

Genetic Hybrid

Latest evolution in commercial fills industry gap

BY GILBERT PEÑA

Walk-behind mowers have come a long way from when they were small, self-propelled units. Several significant industry trends have continued to make them a necessity in a commercial mower's equipment fleet.

One of the biggest industry improvements for walk-behinds was the introduction of hydrostatically driven machines. Although the cost for a hydrostatic mower is higher than a gear-driven mower, the transmission offers improved productivity.

Another industry trend was the introduction of the velky and sulky attachments, which increased productivity and reduced operator fatigue. A velky is a stand-on attachment that allows the user to ride on a platform that is pulled by the mower. A sulky is a ride-on attachment that performs the same function as a velky, except the user sits in a seat mounted on the platform. Because a walk-behind is limited by its user's walking pace, velky and sulky attachments allow the machine to be operated at a faster pace while the operator simply served as a guide.

The latest industry trend is offering operators even more power and control over their walk-behind mowers. The trend is a new style of machine that commercial mowers might choose to replace their hydrostatic walk-behinds and any velky or sulky attachments. Several commercial mowing manufacturers are offering hybrid zero-turn-radius (ZTR) mowers with integrated stand-on platforms. For example, John Deere recently introduced its 607 Series Commercial Quik-Trak™ mowers (see sidebar).

The benefits of a hybrid ZTR over a velky or sulky attachment include better maneuverability and control for the operator.

With a velky or sulky attachment, the operator stand is separate from the actual machine. As a result, when the machine goes over a bump or makes a turn, there is a delay before the operator stand goes over the bump or makes the turn. This ultimately slows the mower down and can be a hazard to the operator.

The new hybrid ZTR mowers with integrated operator platforms don't have that disadvantage. There is no delay between the movements of the operator and the machine, because the platforms are built into the unit. The operator moves with the machine as one unit, which allows the operator to mow at top speeds.

Although the new hybrid ZTRs may be more expensive than a hydrostatic walk-behind, they offer the power of a hydrostatic mower and convenience of a velky or sulky while increasing productivity and reducing operator fatigue. Although operators "ride" on the machine, they are definitely not "ride-on" mowers. The new machines still have the advantage of a walk-behind mower's trimming capabilities and ability to get into tight areas.

The hybrid ZTR mowers are filling an industry gap between traditional walk-behind mowers and ride-



Hybrid ZTR mowers offer all of the trimming capabilities and flexibility of traditional walk-behind mowers as well as increased productivity and reduced operator fatigue.

on units, allowing operators to indulge in the best of both worlds.

Gilbert Peña is marketing manager of commercial mowing. He can be reached via e-mail at penagilbert@jdcorp.deere.com.

John Deere introduces commercial Quik-Trak™ mowers

John Deere has introduced its 600 Series Commercial Quik-Trak™ mowers, which are hybrid zero-turn-radius (ZTR) mowers designed to fill a gap between traditional mid-mount, ZTR mowers and traditional walk-behind mowers. The operator doesn't sit or walk; he or she stands on a platform. Each model's compact size requires less trailer space and improves maneuverability and trimming ability.

The three models — the 19-hp 647, the 23-hp 657 and the 23-hp 667 — are all powered by air-cooled, vertical Kawasaki engines. And they are all equipped with the 7-Iron® side-discharge commercial mowing decks. The 647 has a 48-in. deck, the 657 has a 54-in. deck, and the 667 has a 60-in. deck.

Each machine is controlled by dual-loop levers that function

as a ZTR lever system. Ground speed and direction are controlled by pushing the levers forward to move forward and pulling them rearward to go in reverse, which lends itself to operators of all experience levels. A reference bar is included to reduce fatigue from control lever operation. A separate choke control requires less adjustment and saves time.

The operator platform is supported with suspension springs to absorb shock and provide a smooth, comfortable ride. An insulated, 2-in.-thick pad also absorbs shock and protects against engine heat to increase operator comfort.



JOHN DEERE

—Gilbert Peña



ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW

Remington introduces their newly designed 3.5-hp electric chain saw. The improved styling gives the chain saw a modern powerful look full of safety elements, including a full wrap-around front handle makes for comfortable handling at all cutting angles, while the rear handle features a one-of-a-kind soft-touch grip for comfort and reduced vibration.

Built-in steel bucking teeth are great for leverage and pivoting, while a narrow nose bar tip and chain design safeguard against kickback. The new finger chain tension system offers convenient chain tensioning without using a screwdriver and a power cord hitch holds cord for safer cord management.

This new Remington electric chain saw is one of the lightest in the industry at 9.5 lbs.

