

February 15,  
2008

# Agri-Plastic Report

American Society for Plasticulture



A Member Service of the American Society for Plasticulture

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**Towards A “Biodegradable Plastic World” of Agriculture?** Is the Message from the Editor in *New Ag International* (Nov. '07). “Greenhouse cropping is increasingly proving its efficacy in providing quality crops even in an hostile environment. Moreover, and contrary to the idea generally spread, the greenhouse system is already an energy saving and environment protection system compared to open-field agriculture, as it is based on a more efficient use of many of the available resources and also allows for a better control of pests and diseases in the frame of IPM and biocontrol programmes. So, let’s rush to a plastic world of agriculture? No way, will rightly say a number of people, simply because they see greenhouses as a source of pollution by plastics. This has been the case for many long years but it may change: not only the plastic covers are increasingly biodegradable but also the plastic mulches, the pots used for potted plants in nurseries and, last but not least...drip irrigation systems! New Academic research on those topics and also the findings from the industry were on impressive display at Greensys in Naples and Hortifair in Amsterdam.”

**US\$1.3 billion for Subsidies to Drip Irrigation in Pakistan!** (*New Ag International*, Nov. '07). “After years of a slow decision process, the government of Pakistan is finally launching a massive US\$1.3 billion programme to move the country’s agriculture from flood irrigation to drip irrigation. . . . The government decided to move ahead with the project after a successful pilot project involving about 3.5 hectares of cotton. Yields in the pilot increased from 960 kg per acre using flood irrigation to 1,520 kg up to 1,680 kg per acre with drip. Officials estimate moving to drip can result in water savings as high as 70%.”

**Protecting Strawberries from Winter Injury** (*The Grower*, Jan. '08). “Snow cover, of course, is the best protection for strawberries . . . Unfortunately, snow cover is not dependable in most areas. Straws are the most commonly used strawberry mulches. . . . Row covers may be used for winter protection in the Mid-Atlantic States and further south, but do not provide sufficient protection for strawberries in the Northeast. However, row covers are used in the Northeast in conjunction with straws to protect overwintering annual plasticulture strawberries.” The article is also available on the New York Berry News website:  
<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/extension/tfabp/newslett.shtml>.

**Plastics Hall of Fame seeks nominations** (*PLASTICS NEWS REPORT*, Jan. 18, '08). The Plastics Academy is seeking nominations for the Plastics Hall of Fame, which is housed at the National Plastics Center in Leominster (MA). The nominations are for living individuals; separate ceremonies are held for posthumous inductees. Nominated individuals are industry professionals who have made outstanding contributions to the plastics industry during their careers. . . . Plastics Academy officials will recommend up to 12 people for final consideration by all living members of the Plastics Hall of Fame, who then pick as many as nine people for induction into the new class, at NPE 2009. Official nomination forms can be obtained online at <http://www.plasticsacademy.org/pa-nomform.php>.

**Plant Tags** (*Acres Online*, Jan. 23, '08). Editor Chris Beytes writes, “Speaking of tags, Don Eberly of Eberly Communications just sent me info about two new plant tags from [Horticultural Identification Products](#) (Thomasville, North Carolina), one that’s “degradable” and one that’s “biodegradable.” The EcoTag degrades in compost or landfill in one to five years. It’s manufactured in an environmentally friendly fashion . . . including using wind power as one of the factory energy sources. BioTag is made of biodegradable plastic, using polymers derived from bio-based products such as corn and soybeans rather than fossil fuels. It will degrade in about one year.”

**Proactive is the Word of the Week** (*GreenTalks*, Jan. 25, '08). Editor Jennifer Dufield White writes, “Here are two Long Island businesses that are proactive on the sustainable issue . . . Jack Van de Wetering, owner of [lvy](#)

[Acres](#) says his ultimate goal is to take plastic out of production at Ivy Acres. Their biodegradable straw pots, handmade in Sri Lanka, will appear nationwide in a Home Depot program this spring. They're a plantable pot that breaks down quickly in the garden. These pots got a trial run in Wal-Mart last year, where they pulled down a premium price of \$10 for 6 pots in a plastic carry tray. They're now working on baskets . . . and biodegradable trays. Ivy Acres President Brian Sullivan told me, 'The customer is willing to pay to go green.' Growing in straw pots is a little different than plastic; Jack is spending this winter educating growers on cultural methods. Ivy Acres has found success with a quick turn system: planting three plugs per pot, finishing to bloom in as little as two weeks, using seed annuals."

## **The 34<sup>th</sup> National Agricultural Plastics Congress March 7 – 10, 2008 / Tampa, Florida**

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### **OTHER EVENTS**

**Mar 9 – 12 Plastic News Executive Forum**, Saddlebrook Resort, Tampa, FL.  
<http://www.plasticsnews.com/forum2008/index.html>

**Mar 25 – 29 Argenplas 2008**, La Rural, Buenos Aires Exhibition Center, Argentina.  
<http://www.argenplas.com/internai.htm>

**Apr 2 – 4 New Ag International Conference**, Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi, India. [www.newaginternational.com](http://www.newaginternational.com)

**Apr 6 – 11 International Symposium on Strategies Towards Sustainability of Protected Cultivation in Mild Winter Climate**, Limak Lara Deluxe Hotel, Anyalya, Turkey. [www.protectedcultivation2008.com](http://www.protectedcultivation2008.com)

**Apr 8 – 11 PLASTIMAGEN Mexico 2008**, Centro Banamex, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico.  
<http://www.plastimagen.com.mx/02-ficha08.html>