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SAFETYGRIP: THE NEW AGENTS FOR PIRELLI TRUCK TYRES IN SA



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INNOVATION THIS, INNOVATION THAT

"THERE'S NO NEED TO REINVENT THE WHEEL," SOME ARE OFTEN HEARD SAYING. IN TRANSPORT, THOUGH, THE ONLY WHEELS THAT DON'T NEED (TOO MUCH) REINVENTING ARE THE ONES TOUCHING THE GROUND



GAVIN MYERS

Innovation is an unmistakable buzzword of the 21st century. From boardroom debate to barroom banter, modern-day companies are continually striving for "innovation" in everything they do, every product they create, every service they sell.

"Make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products", is the way innovation is described in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Despite its challenges, the road-transport industry in South Africa is surely more established than it's ever been. The changes could be happening a little faster, though... We know that if the industry waits for government to take the wheel, it'll wait for a very long, bureaucratic, red-taped time before anything productive happens. And any transporter will tell you that productivity is what counts most.

It is, therefore, up to the industry to introduce those new methods, ideas and products. Thankfully, the South African transport fraternity is very good at this. Sure, there are those that are happy to continue running their rust buckets with a trusty 30-odd year-old ADE engine (an innovation of necessity in its time) and very little in the way of anything modern or, indeed, innovative. Broadly speaking, however, the local industry can be proud of the way it has engendered innovation.

As the editor of **FOCUS**, I get to see and hear about these advances on a daily basis.

Vehicle autonomy, alternative propulsion and widespread machine connectivity (or, as it's more trendily known: the Internet of Things) are all the rage as vehicle manufacturers push engineering boundaries to meet increasingly strict environmental and safety legislation – while bringing hitherto unprecedented levels of efficiency and convenience to transporters.

We're not talking only trucks, here... For example, the likes of Wabco are developing connected trailer components that create potential for greater monitoring and diagnostics. "Smart" tyres have been developed that keep an eye on their own temperatures and pressures. In the warehouse, Bosch has developed a 360° camera system for forklifts to reduce accidents.

These innovations do not even make up the tip of the iceberg of what's currently available, and conceivable, as the global transport and logistics industry heads into Industry 4.0. As a traditionally late adopter (thanks to lethargic government legislation), South Africa would seem to be on the back foot. However, there are pockets of innovation excellence in the local industry of which we should be very proud!

You'd have read about the handover of 77 Euro-5 Mercedes-Benz Actros to Bakers Transport in the previous issue. Bakers is but one of numerous South African fleets running high-efficiency vehicles from numerous original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) – many of whom are also enthusiastically researching the viability of alternative fuels and electric vehicles in the local market.

They've chosen to do this not because they have to, but because it makes good business sense to do it – because it will set them up for future excellence. It's innovation in the local context...

In this issue, we feature a trailer from Jost and Cobalt Engineering that's a first of its kind in South Africa (turn to page 24 to read all about it). It's locally built to meet a local challenge. Innovation...

Those smart tyres are even available locally through a partnership between Continental and MiX Telematics. Innovation...

Believe me, there's even more to come the way of the South African trucking and transport industry – and I look forward to seeing how the wheels of the industry are reinvented as the word "innovation" buzzes it into the future. **F**



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ALL YOU NEED IN TYRES

A WELL-KNOWN NAME IN THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE TYRE INDUSTRY, SAFETYGRIP HAS ADDED TO ITS PORTFOLIO BY BECOMING THE EXCLUSIVE LOCAL IMPORTER OF PIRELLI COMMERCIAL TYRES

From humble beginnings as a family business in 1997, Safetygrip has grown to be one of South Africa's most trusted tyre retailers and service providers. Juan Venter, the company's current owner and son of its founder, says that the company's morals, which come from it being a family run business, ensure customers are provided with the best service, knowledge and expertise.

"We need to ensure our customers are provided with the products that work best for their application, so that their businesses can run as efficiently as possible," Venter says.

In this regard, Pirelli is seen as an ideal product addition to the Safetygrip stable.

"Last year when the opportunity came about to be the South African Pirelli agent through Prometeon, we grabbed it," explains Venter. "We are in the process of testing different tyres in their respective applications at various fleets."

To begin with, Safetygrip will offer Pirelli truck and bus radial (TBR), as well as military tyres, sourced from Turkey and Egypt. "There's a big, untapped market for military tyres in South Africa," Venter explains, adding that in the coming years the range will be expanded with the addition of agricultural and radial OTR tyres.

The company is also known as a Michelin Truck Service Centre and also offers its own brand of Fesite tyres sourced from China.

"There are probably more than 400 different makes of tyre coming into South Africa from China. However, we did testing to find out if it was viable to bring in these tyres and if it'll make a difference in the local environment. The Fesite brand is one of the better-performing budget tyres from China," Venter says.

While Safetygrip consists of three departments (retail – which deals with the end customer; wholesale – which

deals with other tyre and procurement dealers; and exports – which handles cross-border sales), supplying tyres is not where the business begins and ends.

"Service levels are first for us, then the product, quality and price," Venter notes. The company offers both on- and off-site services. On site the company offers the usual alignment and balancing as well as brake and suspension testing, air-conditioning re-gassing and nitrogen for the tyres. Fully equipped breakdown vehicles tend to stricken trucks.

When a truck comes into its Cosmo City premises (even if it's simply to fix a puncture) the Safetygrip team will conduct a full inspection of its tyres, brakes and suspension and provide a full report.

"If something needs to be fixed, we will call the customer and see if we can go ahead," says Venter.

The company also runs a retreading operation, offering Michelin's Recamic as its premium retread option, and Leadertread as the second brand.

Venter is excited to add that Safetygrip has worked with Budini tyre-management software for around ten years now, which loads every tyre in a fleet to the system and electronically records each unit's measurements. These can be referenced via an app and the customer receives a copy of the inspection report via the cloud.

"We strongly believe that it's the best system for testing products and the management of a fleet's CPK," Venter says. "Of course, these services come at a price; but we offer them to ensure the best CPK for the customer's operation."

