

# Score one for the environment

## **More and more, awareness of the environmental effects of fertilizers and pesticides is forcing welcome change on an industry with a less-than-salubrious past.**

Meanwhile, Scotts continues to stand tall as an environmental steward, with strong policies in place to help minimise the environmental impacts of their products.

According to Karen Kendrick, Regulatory Specialist at Scotts, with a Bachelor of Environmental Management under her belt, "Environmental impacts occur throughout the life of a product, from manufacture through to end use and disposal." While the majority of Scotts' manufacturing occurs in The Netherlands, and Marysville in the USA, and therefore doesn't directly effect environmental quality in Australia and New Zealand, it is a comfort to know that both sites have achieved the much-coveted ISO 14001 certification. It's a powerful customer assurance that Scotts products are produced, and can be used, with the lowest environmental impact possible.

Vincent Roes, Scotts' International Marketing Manager, believes that customers are responding very positively to the ISO 14001 certification. Says Vincent, "Environmental safety is becoming an increasingly important criterion for businesses and local authorities ... Essentially, all of our customers, from growers to parks and sports turf managers, can be sure that use of Scotts Osmocote, Sierrablen or Agroblen will satisfy the most demanding of environmental standards."

On top of all this, many fertiliser users are keen to minimize nutrient leaching and groundwater contamination. That's where products like Osmocote, Sierrablen and Agroblen really come into their own, because their nutrient release is governed by temperature and moisture and designed to correspond to a crop's needs – increasing under warmer conditions, when nutrient demand is high, and reducing as temperature falls.



Says Karen, "In many parts of Australia and New Zealand, soil is inherently low in some nutrients required for horticulture, so large quantities of fertiliser are added each year. Water quality is often degraded by runoff from these areas as a result of nitrate and phosphate leaching from excessive fertiliser application. The use of Osmocote and Agroblen controlled release fertilisers ensures that nutrients are released according to the plant's needs, leaving little for weed growth and potential leaching."

Scotts' is committed to recycling, to reducing energy usage, and to protecting the environment. Internationally, the company has also allocated significant funding to upgrade landfills, and drastically reduced air emissions – although not creating pollution in the first place is their top pollution control strategy.

Since 1998, in the Marysville manufacturing facility alone, Scotts has reduced the volume of waste created by 28.3 per cent, while production has increased by 16.8 per cent. Not only that but, since 1987, it has reduced ammonia emissions by more than 90 per cent from each kilogram of fertilizer produced; that's a 75 per cent overall reduction of ammonia emissions. They have also reduced particulate emissions by up to 68 per cent.



Closer to home, sustainable water use and water quality are currently major environmental issues in Australia and New Zealand. Due to water shortages, there is increasing emphasis on the sustainable use of water by households and all aspects of industry, including horticulture. In response to the need for efficient water use, Scotts has introduced Hydraflo wetting agents which can improve the efficiency of irrigation and the soil's water retention capacity, as well as the efficiency of fertilisers and soil fungicides.

On the subject of end use and its local impacts, says Karen, "We have improved environmental practices by removing some old, 'dirty' chemistries from our home garden product range and we have also placed emphasis on educating our end users on how to use our products most effectively. The Regional Sales Managers are able to provide guidance on the correct product choice and optimum application rates for a particular crop. This helps both environmentally and economically, by reducing nutrient and chemical wastage, potential leaching and contamination of waterways."

She adds, "On occasion, when a new nursery is opened, we have customers requesting supportive environmental information for submission to local councils, which we can happily give them."

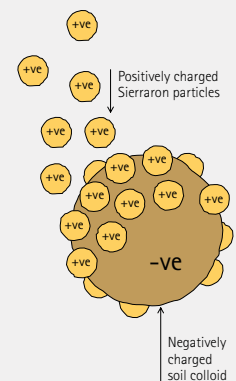
Scotts aggressively researches new and better products to ensure it offers the most effective and safe products on the market. Says Karen, "I feel that Scotts worldwide is taking environmental management seriously, and in Australia and New Zealand we will continue to provide new products with environmental benefits and also to educate our users accordingly." That is good news for everyone concerned, from the ground up.

## Clever weed-control technology ensures minimal run-off or leaching

Sierraron is a proven pre-emergent +ve weed control that continues working for up to six months when applied correctly. Sierraron is environmentally safe with minimal run-off or leaching, and because of its granular form is easy to apply, with no suiting or masking required for the operator.



Positively (+ve) charged Sierraron particles are attracted to negatively (-ve) charged soil colloids, adsorbed on contact and metabolises to form a weed barrier. This process ensures there is minimal run-off or leaching into waterways.



## Scotts advanced technologies control fertilizer nutrient release

Scotts Osmocote, Sierrablen and Agroblen use advanced, patented bio-degradable technologies that control nutrient release. The release of nutrients is governed by temperature and designed to correspond to a plant's needs – increasing under warmer conditions, when nutrient demand is high, and reducing as temperature falls. This process reduces leaching and run-off of nutrients.

