

Comments Received From Industry Review

Jason Bates

File: 5700000 – Turf
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Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2005
Time: 03:24:43 PM

Comments:

I do not think combining all of the grassing operations under a single "turf" section is reasonable. How would you be able to bid a job? One contractor may think he can fulfill the turf requirements by hydroseeding while another may feel only sod will meet the specs. This does not put everyone on an even playing field. I think the specification that had been proposed of sodding complete and grassing complete is more reasonable. The plans should indicate what areas require sod and what areas require grassing, whether that be seeding, hydroseeding or seeding and mulching at the contractors discretion. Whatever method that he feels necessary to meet the requirements. Establishing a known quantity of sod puts everyone on the same field. There is too large of a price gap between seeding and sodding to lump them together. Establishing a "grassing" item by whatever means necessary would allow grassing companies to use their expertise in growing grass.

If pegging of sod will be paid as extra work, I think overlapping sod should be a separate pay item as well.

I know the erosion control industry has been pushing hydroseeding and BFM and erosion control blankets for years. The fact of the matter is that sod is the cheapest thing on a construction job. It is instant grass and instant erosion control. We have been in the sod business for 25 years and I can tell you that hydroseeding does not work in Florida sand. There seems to be a constant effort by the Department to reduce reworking shoulders and reduce the amount of sod on every project we do in an effort to save money. This is worth repeating: Sod is the cheapest thing on the job and in an era where erosion control seems to be at the top of the list, the Department should be sodding more, not figuring out how to sod less.

We are a family business that has been sodding FDOT projects for a long time. A single turf specification, in my opinion, would really push the hydroseeding market. While I feel that hydroseeding is not the answer in Florida sand where sod is cheap and plentiful, should someone figure out how to consistently use hydroseeding to meet your specifications, the sodding industry would be on its way out along with a lot of good people.

I think eliminating the materials as separate pay items is a great idea. Could we reduce it to two item?

- 1.) 570-1 Grassing - per square yard
- 2.) 575-1 Sodding - per square yard

That would be it. No fertilizer pay item. No mulch pay item. No grass seed pay item. Private and county work have been bid like this for years. Please consider.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
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Don Evans
Suwannee Valley Grassing

RE: Proposed Specification Change: 5700000.D01 - Turf

Dear Mr. Brautigam,

I have read the proposed changes to the grassing operations and I am really concerned about several issues.

The first of these would be how you would know how to bid the work. Unless you specify what areas are going to be sodded and which areas are to be seed and mulch or hydroseeded I don't see how different contractors could bid on this work on a level playing feild. I think you should establish minimums on sod such as a 42" strip by edge of pavement and minimums around structures and on slopes. When I started grassing roads in 1979 there was no strip by pavement and I know what an improvement it was when they changed that and how it helped when they changed to 42" by pavement.

Sod is the cheapest maintenance you can do on roads. If you let contractors come in and bid and get jobs by not laying much sod you won't be happy with their work, probably won't accept it, then they will lose on the job and contractors that bid it right won't get work and they lose too. We need a standard for sodding and we need to seperate sod and seed and mulch on the bidding process.

From my experience hydroseeding is the least desirable method of grassing. It is easier to do and less labor intensive but does not do as well as sod or seed and mulch. I also think you should stay with hay mulch. Sod and hay are both agricultural products grown in our area that several farmers have come to depend on so it helps people in Florida instead of hydromulch companies in other states. Hydroseeding should only be used in areas that are not reasonably assessable to sod or seed and mulch with hay.

I am really concerned that we are taking a step backwards. If anything we should lay more sod and not less.

Thank you for your time,

Don Evans
Supt. Suwannee Valley Grassing

Rusty Birchall

General Comment – I am dubious of the intent of this specification. Does the Department intend to stop specifying the type of grassing on projects and leave it up to the Contractor at bid time? Currently, the plans specify areas to receive sod versus areas to be seeded and mulched. If the Department intends to leave this up to the Contractor, my opinion is that there will be problems maintaining a level playing field during bidding. A prudent contractor may bid sod on a project, but since it is not required or specified, it is likely others will not. The Department should continue to specify the grassing treatment desired in the plans in order to ensure the quality of the project and keep the playing field level among bidders.

Section 570-3.2 Placing Sod – The rolled sod placement specs are unclear.

1. Item 1 states to overlap the sod 3 inches, but does not specify if this is along the vertical seams, the horizontal seams or both.
2. Item 2 does not specify the required overlap of the parallel sod over the previously placed perpendicular sod.

Section 570-4 Establishment Period – States, “No continuous streaks running perpendicular to the face of the slope.” This is unclear. What are “streaks?”