"We hold a lot of knowledge within the company and we want to share it with our customers to ensure their success," he concludes. **F**

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SAFETYGRIP AND THE PIRELLI RANGE OF TYRES



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MIKE FITZMAURICE is the CEO of the Federation of East and Southern Africa Road Transport Associations (Fesarta). He has 42 years of experience in the transport and logistics industry with several major companies in South Africa, as well as overseas exposure with some of the leading transport companies in six European countries. Since 2004 he has established and run Transport Logistics Consultants. In May 2015 he became CEO of Fesarta.

CRASHED INTERSTATE TRADE

THE REPORTS FROM FESARTA MEMBERS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION ON THE MAIN ROAD CORRIDORS OF THE REGION MAKE A MOCKERY OF THE FANFARE AND VERBIAGE SURROUNDING THE GOLDEN FUTURE OF INTERSTATE TRADE THAT WILL BE FACILITATED BY THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCTFA) AGREEMENT

As a result of the inefficiencies of the border systems, bureaucratic indifferences between Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the total incompetence of the officials at the border posts, there is currently a 72-km queue of more than 1 200 vehicles from the Kasumbalesa border back to the town of Chambishi in Zambia. The queue includes more than 700 loaded fuel tankers.

This means that roughly 2 000 people (bearing in mind that Tanzanian operators have a driver and conductor on board each truck) are living on the roadside for weeks without food, water or sanitation and in very real danger, as cooking is done on open fires at the roadside.

This is a recipe for disaster; there is potential for a repeat of the Kasumbalesa fire that burned out 43 trucks and caused an unknown number of fatalities last year.

On the road tempers are rising, with reports of drivers fighting each other over queue jumping and constant harassment by thieves (which include police and army officials in the DRC).

The official responses are unsupportive and aggressive and are adding to the misery. At all Zambian borders, customs have stopped issuing T1 Transit documents for the DRC with the result that the borders at Chirundu, Kazungula, Vic Falls and Nakonde have growing queues and all available truck parks are full.

The operating hours at Kasumbalesa border post are 06:00 to 18:00. However the staff live 100 km away in Lubumbashi and travel to work every day. They generally arrive late, which limits the time for the clearance of vehicles. The queue therefore moves only two kilometres per day – some vehicles



At Chirundu the congestion is chaotic with Zimbabwean Customs officials telling drivers to uncouple their tankers and drive the truck tractors away to make space, with wheel clamping and a US\$ 100 (R1 400) fine when they refuse to comply.

The Chingola town council has banned trucks from parking in the town, thereby leaving a five-kilometre gap in the queue, which means northbound truckers have no means of knowing when the queue moves.

Zambia allows three days for transit vehicles to enter and leave the country before imposing penalties, but this is patently impossible and is another source of conflict for truckers.

could take a month to cross the border!

To date there has been no joint attempt by the Zambian or DRC revenue and customs authorities to extend operating hours to 24 hours a day to clear the backlog.

The situation is aggravated by the devastation caused by Cyclone Idai in Beira, Mozambique, which destroyed fuel, road and bridge infrastructure, including the Harare oil pipeline. This means that all oil fuel for Zambia and the DRC is coming by road from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (1 750 km away), and all these tankers are now jammed in the queue.

South Africa has embargoed fuel exports to support Eskom's need for

generator capacity and the South African Revenue Service (SARS) does not permit fuel transit from Maputo, due to concerns about potential unloading in South Africa.

The current work stoppage at the Kazangula bridge by Daewoo Corporation, due to non-payment by the Zambian Government, is another obstacle to corridor efficiency.

It is estimated that the cost of this monumental fiasco is approximately US\$ 1.5 million per day (R700 million per month) in truck standing time and possibly twice that figure in loss of business and industrial disruption.

This disastrous situation does not appear to be of any interest to the region's economic communities as there has been no useful response to resolve the issues from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common

Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) or the East African Community (EAC). The country authorities appear to be incapable of concerted action.

As executive director of Fesarta I have again made an appeal to the transport industry to get serious about supporting and strengthening the region advocacy potential of the association. Experience in other regions of the world shows that this is a crucial necessity to provide a counter to the official indifference to the impacts of logistical inefficiency on the economies of the region.

The magnitude of the current wastage and losses is a measure of what could be achieved by support from the industry and the various donor groups that are currently wasting their money supporting government agencies. **F**



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Standby power/speed (Kw/rpm)	19/1500	23-34/ 1500	36- 53/1500	72-92/1500	105- 154/1500	194/1500	226- 251/1500	316-330/1500
Prime power/speed (Kw/rpm)	19/1500	21-31/ 1500	33- 48/1500	65-84/1500	96- 140/1500	176/1500	205- 227/1500	287-300/1500
Available range	Generator: 15KVA-375KVA							

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Bore*Stroke mm	4- 85*100	4- 90*100	4- 102*118	4- 110*125	6- 110*125	6- 112*135	6- 112*145	6- 123*145	6- 126.5*166
Displacement (L)	2.27	2.54	3.86	4.75	7.13	7.7	8.6	11.05	12.52
Rated net power/speed (Kw/rpm)	17- 33/1500- 2650	22-55/ 1500-2650	40- 74/1500- 2400	65- 118/1500- 2300	92- 177/1500- 2400	147- 195/1500- 2100	162- 235/1500- 2200	228- 309/1500- 2000	300- 338/1500- 1900
Maximum torque/speed (N·m/rpm)	145/1500 0-1800	245/1500 1800	380/1500 0-1800	540/1400- 1700	890/1400- 1700	1100/1500- 1800	1400/1500- 1800	2100/1300- 1800	2300/1300- 1500
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VIC OLIVER is one of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, and has been in this industry for over 50 years. Before joining the FOCUS team, he spent 15 years with Nissan Diesel (now UD Trucks), 11 years with Busaf and seven years with International. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit www.focusontransport.co.za and have your say!

