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SUBJECT: 2009 National Cool-Season Drought Trial

TO: Seed Companies and Breeders

FROM: Kevin N. Morris, Executive Director

DATE: April 27, 2009

In response to the need for more specific information on turfgrass species and cultivars, the NTEP Policy Committee has proposed a new program, '*Trait Specific Testing*'. This new program will establish its first two trials in fall 2009, focusing on drought tolerance and traffic tolerance of cool-season grasses.

This trial will evaluate drought tolerance over two years at six locations. Three locations will be established in the eastern half of the U.S., using rainout shelters. The other three locations will be established in the western half of the U.S., using deficit irrigation regimes. The trial will be open to all cool-season grass species.

Data will be collected regularly on percent green and ground cover over time, using digital imaging technology (digital camera plus software manipulation). Since last fall, we have refined the trial parameters and have developed an updated draft proposal. Some highlights of the proposal are below:

1. Three locations will utilize rainout shelter technology. Rainout shelter allows testing of *acute* (or short-term drought situations, i.e. 60-75 days) during two growing seasons. These locations are located the midwest, south and northeast (locations include such sites as Fayetteville, AR, St. Paul, MN and Ithaca, NY).
2. Three other locations will measure *chronic* drought stress by imposing deficit irrigation over two full growing seasons. Deficit irrigation levels will be determined by the needs at each location, however, will range somewhere around 50% ET_o during spring and fall and up to 65% of ET_o during summer. Potential locations conducting the chronic testing include Ft. Collins, CO, Logan, UT, Tucson, AZ, Fargo, ND and Aberdeen, ID.
3. Cool-season species will be organized into high-fertility and low-fertility groups, for the purposes of this trial. Therefore low fertility species, such as fineleaf fescue, will receive only one-half the fertility of species such as perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass.

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To read the more detailed drought trial proposal, please go to the NTEP web site News Room, www.ntep.org/newsroom.htm .

Seed will be needed at Beltsville by mid-to-late August, 2009. The cost for these evaluations will most likely be set at US\$4,000 per entry payable in two annual installments of \$2,000 each.

We surveyed the industry last fall, but again, we are gauging the seed industry's interest in submitting entries. Therefore, if you have an entry or entries you would like to enter into this test, please complete the attached questionnaire(s) and return to me by May 31, 2009. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me (301-504-5125 phone, 301-873-6545 mobile or kmorris@ntep.org).

2009 NATIONAL COOL-SEASON DROUGHT TRIAL

Sponsorship of Entries

1. Approximately, how many entries would you like to sponsor? _____

2. What species are you considering entering? _____

3. ADDRESS

Your name _____

Institution _____

Bldg., Street _____

P. O. Box _____

City, State, Zip _____
Country _____

Phone No. _____ FAX No. _____

Email address _____ Date _____

Return questionnaire to: Kevin Morris, Executive Director
(by May 31, 2009) National Turfgrass Evaluation Program
BARC-West, Bldg. 003, Room 217
or fax to: Beltsville, Maryland 20705
(301) 504-5167 (301) 504-5125 Voice