Section 570-5 Method of Measurement – This section indicates payment to be made by plan quantity. How will Department requested overruns in areas not shown in the original plans be handled?

Section 570-6 Basis of Payment - If all payment is to be made through one pay item – Turf Complete – will the Department provide a matrix of quantities to break down the quantities individually into sod, seed, wildflower, etc. or does the Department expect the contractor to perform this takeoff? It should also be noted that paying for turf in this manner forces the contractor to use a “blended” bid price. If the Department decides to place sod in an area not previously specified in the plans, and the job was primarily a seed and mulch job, then the Department should be prepared to pay additional money for

that sod above and beyond the pay item, since the pay item may include several different treatments of varying price.

Rusty Birchall
Cone & Graham, Inc.
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District 2 Materials Office

File: 5700000 – Turf
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Date: Thursday, September 29, 2005
Time: 04:48:52 PM

Comments:

570-3
Review use of 'finish soil layer" in terms of definition and intent of Spec 162.

570-3.7
Review which tests are intended and consider the lab qualifications needed for the tests. Primary & secondary nutrient tests are not routinely proved by Sect 6-9 (CMT) labs.

DralynnS@aol.com

These comments are responses to the changes being made to grassing project specs.

Lumping everything under the term "Turf" will make bidding jobs practically impossible. There will be a large margin for error because of different types of grassing and the price variations. If all grassing is combines under "Turf" then sod should be the only grassing option to be used.

570-3.3: Replacing seed and mulch with hydroseeding is not feasible for all projects. For example, hydroseeding is not stable and will not hold in sandy Florida soil. Also, contractors would have to redress often.

Regarding newspaper versus woodfiber, newspaper works just as well and more cost effective and efficient.

570.3-2: Rolled sod should be rolled up and down steep slopes, if unable to roll parallel to the road. If has been proven that rolling sod up and down slopes does not wash if done correctly. Also, not using sod that has been cut longer than 48 hours will result in costly waste of perfectly good sod.

570.3-7: Waiting to fertilize seed and mulch will cause slower growth leaving exposed areas susceptible to erosion. Also, it is more costly to mobilize workers later rather than when seed and mulch is originally done.

981-3.2: All strip sod 16" or narrower should be replaced with 30" or 42" rolled sod to eliminate washing between seams. Wider strips can handle more run-off. Also, biodegradable net that is "preferred" is not even manufactured yet.

981-4: Changing mulch material will be extremely costly. Currently used material such as hay and straw are perfectly effective cost wise and work well under any conditions. Changing this would be very impractical.

Quality control should be the objective of the grassing contractor not DOT. As long as the end result is good coverage and erosion control, the DOT's objective has been met.

J. C. Miseroy

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Date: Monday, October 03, 2005
Time: 08:07:38 AM

Comments:

It appears that all work associated with 'turf' will be paid / sy of turf. Seed & Mulch will be included in the same bid unit price as sod. This will create problems when quantities are changed during construction. What about temporary sodding?

It appears that any mowing of new turf areas will be incidental to the item. What about mowing of existing sod and litter pickup on the site. Will there still be pay items for those areas? What happens when different types of sod are specified for the same project? Will they both be included under the one unit price?

Bradley Braden

Dear Mr. Brautigam:

I have reviewed the proposed specification change, 5700000.D01-Turf and have respectfully submitted the following comments:

1. Under the section 570-3.3 mentioning not to use acrylamides and polyacrylamides, but later mentions that you can use flocculants or moisture holding

compounds. Polyacrylamides are commonly referred to as or used for flocculants or moisture holding compounds. Polyacrylamides are also commonly used for locking sandy or clay particles together to reduce sediment runoff in the erosion control industry.

2. Under the section 570-3.3 mentioning maintaining the slurry, if you leave a slurry in the pumping mechanism or the hose for 24 hours, you can have plugging problems can render the machine useless.

3. Under section 570-3.4 mentioning (minimum physical and performance) and (independent laboratory), are these or will these be listed within this specification as to which independent laboratories or what minimum physical and performance criteria are acceptable?

4. Under section 570-3.4 also mentions not using polyacrylamides. This would limit the alternate technologies with BFM's in difficult conditions of extreme slopes or daily precipitation as higher strength BFM's typically polyacrylamides and/or synthetic fibers to achieve higher performance.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions to my comments at Ph. 877-842-0804.