PREPARING FOR WINTER ON THE ROAD

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR TRUCKS AND DRIVERS TO BE READY TO HANDLE HARSH WINTER DRIVING CONDITIONS

Driving a truck in winter conditions can be a challenging task, especially if the vehicle and driver are not ready and equipped for the unforeseen harsh driving conditions.

With the abnormal amount of rain and the strange weather patterns that the country has experienced lately, we can expect some unseasonal weather this winter.

To avoid unnecessary and costly roadside vehicle breakdowns, ensure that all vehicles in the fleet will start on cold mornings and that the water in the engine and radiator will not freeze, extra care and maintenance must be applied.

Vehicle batteries need to be inspected regularly. Cold weather makes starting more difficult, because low temperatures make the engine harder to crank and, at the same time, reduce a battery's power potential. A fully charged battery that delivers 100 percent of its full power at 27°C will deliver only about 65 percent of its full power at 0°C and only 40 percent at -18°C.

The amount of anti-freeze in the radiator needs to be inspected regularly to ensure that the ratio of anti-freeze to water is in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's specification. An insufficient amount of anti-freeze could result in the



“

With the abnormal amount of rain and the strange weather patterns that the country has experienced lately, we can expect some unseasonal weather this winter.

water in the radiator freezing, which will severely damage the engine. An incorrect anti-freeze ratio will also result in expensive long-term engine damage due to corrosion.

Vehicle radiators also need regular inspection to ensure that they are not blocked with dirt, insects and/or seeds from the winter grass. Extra care must be taken with vehicles that undertake long-distance trips, as often the radiators on these vehicles become blocked with insects. Care must also be taken to ensure that the radiator fins do not

get damaged by the use of high-pressure cleaning guns.

Drivers play a vital role in reducing the risk of a vehicle not starting on a cold morning and ensuring that the cooling system of the vehicle is functioning correctly.

Vehicle batteries and cooling systems do not normally just fail, there are often tale-tell signs that the driver, if correctly trained and motivated, will quickly see and report or stop the vehicle before severe damage is done.

Drivers need to be motivated to

carry out a daily vehicle pre-trip inspection, which should include an inspection of batteries and the cooling system.

Drivers need to be taught what to look for when inspecting the batteries and cooling systems.

The visual vehicle battery inspection points are:

- Check whether battery terminals are corroded. If they are, this will inhibit the flow of electricity, which will cause the battery to not work as required.
- If electrolyte levels are below the top of any of the plates in any cells, this could indicate overcharging, lack of maintenance or a cracked cell.
- Check for battery hold-down clamps that are loose or missing.
- Check whether battery terminals show signs of having been hammered or twisted.



By applying a little more attention and daily inspection to vehicles in the cold winter months, the risk of expensive failures will be greatly reduced.

- Look for any signs that the battery casing is cracked or damaged.

The visual vehicle cooling system inspection points are:

- Look for and immediately report any water leaks.
- Check the water header tank. Modern vehicle cooling systems

do not lose water; therefore it should not be necessary to top up water. If the water level has dropped the driver must report this to the maintenance crew immediately.

- Inspect the radiator to make sure that it is not blocked.

By applying a little more attention and daily inspection to vehicles in the cold winter months, the risk of expensive failures will be greatly reduced.

Drivers also need to know how to handle any unexpected adverse conditions, like snow or black ice on the road, or whether or not to proceed on a road that has become flooded. This applies especially to long-haul operators that travel over mountain passes and/or to neighbouring countries. Drivers also need to be prepared for long unforeseen delays caused by bad weather conditions. **F**



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AN EYE ON THE ELECTIONS

HOW WILL THE OUTCOME OF THE MAY GENERAL ELECTIONS AFFECT THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY?

One certainly feels as though the South African economy has stumbled from one crisis to another of late. After the dark Zuma years, the country has faced a currency crisis, rampant petrol price increases and, finally, an electricity crisis in the build up to the 2019 May general elections. Many economists had hoped the growth would already be on the up and the past forgotten as we entered a new era.

I thought it prudent to look at how the potential outcomes of the May election could influence the transport sector, and compile my own wish list for the election. *(Even if you are reading this post-election, we feel much of it still applies - ed.)*

Many hope that President Ramaphosa will sweep the elections, and bring a new dawn to the country. We believe this is likely – the latest polls have showed that the incumbent enjoys a majority approval rating, but there remain a number of problems to be solved. The political troubles surrounding unity in the ANC have continued, and the election lists provided a stark caution to the pro-Ramaphosa faction that he may not find the support to enact economic reforms, such as corruption busting and increasing investment, as easy as he thought a few months ago.

Further, although these issues have been flogged *ad nauseum* lately,

the structural problems at Eskom, non-payment of e-tolls and flagging tax revenue generation are likely to remain long after the dust has settled on the election.

Despite the lack of activity in the economy (I argued in my previous column that conditions in the broader economy are not ideal), the transportation industry needs to consider the favourable credit conditions and the petrol

state of the economy, the ANC will emerge victorious in May. However, it is also likely that urban centres will swing away from the ruling party, as the recent bout of load shedding and service-delivery protests will prove a bitter pill to swallow for the urban voter – the outcome of this will be key to how business recovers.

The key to any post-election positivity will be investment. From our analysis, we have seen that there



price to replace fleets while mining inventories continue to be sold off (a strong driver of freight in the current economy).

With a darkening global outlook on the horizon, recent United States jobs data appears to give enough of a risk appetite to keep the window open for fleet replacement to continue. This would allow operators to widen margins to act as a buffer if the petrol price outlook were to worsen, or conditions in the domestic economy were to continue at the stagnant pace.

It is likely that, given the recent

has typically been a good correlation between the growth rate of fixed investment and the growth in heavy-vehicle sales. For good measure, too, as investment signals an uptick in activity and general economic expansion.