Remington/800-858-8501
For information, circle 193



HUSTLING HYDROS

The Hustler line of Hydro WalkBehinds keeps growing. New this year is a 37-in. model and an electric start option on the 17-hp Kawasaki engine. Deck sizes can be either 48 or 54 in. Patented H-Bar steering makes the Hustler Hydro WalkBehind easy to learn and operate; it features simple motorcycle-style controls with a forward twist to go forward and a twist back for reverse. Add the Hustler Sulky and the Hustler Hydro WalkBehind becomes a zero-turn front-mount mower. Other options include a deck-mounted catcher, mulch kit, and Gator blades.

Hustler Turf Equipment/
800-395-4757
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PARTS CATALOG

Prime Line Power Equipment Products has introduced their new OE engine and drive parts and accessories catalog that specifically targets the commercial market.

The new commercial catalog features the most popular commercial grade parts for top brands such as Bobcat-Ransome, Exmark, Toro, John Deere, Scag, Gravely, Kawasaki, Kohler, and more. A wide range of equipment, including commercial mowers, gas trimmers, and blowers will be supported.

"We have always been known for our OE equivalency, superior quality, distribution, industry leading warranty and in-house technical support.

These will continue to be our focus with the new commercial grade lines," says Prime Line's Laurie Klump.

Prime Line/217-324-9400
For information, circle 191



TORO'S MID-SIZE MOWERS

Toro's ProLine Gear and Hydro Floating Deck Mid-Size mowers feature 12.5-, 15 and 17-hp Kawasaki and 13- and 15-hp Kohler Command PRO engines; the patented Toro T-Bar Steering system; forward ground speed up to 6.5 mph; and 44- and 52-in., fully floating, Super Flow System decks with blade tip speeds of more than 18,000 ft. per minute, height of cut from 1 to 4.5 in. with 1/4-in. increments, and sealed spindle ball bearings.

The Toro Co./800-476-9673
For information, circle 205

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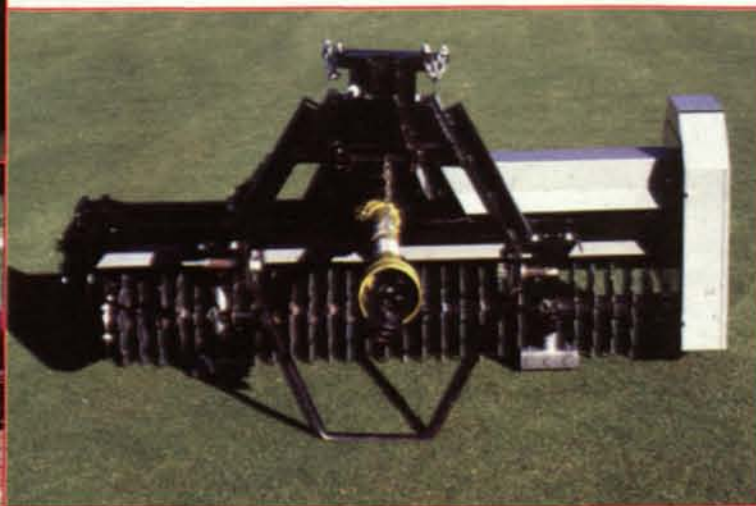
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SOLID STEEL BODY & FRAME

Snapper's SPLH171KW has a solid steel body and frame. It also features a 17-hp OHV Kawasaki engine and Accutrac on-the-go fingertip hydrostatic drive control with comfort-loop steering. The full-floating deck with easy height-of-cut adjustment is constructed with 7-gauge (3/16-in.) steel. Also included is the field-serviceable spindle assembly for ease of repair. The patented Ninja Mulching System can be added to the deck to leave lawns looking manicured without bags of grass clippings.

Snapper/800-762-7737

For information, circle 204



REDUCE USER FATIGUE

Husqvarna's WHF5218ETS features the Easy Touch System (ETS) with pistol grip controls and a one-lock system (instead of two independent locks). The ETS reduces fatigue and provides the user with more leverage. The mower's Quick Lift deck allows height to be adjusted from the operator's position, eliminating the need to leave the controls. Floating decks use the Advanced Cutting Systems technology that follows the terrain evenly for a precise cut. The hydraulic system uses fully synthetic Mobil 1 15W-50. A 52-in. deck increases productivity, and a 5.3-gal. fuel tank provides up to 6 hours of mowing time. An 18-hp V-Twin Kawasaki engine with standard electric start powers the unit.

Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co./800-HUSKY-62
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Maintaining the Grounds

SIMPLIFY MAINTENANCE

Exmark's Turf Tracer walk-behind mower combines the natural positioning of the Enhanced Control System with hydrostatic drive productivity, durability, and quality of cut. The Turf Tracer features 52- and 60-in. UltraCut 5.5-in. deep deck design. Larger rear-drive tires provide traction. Larger diameter pneumatic front castor tires with sealant are designed for performance and reliability.