Sincerely,

Bradley Braden
Mat, Inc.
526 S. Beach St.
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
Ph. 877-842-0804



5700000.pdf

Allen Schrumpf

SECTION 570 - TURF

1. In proposed Section 570-2, Materials, the reference to Compost should refer to “.....Section 987-2.3.”
2. In proposed Section 570-3.1, Seeding, in the 5th sentence, Compost should refer to “.....Section 987-2.3.”
3. In proposed Section 570-3.3, the slopes should be shown in Rise:Run format to be consistent with the Design Standards. Change 4:1 to 1:4, and 3:1 to 1:3.
4. In proposed Section 570-6, Basis of Payment, the reference tin the 2nd sentence should be changed to “..... (as provided in 570-3.2).”



Stephen Zwilling

October 10, 2005

Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Mr. Duane Brautigam P.E.,

I would first like to thank you for allowing us to assist you in developing a comprehensive specification for the Florida Department of Transportation. Our objective is to provide you with industry feedback to ensure a quality specification. Please feel free to contact me if you need clarification on issues enclosed in this document.

Section 570-3.3

1. Weather restrictions should be noted for wood with tack application. Material needs a 24 hour drying time to be effective.
2. The minimum viscosity of 4,500 cps should be 4,000. Guar at 4,500 cps is very difficult to obtain and is not reliably available in the market.
3. The use of polyacrylamides in the mulch slurry has been restricted in the specification. Polyacrylamides aide in water retention, soil flocculation and provide some erosion control value. The use of polyacrylamides as part of a mulch system, is an industry accepted practice and an appropriate BMP. We have extensive independent data available, documenting that polyacrylamides are safe for the environment and provide measurable value.

We would like an opportunity to address your concerns on polyacrylamides so you have a comfort level in allowing them to be included as part of an erosion control mulching system. Enclosed you will find a copy of our Fish Toxicity Report and our Caribou Report which evaluates polyacrylamides as part of an erosion control mulch system.

4. The document suggests that fiber once mixed with water, should be used within 24 hours. We suggest that the material should be applied ASAP and should not remain in the tank for more than 5 hours. It is important that the fibers, fertilizer and other ingredients stay in suspension to avoid clogging problems in the equipment.

Section 570-3.4

1. Polyacrylamides issue.
2. “In difficult conditions of extreme slope or daily precipitation, where applications of BFM might fail, Engineer may allow use of alternative technologies to accomplish necessary seeding operations.” Our suggested language: “In difficult conditions of extreme slope or daily precipitation, where applications of BFM might fail, Engineer may allow the use of a Fiber Reinforced BFM product which does not require a cure time and can be applied in conditions of extreme slope or daily precipitation.”

Fiber reinforced BFM products like Flexterra cost a little more but they don't require a cure time, last longer than a BFM and can handle more extreme slope conditions. This product category is growing and a definition for a Fiber Reinforced Matrix is under review by the new products committee at ASTM. Inclusion of the above language gives the contractor a specific option to a BFM where conditions warrant. This is really the product that Florida seeding contractors need to control erosion in severe environments.

- Enclosed with this document you will find a copy of Fish Toxicity Report and our Caribou Report which addresses the safety issue of polyacrylamides
- Original Generic BFM specification submitted last year
- FGM product specification

Thank you again for your consideration and allowing us to participate in the specification process with the Florida Department of Transportation. I can be contacted by cell at (847) 612-7199 or email stevez@profileproducts.com for further consultation on this document.

More information on profile is available at www.profileproducts.com

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Zwilling

Profile Products LLC
Market Development Manager

Merritt Bird

File: 5700000 – Turf
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Date: Monday, October 10, 2005
Time: 03:27:29 PM

Comments:

Specifications on the impracticable depth requirements are not only unfeasible for the contractor to perform but also for the Department to inspect and verify. This clause opens up a window of conflict between the Contractor and the Department for which no one has an interest .

Why is the Department mixing the structural characteristics of the work covered under 577 with the agricultural characteristic of the Turf specification?

Combining these two types of work will force the contractor to have a more conservative posture when bidding the work under Spec 570 due to the contractor's anticipation of additional "structural" work once the project has begun, thus raising the price as a whole.

Swart's Landscaping, Inc.

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Date: October 10, 2005
To: Duane F. Brautigam, P.E., State Specifications Engineer
From: Andy Swart, Swart's Landscaping, Inc.
Nan Bambara, Swart's Landscaping, Inc.
Subject: Proposed Specifications Change:57500000.D01-Turf

570-1: Delete- "The Engineer may eliminate, at his discretion, any item of work covered by this Section." If it is at the Contractors option to sod or seed to establish "turf", it should not be allowed that the Engineer can eliminate sod or seed as a material and operation. How would the Contractor know how to bid?

570-3: Delete the following three sentences- "In preparing the ground.....Make the soil.... and Do not begin..." This operation language should stay under 162-1.1,

as this responsibility is that of the Contractor performing the Finish Soil Layer, not the Contractor performing the Turf line item.

