❖ BUSINESS NEWS ❖

Frey Dairy Farms To Install BioDigester™

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)—EnviroGro's President Graeme Watson announced that EnviroGro will install its recently developed Model 201 BioDigestor™ at Frey Dairy Farms in southwestern Lancaster County.

"We are very excited about the Frey installation. It provides us with a superb opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of our cutting edge manure processing system. Tom Frey's enthusiasm, energy, and experience with a variety of composting technologies make this location a perfect choice for our BioDigestor™. We expect this installation to provide significant benefit for both EnviroGro and Frey Dairy Farms."

EnviroGro, a five-year-old company based in Dublin, is a leading manufacturer of devices that process organic waste material and turn it into compost that can be safely used for a variety of applications. According to Cesar Orrego, EnviroGro's vice president of engineering and manufacturing, "In-vessel composting provides several unique benefits. The process provides pathogen and weed free compost. It provides unprecedented levels of mixing and recipe control. As a result the output from our BioDigestor™ is very uniform and the nutrient levels can be closely managed. Finally, the device can operate and produce compost year round."

Frey Dairy Farms, one of the largest dairy farms in the Northeast, has a herd of more than 1400 head. Tom Frey, president, expressed his excitement at the impending installation.

"Over the past several years we have experimented with a wide variety of composting methods. We are very interested in identifying the most effective and efficient techniques for managing waste and protecting the environment. After preliminary testing, we are very excited at the prospect of working closely with EnviroGro to install the device and realize the benefits of in vessel composting."

John Deere Vacuum Meter Planter Update Kit Available

ST. MARY'S, Ohio—S.I. Distributing has introduced an AccuVac update kit for the John Deere Vacuum Meter that improves the seed spacing in the row while improving the desired planting population for corn.

The kit also allows the operator to plant most sizes of seed corn—even mixed sizes—without changing the disk or the vacuum pressure setting on the planter.

The update kit includes a new AccuVac 40-cell seed corn disk to replace the John Deere's 30-cell seed corn disk. Since the new AccuVac 40-cell seed disk makes fewer revolutions to plant the same number of seeds as the old 30-cell seed disk, the vacuum meter turns slower. This means the planter can travel at a faster ground speed without increasing meter RPM's when compared to the OEM meter.

The new design of the AccuVac seed corn disk allows the seed to drop straight down when released from the disk. It will not kick out sideways and bounce down the seed tube causing erratic spacing. This feature significantly improves the seed spacing in the row.

The kit also includes a modified, adjustable "doubles eliminator" that virtually eliminates doubles, which improves desired plating population significantly. The design of the "doubles eliminator" allows for one setting regardless of seed size.

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Growers Gain Higher Earnings Potential With DEKALB Hybrids

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — U.S. growers are seeing the benefits of the proven science and seed performance advantages of DEKALB® corn hybrids where it counts most—the bottom line. In 2002, DEKALB corn hybrids averaged $10 to $24 per acre income advantage in more than 33,000 yield trials across the United States.

"With yield wins in more than 60 percent of the 2002 trials, DEKALB corn hybrids provide growers outstanding yield advantages and increased earnings over other hybrids," says Kyle Maple, Monsanto U.S. Corn Marketing Manager.

In the five major maturity zones of the Corn Belt, or 84 percent of the U.S. corn market, DEKALB hybrids averaged 3.3 bushels to 8 bushels more an acre than other competitive hybrids.* "More and more U.S. growers have come to rely on the trusted performance that only DEKALB hybrids can bring," Maple says. "As a result, U.S. growers planted DEKALB hybrids on a record number of acres in 2002. In fact, DKC44-46 is the largest-volume hybrid in the 90- to 100-day relative maturity zone."

In addition to higher yields, Monsanto brand corn hybrids with the "Root Strength Advantage" also provided growers with the flexibility and innovations—such as the best defensive traits and the leading technologies including Roundup Ready®, YieldGard® Corn Borer, and Roundup Ready stacked with YieldGard Corn Borer—to meet their farming needs throughout the year. The root strength of DEKALB hybrids allowed growers to have more plants standing in their fields this past fall, leading to an easier harvest, higher yields and better profit opportunities.