In the heavier sectors of mining and manufacturing, the increased outputs translate into strong freight demand. This is just the direct impact. As wages rise, demand for consumer goods will spur on second and third-round effects that will push growth and demand for transport higher. **F**



 @NLawGlobal

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RISK MANAGEMENT IN SUPPLY CHAIN

THE LANDSCAPE FOR MANAGING RISK HAS CHANGED. FOLLOWING THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS, PEOPLE NO LONGER HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF TRUST IN COMPANIES

Being perceived as trustworthy has become a priority for companies. Risk management is one of the most important functions of a board of directors. Boards are generally aware that the risk-management landscape has changed and they expect management to evaluate that risk differently.

Companies need systematic processes in place to identify and manage risk, especially in the face of increasing oversight and regulators seeking to rebuild credibility by using higher-profile enforcement activity. Regulators' expectations of compliance programmes have changed dramatically in recent years and they are continuing to evolve.

The operating environment for companies has also changed. New technologies bring additional cyber-security risks. Social media has increased this risk exposure and local issues can rapidly become global. A company's brand and reputation has, in the eyes of stakeholders, become symptomatic of how that company manages its risk.

Companies also need to consider their ethical obligations while complying with their legal obligations. Legislation dictates the minimum standards required of a company, whereas ethics is something that should be applied by all companies,



even if they are not legally compelled to do so.

Companies need to find their "sweet spot" by considering their culture, values and conduct in order to determine what is reasonable, while balancing the need to remain profitable.

Increasingly, environmental, social and governance (ESG) awareness is becoming more relevant than the letter of the law.

Environmental issues would include: climate change; greenhouse gases; resource depreciation (including water); waste and pollution; and deforestation.

The social issues include: working conditions (including slavery and child labour); local communities (including indigenous communities); conflict; health and safety; and employee relations and diversity.

Governance issues include: executive pay; bribery and corruption; political lobbying and donations; forward diversity and structure; and tax strategy.

A supply chain is only as strong as its weakest link. A company must consider cyber security and data and privacy protection; ESG and sustainability; increasing regulation and regulatory scrutiny; and incident response and crisis management.

Risk management of the supply chain and logistics requires careful

consideration of the company's role in the supply chain and the exposure to various risks. Proper risk management involves considering the risks the other role players in the supply chain may encounter. These role players include the seller, buyer, logistics service provider, bank financing institution and underwriter.

Companies then need to understand the legal parameters of the various risks. These would include the contract of sale, the logistics contract, the banking or financing instrument and the relevant insurance policy. Within these legal instruments, the factors that give rise to risk must be identified.

Consider the nature of the cargo concerned, the types of carriage, the geography over which carriage will take place, the various international regimes and local laws, costs, cyber risks and new technology.

Cyber security as an integral part of a company's risk-management system, and the impact of new technologies on supply chains creates fertile ground for new technology such as smart contracts, block chain and autonomous vessels.

These new technologies and their impact on cyber risk will be discussed separately in a series of upcoming articles. **F**



VAUGHAN MOSTERT lectured on public transport issues at the University of Johannesburg for nearly thirty years. Through Hopping Off, Mostert leaves readers with some food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.

HAVE WE LEARNT ANYTHING SINCE 2015?

HOW DID WE ALLOW ESKOM, SAA AND E-TOLLS TO GET US INTO SUCH A MESS? WE ARE ALL PARTLY TO BLAME FOR OUR FAILURE TO ASK QUESTIONS DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THESE GRAND SCHEMES

Passenger rail is one of my favourite topics. President Ramaphosa recently took some rides on our Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) trains. His first trip, north of Pretoria, took three hours instead of 30 minutes.

On his second trip, in Cape Town, he used a "sparkling new" Blue Train. There, things went more smoothly – Cape premier Helen Zille was also on hand to point out that the DA-run province will "set standards for rail transport and establish a rail inspectorate".



Business Day of April 10 gushingly reminded us that the "new trains are part of Prasa's modernisation programme, which includes the manufacture of 7 224 trains in the next 20 years at a cost of R123 billion".

How can we doggedly stick to this figure of 7 224 coaches? Let's go back

to the July 2015 issue of **FOCUS** and quote Hopping Off word for word:

"Let's take a quick look at another potential transport crisis in the making: Prasa's R123-billion fleet-renewal programme. According to reports, it's the biggest of its kind in the world, involving 7 224 coaches. Already it is off to a shaky start, with SATAWU calling for the 'immediate dissolution' of the Prasa board (*Business Day*, May 28, 2015).

"How did we get to the overall total of 7 224 coaches? It's a suspiciously precise number. My guess is that a clerk was told to take the current fleet of, say 3 500 coaches and increase it by, say, one percent a year for the next thirty years. He or she arrived at 7 223,36 and, being a well-trained student of transport economics, correctly rounded it up to 7 224.

"Has any attempt been made to reconcile this figure with any of the regional and/or provincial transport plans? I doubt it. Take Gauteng, which, according to the 25-year Gauteng Transport Plan (GTP), makes up 48 percent of Prasa's operations in South Africa. The GTP consists of 1 400 pages, of which a miserly 71 pages (Appendix F) are devoted to public transport.

"The six-odd pages involving Prasa mostly refer to expansion into areas not currently served by rail, which will presumably require at least a few hundred extra coaches. There is also a vague reference to 'rapid rail' – presumably Gautrain – expansion.

"The GTP then contradicts itself three pages later, on page 69, where it quotes international research showing that population densities in Gauteng are so low that they justify only a 'basic'

bus service, not even a 'premium' – presumably bus rapid transit (BRT) and even less a rail service. Late flash: Appendix F was quietly been taken off the GTP website during June (2015). Why am I not surprised?

"The simple conclusion is: we don't need rail 'expansion', of either the Prasa or Gautrain variety. There is no need for 7 224 new coaches – simply stick with the interim order for 3 600 coaches (which we might not even get), while government needs to immediately start fixing basic bus and taxi transport throughout South Africa."

When the above was written in 2015, the railway was carrying about 400-million passenger trips a year. It is now down to about 250 million, making the figure of 7 224 coaches even more ridiculous.

I see that the University of the Western Cape (UWC) is looking into the fitness of people to be board members of parastatals. I hope that it pays special attention to the boards of loss-making public transport organisations.

