FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recently, President Bush signed into law Consolidated Appropriations bill H.R. 4818, funding of Fiscal Year 2005 for several federal agencies, including the USDA- Agricultural Research Service (ARS). In the bill, new funding for turfgrass research ($275,000 total) was included at two new locations. This new funding was added as a result of efforts by the turfgrass industry to inform Congress of its research needs and the importance of the National Turfgrass Research Initiative. More information on the National Turfgrass Research Initiative (NTRI) can be found at www.turfresearch.org. Turfgrass research is now funded within USDA-ARS at $760,613.

The breakdown of the funding is as follows:

* $485,613 - restored funding for the current research position at the U. S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC (was about $490,000 - all programs were cut by 0.8%)
* $150,000 - new funding for turfgrass research at Beaver, West Virginia
* $125,000 - new funding for turfgrass research at Logan, Utah

The Logan, UT location will conduct research within Component I (Improvement of Water Management Strategies and Practices) and Component II (Collection, Enhancement and Preservation of Turfgrass Germplasm) of NTRI. Turfgrass research at Beaver, WV will fall under Component V (Enhancement of Soil and Soil Management Practices) of NTRI. The turfgrass industry will work with ARS in determining the research priorities at each location.

Due to last minute Congressional negotiations in resolving differences between House and Senate versions of the bill, the funding for WV and UT turf research positions was reduced by one-half of what was in the original bill. However, considering many programs and agency budgets were reduced in this lean budget year, we feel very fortunate to show an increase for federal turfgrass research. Thanks to everyone for their efforts in making this happen!