"Not only did growers rate Monsanto brand corn hybrids as delivering the best quality in 2001, yield performance results from 2001 and now 2002 demonstrate the yield consistency of DEKALB hybrids over two distinct and different years of weather conditions," says Maple. "This is a testament to Monsanto's commitment to invest in elite germplasm and state-of-the-art technology for high-yielding, high-performance DEKALB hybrids that work hard for growers."

*Source: 2002 Monsanto and third-party yield trials through December 10, 2002. Weighted average, calculated to 15% moisture, $2.50 bu./A, $.03/point of moisture.

SomaLogic, Merial Accounce Research Collaboration

BOULDER, Colo. and DULUTH, Ga.—SomaLogic, a privately held Boulder, Colorado-based proteomics company, and Merial Limited, the world's leading animal health company, announced that they have entered into a spongiform encephalopathy, also known as BSE or "mad cow disease."

Steve Rochester, head of Merial's Ruminant enterprise, commented, "We are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with SomaLogic to investigate alternatives to the current post-mortem based tests."

SomaLogic's technology is based on aptamers, single-stranded DNA molecules that can bind target molecules with high affinity and specificity. Aptamers are identified using the proprietary in vitro Selex process.

"Working with Merial presents us with the opportunity to collaborate with the world leader in animal health," said Larry Gold, Ph.D., SomaLogic's founder and chief scientific officer. "We look forward to applying our technology to this critical problem."

Financial terms of the collaboration were not disclosed.

SomaLogic is developing novel proteomics tools and applications based on proprietary aptamer technology. The company's aptamer arrays will allow researchers—and ultimately clinicians—to measure large numbers of proteins simultaneously, providing the foundation for new insights into disease and health. More information about the company can be found at www.somalogic.com.

Merial is a leading animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of pharmaceuticals and vaccines to enhance the health, well-being, and performance of a wide range of animal species. Merial operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2001 sales were in excess of $1.6 billion. For more information, see www.merial.com.

Northeast Forest Landowners Conference Planned For March

WEST PISTON (Luzerne Co.)—Forests cover nearly 60% of Pensylvania's 28 million acres. The 17 million acres of forestland provide the Commonwealth's citizens and visitors with many benefits. Forests support wildlife habitat. They provide places to hike, camp, hunt, fish, and enjoy nature. Forests help protect water supplies and help remove carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, from the air.

Additionally, forests generate significant economic activity. In fact, timber and forest products is the fourth-largest manufacturing industry in Pennsylvania. The industry employs 90,000 workers in 2,500 firms and contributes almost 5 billion dollars to the state's economy.

Approximately 13 million acres of the state's forests are privately owned by more than 600,000 landowners. Sustaining Pennsylvania's forests depends on the management they receive from landowners. On Saturday, March 1, 2003, the Fourth Annual Northeast Pennsylvania Forest Landowners Conference will be conducted at the Luzerne County Community College Conference Center in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania.

The day will begin with a message from Dr. Jim Grace, Pennsylvania State Forester with DCNR sharing his views on sustainable forestry in the Commonwealth.

Other presenters from the Bureau of Forestry and USDA Forest Service will discuss forest health, timber tax issues, the Clean and Green Act, forest landowner assistance program, and the Forest Legacy Program.

Other topics include a Pennsylvania Game Commission program called DMAP, a program to help landowners manage deer; a panel discussion of Forest Stewards; and techniques to enhance wildlife habitat.

This landowner conference was developed through a partnership of DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Penn State School of Forest Resources, USDA Forest Service, Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation & Development, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and the North Branch Land Trust.

The conference fee that will cover the cost of lunch, breaks and materials is $20 for participants and $15 for one guest with each full registration. Pre-registration for this conference is required. For more information, contact Penn State Cooperative Extension at (570) 825-1701 or your local DCNR Bureau of Forestry office.

Siegers Seed Co. CEO Named Chairman Of ASTA Vegetable & Flower Seed Division

HOLLAND, Mich. — Siegers Seed Company has announced that CEO Rick Siegers has been elected as chairman of the Vegetable & Flower Seed Division of the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA).

Siegers' main duty as chairman is to represent the interests of the vegetable and flower seed industry at all ASTA meetings. He is also responsible for chairing the Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference Jan. 25-29 in Austin, Texas.

Siegers also holds a position on the ASTA Investment Committee, and recently was appointed to the Organic Seed Policy Committee.