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Euro Grass News, May 2010

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Market

Strong winter, strong demand. Strong business?



The autumn of 2009 was characterised by cautious behaviour on all trade levels.

The current and future demands were expected to be on a very low level. Despite these assumptions, the winter 2009/2010 in Europe has shown once again that expectations can change within a few weeks.

Snow that had fallen on a non frozen soil, and covered many parts of North and Central Europe for almost three months, unfortunately created ideal conditions for snow mould (*Microdochium nivale*).

This has caused severe winter damage in grass stands that led to a spring with unusually high demands, especially in the forage grasses. Grass seed companies had, and still have, a challenging time to deliver orders to their customers on time at short notice. Consequently, a high demand for the supply of certain seeds is now expected for 2010. Based on this, we recommend our customers pay attention to the following points:

- **Specialities vs. commodities:** Supply of products with good recommendations will be tighter than commodity products which have to be competitive with international market prices.
- **Keeping the balance:** The spring campaign has shown again that a certain level of stock is necessary in order not to miss business opportunities! Ensuring the right stock level in the mid term ensures maximum focus on sales.
- **Choosing the right partner:** Business becomes easier with a business partner who has the full seed portfolio, acts reliably towards his customers and does the utmost in times of high logistical pressure.

The actual markets show that our industry must always be prepared to expect the unexpected, which leads to the two big sayings of the grass seed world:

- a) the business is never boring
- b) it is almost impossible to come to a status that is fully satisfying (either the prices are unsatisfying or there is not enough seed)

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■ Products

Sustainability of Natural Turf Grass



With the Copenhagen climate summit, and climate changes throughout the world in mind, sustainability seems more important than ever.

The photosynthesis in natural turf grasses is an important contribution to sustainability. Without photosynthesis in green plants there would be no oxygen on earth. Photosynthesis formula:

$6 \text{ H}_2\text{O} + 6 \text{ CO}_2 + \text{light in combination with chlorophyll} \rightarrow 6 \text{ O}_2 + \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$
 6 water molecules + 6 carbon dioxide molecules \rightarrow 6 oxygen molecules + 1 glucose molecule

Despite Europe having experienced real winter conditions this previous winter*, it seems that in fact the growing season for turf grasses has been extended; benefiting sports field managers as well as garden owners.

Euro Grass has bred excellent sports types and winter wear varieties such as *Lolium perenne*: VESUVIUS and EURO-DIAMOND, *Poa pratensis*: LIMOUSINE and LINARES. The Euro Grass sports mixtures, 410, 420 and 450 contain big percentages of the mentioned wear tolerant varieties. Consequently these mixtures are very suitable for facing challenges from the environment and meeting the expectations of sports field managers and lawn owners.

Euro Grass professional turf mixtures, whether for sports or ordinary garden use, can further enhance the many benefits of natural grass: Natural lawns look great. They are nice



Our professional sports mixtures are rated between "very" to "extremely" wear tolerant, and are designed for tough sports conditions. In addition, "Sport" has a very nice appearance and is therefore also suitable for ordinary lawns without too much shade.



VESUVIUS, EURODIAMOND, LIMOUSINE and LINARES are all very well adapted to automatic lawn mowing.

A yearly average estimation of "hours of use" of a sports field will vary from country to country. With a longer period of photosynthesis (shorter and milder winters) the estimated figures for usage of natural turf grass lawns will increase, especially in late autumn and early spring where we need growth the most.

and green and healthy. In hot periods, natural grass will have a cooling effect on the local environment. Natural lawns also serve as dust absorbers. Natural grass has the ability to absorb and also retain water, which is advantageous with heavier and frequent rainfall.

A natural lawn assimilates a lot of carbon dioxide. Caring for this resource and taking the environment into consideration, the maintenance of the lawn should be as "gentle" as possible in order to minimize green house gas emissions. Reduce fertilizer application as much as possible without compromising lawn quality; a recommended approach is to apply fertilizers frequently, but in small doses per application. Lawns should, when ever possible, be mowed with a "man powered" lawn mower or with an automatic (robot) lawn mower powered by renewable energy/electricity. In combination with the right grasses the new automatic lawn mowers are doing an excellent job.

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*Yes, we have to admit that some natural lawns have suffered from the previous winter, but those damages were easily repaired by using one of our renovation mixtures.

■ Products

Breeding in Progress: Better performance with tetraploid varieties



Euro Grass breeding has made a huge achievement which was not thought possible 20 years ago. EGB's newest tetraploid varieties perform better than the average of the diploid varieties on the Western European recommended lists.

Since the introduction, tetraploid *Lolium perenne* varieties suffered repeated image problems. Some of the rumours about *Lolium perenne* 4n were, and still



Diploid (left) and tetraploid ryegrass trials at the Euro Grass breeding station in Ven-Zelderheide (NL)

are, very persistent: Bad winter hardiness, bad persistency, short lifespan, etc. The major advantages of tetraploid varieties are widely recognized: Palatability, vigour, rust resistances. Meanwhile, breeders have made great progress. This is illustrated by the recommended lists where we have seen in recent years that 2n and 4n differences became smaller and smaller. For instance: In the 2000 BSA list, only 4 tetraploid varieties had an M (Moor = Peat soil suitable, which means capable of handling extra difficult circumstances). In the 2009 edition of the BSA list, 20 tetraploid *Lolium perenne* varieties have obtained an M. This is a clear sign that the persistency and winter hardiness of the tetraploid varieties is growing. A practical example is the new Euro Grass variety RIVALDO (late). It scores among the best in persistency (7 = high) and is also the only variety in this ripening group that combines an M with a 3 (low susceptibility) for Rust. The Dutch recommended list reflects similar devel-

opments. Recently the new tetraploid variety MAURIZIO (intermediate) was listed. This variety has a persistency score of 8.3 which is higher than the average of all diploids on the Dutch recommended list of 2010. Combining this high rate with a high rust resistance (8.7) and a very high first cut (110) makes this variety one of its kind in the intermediate segment. Both examples illustrate the growing importance of tetraploid varieties. Combining 2n and 4n *Lolium perenne* in grass mixtures is no longer a must. Choosing a 100 percent tetraploid *Lolium perenne* based grass mixture of the right varieties will lead to an improved output of your grasslands.

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■ Info

New Euro Grass Area Manager for Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria

Martin Deubzer joined Euro Grass B.V. in January 2010 and took over the position of Area Manager for Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

Martin Deubzer has a degree in agriculture from the Technical University of Munich/Weihenstephan. He previously held the position of Product Manager in the

Seeds Department of the Munich based cooperative BayWa. He takes over sales and production responsibilities for forage and turf grasses in the three countries.

Martin Deubzer has two children and lives with his family in Budapest.



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