UWC should recommend that all these transport boards be disbanded and replaced by a single authority whose members are required to use public transport daily, and whose remuneration (say 20 percent) should consist of transport vouchers valid on the systems they are supposed to be "managing".

These board members can give the vouchers to their friends if they can't use them themselves. We'll soon find out who is serious about public transport and who isn't.

If I'm still around in 2023, I hope that I don't have to copy and paste this column again! **F**



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FACE TO FACE WITH HINO'S YOSHIO SHIMO

HINO HAS ANNOUNCED A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES OF ITS VISION FOR 2025 AND BEYOND. WE WENT FACE TO FACE WITH YOSHIO SHIMO, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF HINO MOTORS, TO FIND OUT MORE

“E

visioning 2025” is driven by Hino’s corporate mission: “Making the world a better place in which to live by helping people and goods to get where they need to go”. How will you achieve this?

Today, human transportation and logistics are increasingly affected by social issues – including serious traffic accidents, CO₂ emissions and labour shortages. Hino is committed to helping solve these challenges by tackling them head-on with our own resources and working through partnerships and alliances to bring together a greater range of competencies.

We are working towards a world without traffic accidents, where transport is worry-free and safe; where the transport of people and goods does not tax the environment; and where people and goods can move freely and in an optimised manner.



Hino Motors, Ltd.

How will you achieve these bold objectives?

First, we are developing, manufacturing and marketing best-fit products that incorporate leading-edge safety and environmental technologies. Second, we are providing total support that is customised for each vehicle operator. Third, we are developing new business activity areas.

Practically, how will it be implemented? Exactly what will customers be offered?

We are working on maximising vehicle uptime and minimising vehicle lifetime costs through Hino’s successful Total Support strategy. Actions in this regard include upgrading workshops and increasing the training of technicians to improve after-sales support. Providing optimal maintenance planning and just-in-time servicing are other strategies.

Where appropriate and beneficial, these developments will include the use of artificial intelligence and robot technologies. Along with our dealers, we are also developing solutions to enhance efficiency in transporting goods and people aimed at providing optimal operations with best-fit vehicles.

Speaking of your dealers, how will their role evolve in the future?

At present only 30 percent (525 000) of the 1.75-million Hino units in operation worldwide are serviced regularly by franchised dealerships. The aim is to grow this to 50 percent by 2025, with the number of units in operation expected to be in the region of 2.7-million at that time.

What are your exact objectives when it comes to vehicle sales?

We would like to grow our annual sales, from the 180 000 units sold in 2017, to 300 000 in 2025. The biggest sales increases are planned for the countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Americas, China and “other” markets (Africa, the Middle East and Russia). We aim to grow volume in these markets from 28 000 to 52 000 units a year by 2025.

You have operations all over the world. What is their role within Hino?

Four centres are involved with developing new models: Japan, Thailand, United States (US) and China. Future production will be linked to markets with high demand. Thailand will be responsible for medium-duty trucks (500-Series), Indonesia will be the core production and export centre for light-duty trucks (300-Series) and China will be responsible for heavy-duty trucks (700-Series), while the US will develop dedicated vehicles for this specialised market. We would like to halve new product development lead time in these centres through the increased use of digital development.

Finally, what are your future product plans when it comes to the important areas of the environment and autonomy?

We are developing a growing number of diesel-electric hybrid models as well as full-electric vehicles, with the aim of reaching 100-percent electrification by 2050, in line with the Hino Environmental Challenge 2050.

We are also pursuing new areas of business innovation, which will include connectivity, autonomous vehicles, shared vehicles and strategic partnerships with logistics companies, fleet operators and public-sector organisations. **F**

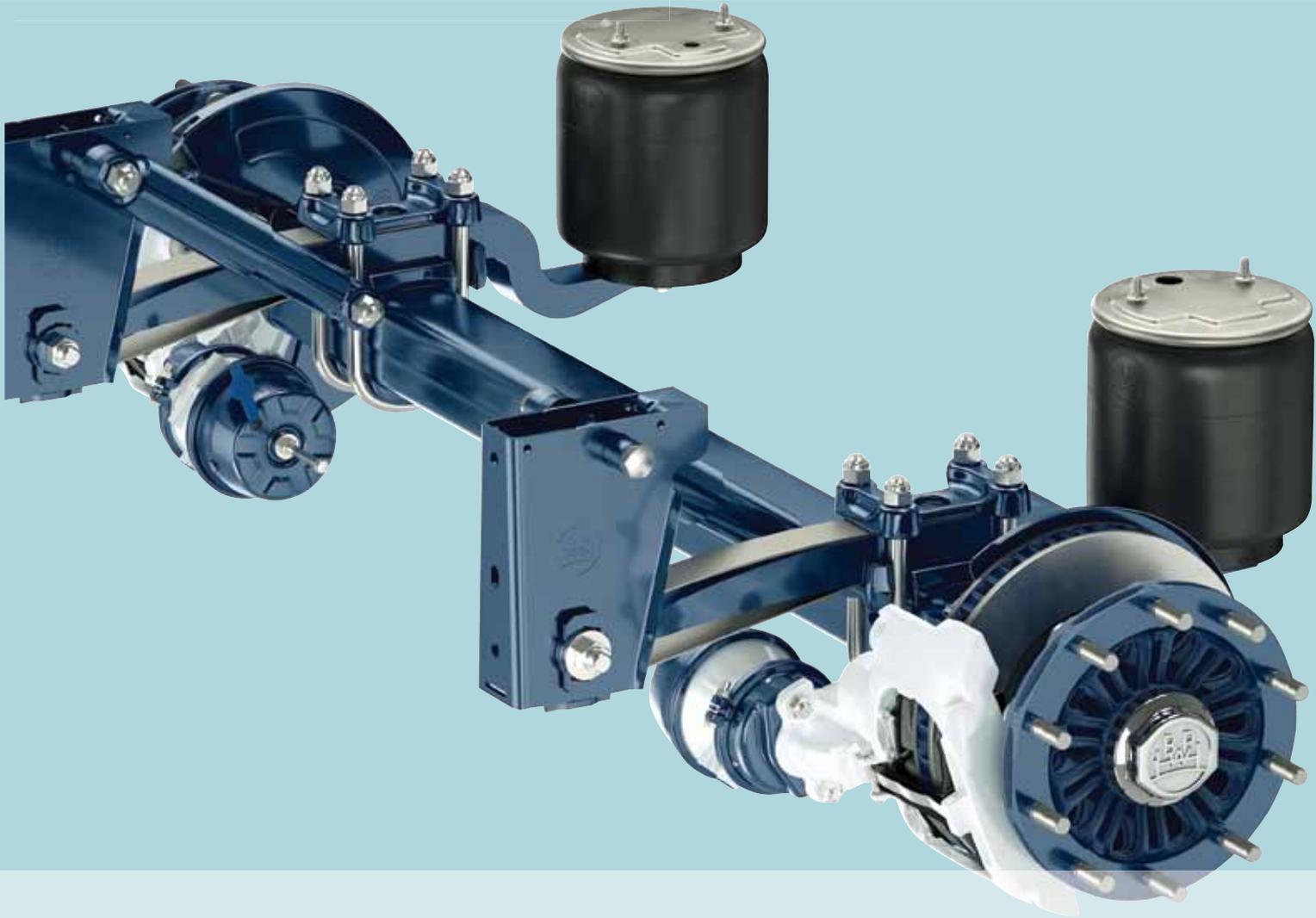
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NATURAL GAS – A CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE TO DIESEL?



