

Stronger Prices - Really!

For many of our customers fall made for a pleasant ending to 2010, thanks mostly to late season sales. Starting the new year, distributor inventories look to be in good shape, with little to no carry over. Better still, prices on most species are either very stable, or stronger, as compared to a few months ago. Annual ryegrass, certain clovers, and forage tall fescue (especially KY-31 and fawn) have been the predominant species to see price increases.



We have also seen a reduction in the availability of off-quality lots and field-run mixes, indicating a greater market confidence at the grower level as excessive inventories are being whittled down.

Finally, shipping activity and buying interest over the past few weeks has also been pleasantly positive. This activity and an overall more "upbeat" tone throughout the distribution channel is indeed encouraging!

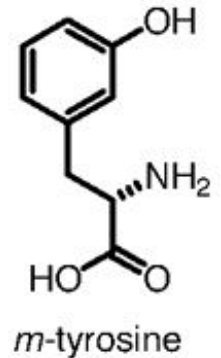
Bulk Bags, Fancy Bags, Bagging Supplies - We Got it all!

Did you know we have a complete Bag Division that provides everything from plain bags to complete turn-key design services? Whether you are looking for poly-woven, polyethylene, bulk bags, paper bags, we have you covered. Using your own artwork or creating a design for you, we can provide bags for grass seed, bird feed, fertilizer, onions... you name it! We also provide bag closure and warehouse supplies including Fishbein sewing machines and parts, stencils, staples, stretch film, and more. Contact one of our Bag Men to learn more: David Del Valle, Arlis Mishler, or Nolan Schrock at 800-826-6327.



Meta-Tyrosine - A Natural Killer Found in Fine Fescue

Did you know that certain fine fescues have a natural way of suppressing weeds? It's called Meta-tyrosine, or M-Tyrosine for short. This nifty amino acid exudes (a scientific term for oozing) out of the grass plant's roots and is then absorbed by neighboring weed seedlings. The weed plants will either die or be stunted from the toxic acid. Pretty amazing!



We already know grasses with high endophyte levels naturally resist weeds better. If M-Tyrosine can be either added or selected for, it has the potential to add even more natural weed resistance to a lawn, and may play an important role in the future of turfgrasses, especially with increasingly restrictive chemical and fertilizer usage laws.

So which species and varieties have these traits? Well, it's not yet fully known. The above information came from published research out of Cornell University, where Dr. Leslie Weston, along with Dr. Andy Senesac, conducted a laboratory study in which they evaluated numerous fine fescue cultivars for natural weed suppression potential. Dr. Weston and her team found "large quantities" of M-Tyrosine in selected chewing fescue cultivars, strong creeping red cultivars, and Arizona fescue. The M-Tyrosine toxin showed the ability to suppress germination and seedling growth in numerous weed species including large crabgrass, dandelion, mustard, cress, and annual bluegrass.

As further research is conducted, we should expect to see increased offerings of grasses that not only look good, but have more and more of their own "built-in" protection mechanisms. More to come - hopefully!