Insert a sentence like... “All sequence of operations under Section 162 shall be completed and approved by the Engineer before Turf operation begins.”

570-3: Delete- “Prior to sodding, thoroughly water areas and allow the surface moisture to dry so as to prevent a muddy soil condition.” Watering is covered under 570-3.6, when it states “Water all turf areas as necessary...” The idea is to put the responsibility onto the Contractor for “establishing turf”, not to micro manage when and if to water.

570-3: General question: Why so specific on mulching operation (ie: anchoring mulch and string netting) when the concept is a performance turf?

570-3.2: Delete: “ ... and embedded it firmly and smoothly by light tamping with appropriate tools.” This task is antiquated and unnecessary. In the field, it is known that this action is ridiculous.

570-3.2: Delete: “Do not use sod that has been cut for more than 48 hours.” It is repetitive; it is covered under Materials 981- Condition.

570-3.2: Delete: “Tamp the outer pieces of sod to produce a featheredge effect. Remove and replace any sod as directed by the Engineer.” This is not performance minded.

570-3.3 General: It seems strange to eliminate so many details and specifics about the old seed & mulch spec (basically in total now we’ve got about three sentences) and now insert so much detail about hydroseeding- almost two pages. We feel the language should be less specific, especially since the idea is to make it a performance “turf” specification.

570-3.4 “The work and materials for re-application, will be paid as Unforeseeable Work.” This needs to have a specific line item price at time of bid, because the price should not be paid at contract unit price per square yard for Turf 570. How will the price be determined?

570-3.5 General: Sod should not be inserted into the seeding specification for rolling. The timing, process and reason to roll seeded areas are different than sodded areas. In fact, a performance minded specification should not include rolling at all.

570-3.6 Delete: “Thoroughly water sod immediately after placing...” This is already covered under the “water all turf areas as necessary...”

570-3.7 General: Fertilizer is used to promote a healthy stand of grass. Shouldn’t the time of application be at the discretion of the one responsible for establishing the turf? The slow release fertilizer is a good idea, but the micro-schedule of application(s) is too specific for performance turf.

570-4 Delete: "No bare spots larger than one square foot." Delete: "No bare areas comprising more than 1% of any given 1,000 square foot area." The intent to be very specific is understood, but in this effort it seems a very difficult to establish and enforce standard is being created. Please alter or eliminate.

General: The July 05 Workbook revised the 575 Specification to include language in 575-3.4 about noxious weeds. It is specific about 30 day responsibility of these weeds. I do not see any reference to it at all. Not mentioned as deleted or left in.... What happened to it?

570-4: "The Department will only pay for replanting as necessary due to factors determined beyond the control of the Contractor." This needs to have a specific line item price at time of bid, because the price should not be paid at contract unit price per square yard for Turf 570. How will the price be determined? If a sodded area gets washed out by a hurricane, it should not get paid at unit price for 570 Turf & opposite is true ... if a seeded area gets hurricane damage that should not get paid at the higher price of 570 Turf.

570-4: Temporary sod- How will that get paid? Sod used for meeting SWPPP and the NPDES permits, how will that get paid?

570-5: Will the Engineer be tracking quantities throughout the job? What if plans change and additional turf is needed? What if plans change and less turf is needed? Will plan quantity still be paid?

570-6: Change: (as provided in 575-3.2) to (as provided in 570-4) I think?

Jennifer Taylor

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Username: Jennifer Taylor
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Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2005
Time: 10:59:25 AM

Comments:

1. Section 570 Turf (570-3.2)
48 hours is a good time period but the Engineer needs to have the flexibility to extend if necessary.
2. 570-6 Basis of Payment
Why not make pegging of sod incidental to the work- it doesn't cost that much anyway?

Is mowing included in the cost of this item? It could be more specific. What about mowing in areas outside of the new turf areas- how is that to be paid for- we do not want to pay the full pay item cost for simply mowing areas that are not to be re-turfed

Bob Graham

Sorry I am late with these comments. One pay item is a bad idea. Invariably, on most of our jobs the sod quantities overrun. This is primarily due to field conditions not anticipated at bid time. Currently these conditions will be discussed with CEIs and agreements will be reached where to place the sod. Disputes are avoided by simply overrunning and underrunning the pay items. Under the proposed spec disputes will occur. 'You should have included in your bid to sod this area' will be the initial position of the CEI. Even if the CEI agrees that the area was unanticipated the next dispute will be how to determine the compensation due to the blended price. In my humble opinion the pay items should be left as is and allow the use of hydroseeding and BMF as an option and pay under the seed and mulch item. PS ,there are too many variables and unknowns beyond the control of the contractor that makes a performance based spec for this work unreasonable. Sincerely, Bob Graham