APRIL SAW THE HIGHEST FUEL PRICE HIKES YET, AS SOUTH AFRICAN MOTORISTS WERE COMPELLED TO ABSORB SHARP INCREASES IN THE PRICE OF BOTH PETROL AND DIESEL. THIS POSES A HUGE THREAT TO A TRANSPORTATION SECTOR THAT IS ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE. LIANA SHAW EXPLORES ALTERNATIVE FUEL OPTIONS AVAILABLE LOCALLY

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areth Jones, head of technical sales, Tetra4, says: "With respect to diesel prices in South Africa, the only certainty is uncertainty. The two main drivers influencing the diesel pump price are the international crude oil price and the rand/dollar exchange rate, both of which can fluctuate greatly."

To illustrate these factors, the pump price of 50 ppm diesel in March 2012 was R10,40/litre based on a crude oil price of US\$ 120/barrel (at R7,64 to the dollar). In March 2019, the same diesel cost R14,05/litre based on crude oil at US\$ 64/barrel (R13,80 to the dollar).

That is an increase of 35 percent, despite an almost 50-percent drop in the price of crude oil during the same period. If the crude oil price reaches US\$ 120/barrel again, the expected diesel price at current exchange rates would be over R20/litre.

"To compound matters, additional taxes, such as carbon

tax, are being levied on both petrol and diesel, thereby driving up fuel prices again," Jones adds. The fuel levy has risen by nearly 22 percent over the past three years!

In addition to the environmental benefits, it's little wonder that producers and suppliers of alternative fuels see South Africa as a prime market.

According to Jones, Tetra4's natural gas, per diesel litre equivalent (DLE), will be around 25-percent less expensive than diesel to operate. Taking March's diesel price of R14,05/litre, Tetra4's customers will pay the equivalent of only R10,54/DLE for a premium-grade fuel.

"For a trucking fleet, this could mean savings of millions of rand per annum, with the added benefit of reduced environmental emissions," suggests Jones.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Equally important, vehicles powered by natural gas provide significant air-quality benefits compared with other fuels,



such as diesel. Using natural-gas vehicles reduces both smog-related emissions as well as toxic emissions that can affect human health.

Moreover, using natural-gas vehicles reduces greenhouse gas pollution by between 10 and 25 percent. Jones explains that, as Tetra4's natural gas contains no sulphur, SOx is eliminated and NOx and particulate emissions are significantly reduced.

As part of its continued battle against air pollution, the Chinese government is encouraging the use of vehicles powered by clean energy and tightening control over emissions from new motor vehicles. This trend is occurring worldwide as major cities are starting to restrict, and will eventually ban, the entry of diesel trucks into city centres.

Closer to home, the Carbon Tax Bill is expected to come into effect on June 1, and will level the playing field between carbon-intensive (fossil fuel-based firms) and low-carbon-emitting sectors. As it currently stands, there is no carbon tax on natural gas. Even if it is applied in the future, the reduced carbon emitted by natural gas will attract the lowest carbon tax.

"On a total carbon-footprint basis, operating a vehicle with natural gas in South Africa will be environmentally cleaner than an electric vehicle with respect to gas emissions," claims Jones.

"This is because countries such as China and South Africa, that rely on coal to generate electricity, will continue to have a poor carbon footprint. In contrast, Nordic countries, for example, where electricity is predominantly generated from hydropower, will have an excellent carbon footprint for electric vehicles."

Tetra4, a subsidiary of Renergen Limited, is developing a unique gas field in Virginia, in the Free State, which is being dubbed as the cleaner premium fuel for engines. Unlike gas generated from traditional hydrocarbon oil and/or gas fields, the gas produced from Tetra4's gas



“

For a trucking fleet, this could mean savings of millions of rand per annum.

field originates from microbes deep underground. These microbes generate only one hydrocarbon – methane – making it one of the cleanest and most consistent natural-gas sources in the world.

Typically, pipeline natural gas contains other hydrocarbons – such as ethane, ethene, propane and butane – which could interfere with the smooth operation of an engine. In contrast, pure methane has the highest knock-resistance properties of all commercial gases and thus substituting diesel with methane will have minimal effect on engine performance and will result in less wear and tear on the engine; thus reducing engine maintenance compared to diesel.

BUILDING NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE

In eMalahleni, Mpumalanga, sustainable energy solutions, technology and management company, NOVO Energy, recently launched its large-scale natural-gas compression (NGC) facility.

