

# Look What's Out There

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Issue 8– Aug. 2004  
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## Making Grass Out of Trash

Turning the U.S. Army's trash into a useful pulp is how the Agricultural Research Service is helping to revegetate the Army's training grounds at Fort Campbell, Ky.

At the base, the Army is using a conveyor system to separate useful garbage from waste. The useful material is then heated and sterilized. After it is dried, a pulp, which looks like home insulation material, remains.

That's when ARS takes over. Soil scientists H. Allen Torbert of the National Soil Dynamics Laboratory, Auburn, Ala., along with Ken Potter of the Blacklands Research Center, Temple, Texas, have planted native grasses on bare training areas. They are studying the soil chemical properties after the pulp--which contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium--is added. It has a neutral pH.

Native grasses were successfully established, and a significant increase in plant biomass occurred between the first and second year of the project. The researchers were able to make the soil fertile again. The addition of native grasses not only has made bare areas look nicer, but has cut down on soil erosion. This research should be applicable to degraded agricultural soils and may be used in the future to grow grass in parks, golf courses and backyards.

The ARS soil scientists also conducted work at Fort Benning, Ga., where the soil condition was even worse and needed a higher concentration of the pulp. The results, however, were the same. Degraded training areas became fertile grasslands.

The Army considers the research a success and is interested in expanding the technology to other bases--and even possibly to the other military branches.

(By David Elstein: USDA-ARS, July 9, 2004)

## The citrus longhorned beetle.

Washington's tree slayer: Trees in Puget Sound are at risk from a tree-killing insect that was first discovered in the Evergreen State in August 2001. The citrus longhorned beetle, called CLHB for short, is one of the worst non-native pests to ever enter the United States. Its unwitting arrival on a shipment of bonsai maple trees is the first and only time the beetle has been caught out-of-doors in the U.S. The wood-boring beetle is considered a serious pest in Asia. Here, in Washington, it poses an unprecedented threat to the environment because it attacks healthy trees - more than 40 varieties of hardwood and fruit trees - and has no natural enemies. Not only are greenbelts, urban landscapes and backyard trees at jeopardy, but also orchards, forests and salmon and wildlife habitat. If this pest were to become permanently established in Washington, thousands upon thousands of trees would be destroyed.

(APHIS-USDA, Emerging Pest Issues, 2003)

## Spread of Japanese beetles

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today announced it is adding the state of Arkansas to its list of quarantined states for Japanese beetles.

Recent trapping surveys indicate that Arkansas

now is infested with Japanese beetles. Adult Japanese beetles feed on fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants and cause damage to more than 300 potential hosts. Efforts to control the Japanese beetle cost an estimated \$460 million annually.

Aimed at preventing the spread of this pest to the western United States via aircraft, the Japanese beetle quarantine regulates the interstate movement of articles from regulated airports and prescribes strict loading, inspection and treatment requirements for departing aircraft. The western states protected by the Japanese beetle quarantine are Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. (By Dore Mobley, WASHINGTON, APHS-USDA Press release, July 6, 2004)

## Chemical News

- EPA is issuing cancellation orders announcing its approval of the requests submitted by Bayer CropScience to voluntarily cancel the registrations of certain pesticide products containing fipronil for use on rice or rice seed. This cancellation order is effective July 1, 2004. Any distribution, sale or use of the products subject to this cancellation order is only permitted in accordance with the terms of the existing stocks provision of this cancellation order. [Federal Register: July 1, 2004 (Volume 69, Number 126)]
- Syngenta's Pragnell Comments on Biotech Foods, EU Regulation. Bloomberg, July 5, 2004. NEW YORK - Michael Pragnell, chief executive of Syngenta AG, comments on the company's decision to end research on genetically modified crops in the U.K. and discusses the European Union's need for an independent regulator.

Pragnell spoke at a conference on consumers, farmers and food at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. Syngenta, based in Basel, Switzerland, is the world's biggest maker of crop chemicals. On ending basic

research on biotech crops in the U.K.: "It was about the rationalization of our research activity around three major laboratories, two in Europe and one in North America. We had four, we wanted to reduce them to three, to get greater proximity of our scientists, to accelerate the rate of innovation."

"What we are doing is investing some \$40 million in new research facilities, and we had to decide where we did what." "This was not a political decision about saying 'Goodbye Europe, there is no future for biotechnology-based crops here in Europe.' Not at all." (Pesticide.Net, July 4, 2004)

- Canada won't ban food or feed crops for biopharming Canada doesn't plan to ban the use of food or feed crops in the development of genetically engineered plant molecular farming (PMF), as biopharming is called north of the U.S. border, but it will certainly encourage developers to use other plants. (Food Chemical News: Monday, July 12, 2004, Volume 6, Issue 132)
- EPA is modifying the terms of the voluntary cancellation notice published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2002 (FR 67 20118) (FRL-[[Page 40907]] 6773-1), for three pesticide products containing the active ingredient chlorpyrifos-methyl based on data received from the registrants and comments and information received from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). EPA proposes to extend the effective cancellation for two products (Gustafson Reldan 4E Insecticide, registration number 7501-41; and Reldan 4E, registration number 62719-43) to December 31, 2004. The technical registration Reldan F Insecticidal, registration number 62719-42 will be maintained. [Federal Register: July 7, 2004 (Volume 69, Number 129)]