brazil; and for breeding program management for beans and soybeans. Roberto obtained a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineer-

Ongoing Research Studies

The following are studies currently underway. Data from these studies will be available over the next several months. If you have any questions about individual studies, please contact the institutions and/or companies conducting the research.

1. Drought tolerance of various turfgrass varieties. This study includes EMPIRE, Palmetto, Sea Isle 1, Bahia, Floratam; and is being conducted by the University of Florida.
2. Proper insecticidal timing for billbug control. This study is being conducted by the Bayer Corporation and Sod Solutions.
3. National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP). These studies include Celebration Bermudagrass, and are being conducted by numerous state universities, including Texas A&M, University of Georgia, University of Florida, New Mexico State, University of Arkansas, Clemson University, University of Arizona, the University of Missouri, and others.
4. Clemson shade study involving Celebration, TifSport and Tifway 419.

ing from the University of Sao Paulo. At a time when many companies have implemented hiring freezes, or even staff cut-backs, we feel fortunate to be able to increase the level of technical support that we offer you. Roberto's breeding experience will be valuable to all of us as we continue to identify new cultivars that will distinguish Sod Solutions, and the licensed producers of the brands, in a competitive marketplace. In fact, at this time we are testing new centipede grasses, which show great promise for southern landscapes.

We are excited to have Roberto on board. You can reach Roberto at rgurgel@sodsolutions.com, or via telephone, 281.535.1438. Thank you for your confidence and your business.



Tobey Wagner
President

Tobey Talk

Above Far Left
Roberto Gurgel,
Sod Solutions' Agricultural Engineering Specialist.

Turfgrass Brands Are Focus at Lakeland, Prattville Events

Meetings Draw Producers, Prospective Buyers, Agents

On July 15 in Lakeland, FL and August 21 in Prattville, AL Sod Solutions and licensed producers participated in a key producer-oriented marketing program: "A Meeting of the Minds: Turfgrass Symposia 2003". These meetings were the first of a series to be held throughout the U.S.; each designed to support licensed producers in increasing demand for the brands.



Sis Reda
Director of Marketing

Market Rap

At Right
Producers and guests share lunch and ideas at the Lakeland Symposium.

Turfgrass Symposia 2003 is a primary marketing program. As with the Lakeland and Prattville events, each is planned for the producers' benefit, and includes area producers, their guests, and turfgrass professionals invited by Sod Solutions. The meetings emphasize discussion and networking, and promote the brands directly to a diverse group of professionals: landscape contractors, sportsturf managers, golf course professionals, landscape architects, extension agents, and others. Sod Solutions makes all meeting arrangements, and participating producers are responsible for inviting guests of their choice.

All farms in relevant geographic areas were invited to these meetings. The Lakeland event was attended by H & H Sod, Bethel Farms, Council Growers, Lake Jem Farms, SMR Turf & Trees, and Celebration Turf. The Alabama meeting was attended by Beck's Turf, Craft Turf Farms, Riebling Farms, and Rhyne Select Turf. Guests included landscape contractors, landscape architects, county extension agents real estate developers, parks & rec departments, sod brokers and re-wholesalers.

Additional Symposia will be held in other U.S. locations later this year.

Marketing Highlights July - September 2003

July

- 6 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- "Better Lawns" Radio Ads - Florida
- Producers Symposium - July 15, Lakeland
- New Ads for Celebration, EMPIRE Available
- Update of sodsolutions.com: New Material

August

- 6 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- "Better Lawns" Radio Ads - Florida
- Producers Symposium - Aug. 21, Prattville
- New Ad for Palmetto Available
- Sales, Marketing Visits - Australia

September

- 7 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- FTGA Trade Show - Sept. 8-10, Tampa
- FNATS Trade Show - Sept. 25-27, Orlando

sodsolutions.com: A "24/7" Marketing Partner

"I live in Jacksonville, Florida, where do I find Palmetto St. Augustine?". Or, "I'm in Plano. Is EMPIRE sold here?" These questions are typical of the dozens of e-mails that we receive from visitors to the Sod Solutions Web site, sodsolutions.com.

We help people who contact us by e-mail and telephone in several ways. We direct them to information about the brands, and to answers to installation and maintenance questions; and, most often, to farms closest to them. If a caller can't access the internet, we give them producers' names and telephone numbers so that they can call farms direct about a particular brand. Our field representatives personally answer many technical questions each week.

The Web site averages 350,000 hits per year; with 43,000 searches for producers' locations conducted there. By answering calls and e-mail, we continually provide sales referrals to producers. So, don't be surprised if a caller says, "I got your number from Sod Solutions. I need..."