The R130-million facility is claimed to represent the most advanced compressed natural-gas (CNG) infrastructure in the world and will provide cleaner, more reliable and cost-effective energy compared to coal and other petroleum products.

The eMalahleni plant, which took less than six months to build, will operate continually throughout the year. It is a

fully automated site with substantial compression capacity and access to very large gas supplies. It is described as a gas-aggregation hub, boasting a configuration of compressors and loading facilities that can handle a lot of logistics through the site. It also has the ability to refuel vehicles on site.

NOVO Energy CEO, Andri Hugo, elaborates: "The site is a national key point so we can eliminate supply interruptions when there's no electricity. A great deal of redundancy has been built into the site on all components from a compression, loading and logistics fleet point of view, thereby ensuring service supply to our customers.

"The reason we built this facility, aside from meeting the growing demand for CNG, is to supply customers who are not on an existing gas pipeline. As a gas aggregation hub, we can receive gas, process the molecules and manage the logistics of getting the gas to our customers. From mines, to bakeries, factories, hospitals or a fleet – we deliver the CNG to customers' sites via road with our gas packs installed on trailers. The gas is then fed into either a factory or refuelling station," adds Hugo.

Through its customised offering, NOVO Energy is aiming to deliver CNG to industrial, mining, pharmaceutical, agricultural, food and transport customers with requirements for heat, steam, power generation and cleaner fuel for transportation. **F**

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HOME AWAY FROM HOME

COMFORT CAN HAVE A BIG IMPACT ON DRIVER BEHAVIOUR – THE GREATEST FACTOR IMPACTING FUEL CONSUMPTION. MARISKA MORRIS INVESTIGATES THE IMPORTANCE OF IN-CAB ERGONOMICS



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Whether the driver is travelling hundreds of kilometres to deliver goods across South Africa or making shorter trips in urban areas for last-mile delivery, the cabin design of the vehicle can have a big impact on driver comfort and fatigue.

"The cab is the place in which drivers spend most of their working life. The ergonomics of the cab will directly affect their comfort and ease of working and, more importantly, how safely they will be able to perform their job – for themselves and all the other road users," says Eric Parry, product manager at Volvo Trucks Southern Africa.

Discomfort can be a distraction and cause fatigue. One example is the height of the step into the vehicle on medium and light commercial vehicles used in last-mile delivery. If the drivers need to exit and enter the vehicle regularly throughout the day, they can easily tire if they have to step up high to enter the vehicle.

Parry mentions some of the other factors that are important for in-cab ergonomics: "The visibility out of the cab from the driver's seat is one of the key elements. The others are the seat, the steering wheel and switchgear that the driver needs to use regularly. These all impact directly on how effectively the driver is able to control the vehicle.

"The better drivers can see, the less likely they are to

have a collision. They are also better able to accurately position their vehicle on the road. Keeping the switchgear close at hand means drivers don't have to divert attention away from the road to change the radio station, for example. The positive safety impact of a good cab design cannot be overstated," he adds.

Minimising distractions inside the cabin is essential as distracted driving is one of the top five causes of road crashes. During a press conference in April, Transport Minister Blade Nzimande noted that 77 percent of fatal road crashes were due to human factors such as distracted driving.

He said: "A single use of a cellphone results in an average of 52 seconds of distracted driving (which is just over one kilometre), impairing the driver's ability to react adequately to changes in the road."

Manufacturers are actively developing ergonomics to ensure that their vehicles provide ultimate comfort and safety for drivers. Volvo, for example, has a lower window line, optimised driving position, as well as slimmer mirror housings and A-pillars to maximise visibility of the road.

Like most manufacturers, Scania offers a range of cab options for every vehicle series to suit the driver's needs; from short day and compact sleeper cabs for short trips, to the R-Sleeper-Highline that offers more space and storage to act as a home away from home.

according to extensive safety testing, aerodynamic optimisation and driver feedback," the Swedish vehicle manufacturer notes.

A key feature in the in-cab ergonomics of the Mercedes-Benz Actros is seating. Air-suspended seats can be installed with seat heating, height adjustment, seat cushion angle and depth adjustment.

"The optionally available air-suspended, ventilated driver's suspension seat provides pleasant seating conditions and a high level of comfort. The active ventilation system in the backrest and cushion of the suspension seat reduces heat and moisture build-up. The numerous individual adjustment options make for optimal ergonomics," the team at Mercedes-Benz explains.

Other design elements to consider with in-cab ergonomics are the dashboard material and potential reflections in dark conditions, as well as the positioning of the controls and steering wheel. Safety can further be improved with anti-slip coatings on the handles and steps of the vehicle to prevent falling.

It is also important to ensure that there is adequate room for drivers to store equipment safely without anything hindering their driving ability or movement in the cab.

Transport operators can consult their drivers to find out what in-cab features are important to ensuring their comfort.

To further assist and ensure that drivers are safe on the road, transport operators can acquire in-cab monitoring technology. There is a range of systems available to assist in every aspect possible from surveillance and alerting drivers when they are swerving or speeding.

Drivers can also be encouraged to take frequent breaks and fleet owners can ensure drivers are well rested before they get behind the wheel.

Parry further advises: "Driver training is a key element. If the drivers understand exactly how their vehicle works and the impact their behaviour has on the transporter's operations and success then they will be more inclined to act in the right way."

Fleet owners can consider reward systems to encourage good driving behaviour, or simply help educate drivers on what not to do while on the road. When renewing the fleet, they should be sure to stop and think for a moment about how comfortable and safe a driver will be in their home away from home. **F**



Transport operators can consult their drivers to find out what in-cab features are important to ensuring their comfort.

The vehicles can also be equipped with a number of accessories from floor heating and waste bins, to compressed air guns and cab coolers to maintain a comfortable in-cab temperature for overnight rest or while loading and unloading goods.