Kohler-powered units feature a heavy-duty canister air filter and cleanout ports that improve engine life and simplify maintenance, says Exmark. The quick-height-adjust system provides easy, always-level height adjustments. True zero-turn and instant forward-to-reverse enhance maneuverability. The Turf Tracer can reach forward speeds up to 6.2 mph. Exmark's flow-control baffles eliminate blowout from the front of the deck, reduce horsepower requirements and improve the quality of cut.

Exmark Mfg. Co., Inc./402-223-6300

For information, circle 194



WIDE-AREA MOWER

John Deere's GS75 wide-area walk-behind mower features a Kawasaki 17-hp OHV engine; heavy-duty, five-speed gear transmission; ground speeds adjusted with one of five settings; color-coded levers; spring-loaded thumb latches; and 5-gal. fuel capacity. It is available with a 36-, 48- or 54-in. mower deck.

John Deere/800-537-8233

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ADJUST WITHOUT TOOLS



The Scag SWZU "Ultimate" zero-turn walk-behind mower features an easily adjustable, floating Advantage cutter deck. Cutting heights can be changed from 1 in. to 4 1/2 in. in the field, with no tools required. The self-adjusting, spring-loaded idler pulleys save time, effort and repair costs by keeping the belts in adjustment, says the manufacturer. The "Adjust-A-Trac" feature (patent pending) allows instant neutral and tracking adjustment in the field without tools. Users have a choice of engines, including a 15-hp Kohler engine or a 15-, 17- or 21-hp Kawasaki.

The Floating Advantage cutter deck contours to uneven terrain and allows users to change cutting heights in the field with no tools. Most Advantage cutter decks feature front and rear anti-scalp wheels. Cutter decks are available in 36-, 48-, 52- or 61-inch Standard or Advantage.

The de-clutch cold start feature enhances cold weather starting by removing the load of the hydraulic pumps at startup. Spring-loaded belt idler systems on the cutter deck and pump drive eliminate belt adjustments and reduce downtime by adding life to the belts.

Scag Power Equipment/920-387-0100
For information, circle 201

CONVENIENT BLADE ACCESS

Country Clipper's Trek is a hydrostatic wide-area walk-behind mower that features convenient blade access with stand-up deck; on-the-go tracking adjustment with twin tracking levers; no-refill operation with a 6-gal. fuel tank; a floating deck that easily adjusts without tools; Parker Ross wheel motors and dual hydrostatic pumps; and 1/4-in.-thick reinforced deck top-side with bull nose front.

Country Clipper Div./Shivers Mfg., Inc./800-344-8237
For information, circle 200



SCREENING PLANT

Thomas Equipment Ltd. has introduced an all-new 300 screening plant under its ProTough label. Designed to compliment virtually every skid steer loader or tractor-loader backhoe machine, the ProTough 300 handles up to 1 1/4 cu. yd. of material at a time. Its 8-ft. bucket opening and 8 ft. 2 in. loading height makes for easier loading and quick cycle times, says the manufacturer.

The unit can be set up for work in minutes. The screening plant's dual-wheeled axle hydraulically lowers and locks into transportation position while its front cylinder raises the unit to a truck or tractor's hitch-height to hook up.

You can screen and separate materials, on-site, to produce loam, sand, gravel, drainage rock, septic stone and road base or other.

Thomas Equipment/866-238-6844
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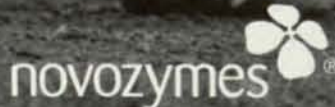
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INFIELD MOWER

National Mower's IM25 infield mower is specifically designed for infield maintenance. The walk-behind reel mower tracks extremely straight and provides highly defined striping patterns for an immaculate playing surface. The IM25 includes a built-in backlapping device that sharpens the reels, which saves time for busy groundskeepers. Other features include: 1/2- to 2-in. height of cut; full width rear-drive split roller system; front throw with polyethylene basket; six and eight blade reel option; and fingertip controls.

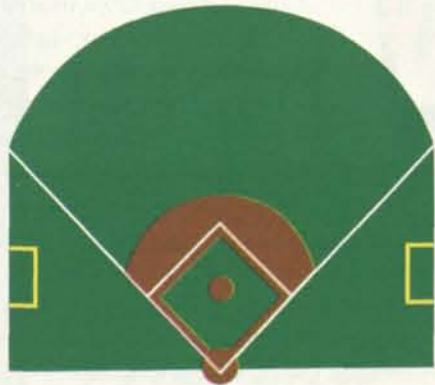
National Mower Co./888-907-3463
For information, circle 195

VERTI-CUT MACHINE

Thatch Master verti-cut machines are designed with managers of sports fields in mind. They need only 25 hp, and are easy to adjust. The thin blades do not leave slow healing grooves.

Blades can easily be adjusted shallow for runner control or deep for digging out even heavy accumulations of thatch. Five-foot working width gets the job done fast. The blades are inexpensive and easy to change.

Turf Specialties/863-289-3330
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