"Safety, visibility and comfort are the three pillars on which all Scania cabs are built. Each model is carefully constructed



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GETTING AGRICULTURAL WITH TRAILERS

WHEN IT COMES TO TRAILERS, THE AGRICULTURAL MARKET IS BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIALISED AT THE SAME TIME... WHILE CERTAIN EVERYDAY UNITS – SUCH AS FLAT-DECKS OR VAN BODIES – CAN BE USED TO TRANSPORT GOODS FROM THE FARM TO MARKET, FOR EXAMPLE, OTHER ACTIVITIES REQUIRE SPECIALISED SOLUTIONS. GAVIN MYERS GETS ACQUAINTED WITH ONE OF THE LATEST

W

hile most farmers could run a trailer like a flat-deck or a tipper, not many transporters could have a use for a cattle carrier, for example. This means that designing and manufacturing a trailer specifically for use in agriculture requires specialist knowledge.

Happily, the trailer-building industry in South Africa is not short of specialists – some of whom have come up with interesting solutions for the agricultural industry. Take this most recent example from Jost South Africa and Cobalt Engineering, for example.

Together, the two companies have created the first trailer for off-road use with hydraulic suspension and steering in South Africa. It's called the Tridec MD-O and this unit has been built for a customer in the agricultural industry who needed a tipping trailer that his tractors could pull anywhere. At the moment, it's the only such

unit in the southern hemisphere.

While this unit has been fitted with a 22 m³ side-tipping bin (with a 22-t payload), it's what's underneath that counts. A fixed drawbar leads back to a torsion-free chassis onto which centre-mounted trailing arms are fixed. These connect to the hydraulic suspension. The front and rear axles feature hydraulic steering (a minimum of two, maximum of four axles can be had) allowing the trailer to pivot around the central axle.

"In certain fields the lack of space means smaller vehicles are used, because they can turn more easily. This system allows for a larger trailer to be used in the field," says Christo de Clerk, product manager: Tridec Steering at Jost South Africa.

The benefits of using a larger trailer in the field are numerous. Less handling of the product when cross-loading from unit to unit reduces loss through damage,



up to 45 km/h. This means that the load remains stable and even across the axles (ten tonnes per axle) and anything the bin is filled with won't move about and get squished," he laughs.

Finally, the system features an automatic front-axle lift (for when its running empty), self-aligning steering (to reduce maintenance), and a handy "jiggy" function. This rapidly raises and lowers the front axle, causing the trailer to "hop" and force the tractor's drive wheels into the ground and allowing it to regain traction if it gets stuck.

"This system has been designed in Holland for use on wet surfaces. It will not get stuck," De Clerk comments.

"This is not a one-use system, it can be adapted to do anything on a farm," he concludes. **F**

while efficiency is also boosted as the unit can be filled and sent directly to the final drop-off point. It even has an onboard weighing system, accurate to within two percent.

De Clerk explains that the centre-mount trailing arms and self-levelling hydraulic suspension create further protection for the load.

"By having the trailing arms mounted in the centre of the chassis, the axle is allowed to move independently. Load sensors ensure the load height is automatically kept constant and level



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TRAILERS

KEEPING THINGS COOL ON THE FARM

Good thermal performance of refrigerated vehicles is vital in the transport of perishable products, especially agricultural produce, with the critical aspect being the maintenance of the cold chain.

"Customers are keen to improve the thermal performance of their refrigerated trucks and trailers," says Clinton Holcroft, Serco's MD.

"Our new injected-foam technique for the manufacture of vehicle panels has resulted in an improvement of more than 20 percent in thermal performance compared our previous product."

He adds that Serco's refrigerated trucks and trailers have high quality insulation for maximum thermal efficiency, sidewalls constructed from high-strength composites, seamless hygienic interiors suitable for food products, slide-on door seals for quick replacement, door switches for better fridge efficiency, and interior cooler unit guards.



Serco also offers remote temperature-monitoring solutions and supplies multi-temperature bodies, making it possible for different products to be transported in the same vehicles at different temperatures using moveable partitions to separate the zones.

The system allows operators to set predefined temperature zones for each load and provides alerts via email or SMS. It also enables users to monitor goods being transported and records a history of data for each trip, generating graphical reports.

"Having a web-based temperature-monitoring system allows customers to monitor multiple temperatures in a vehicle and be in a position to take instant action should temperatures vary from those required.

"Spin-offs include reduced risk of produce loss, as early detection generally results in the problem being resolved proactively," says Holcroft.

COME LEARN TO FARM CLEVER



NAMPO CAPE GEARS UP FOR ANOTHER BUMPER SHOW

Last year Nampo expanded its reach for the first time, going from Bothaville to Bredasdorp in the Western Cape. Wessels comments that the inaugural show was "more than a success story", attracting 18 000 visitors.

Grain SA is therefore excited that the 2019 show, taking place at Bredasdorp Park, between September 4 and 6, will attract even more exhibitors and visitors. Tickets will cost between R20 and R70 and can be brought through Computicket.

Keep an eye on **FOCUS**, including our web and social media platforms, for more details closer to the time.

NAMPO 2019 IS SET TO BE THE BIGGEST – EVER!

No matter the current political or economic climate, drought or other adversarial considerations – the annual Grain SA Nampo Agricultural Trade Show seems to grow each and every year. Indeed, despite some nationwide challenges last year, the 2018 event was the biggest yet...

Exactly 82 817 visitors made their way to Nampo Park just outside Bothaville in the Free State, to engage with 746 exhibitors (who, you may be interested to know, occupied 400 000 m²). Both numbers, by the way, are up on the previous year; by 4 169 and 34, respectively.

The 2019 show, which takes place this year between 14 and 17 May, will centre on the theme: Platform for your Agri Future. It is set to grow on the success of the 2018 show even further. According to Du Toit Wessels, assistant manager: marketing and Nampo at Grain SA, 788 exhibitors are confirmed for the show this year.

He adds that visitors can look forward to the launch of four new vehicles at the show, though he does not specify which these may be. You'll have to attend to find out!

"The South African agricultural industry continues to operate in tough conditions, but with the late rain recently and weather permitting, we expect a good harvest. The people who visit Nampo this year will be there to see

how they can 'farm clever' and more profitably," Wessels comments.

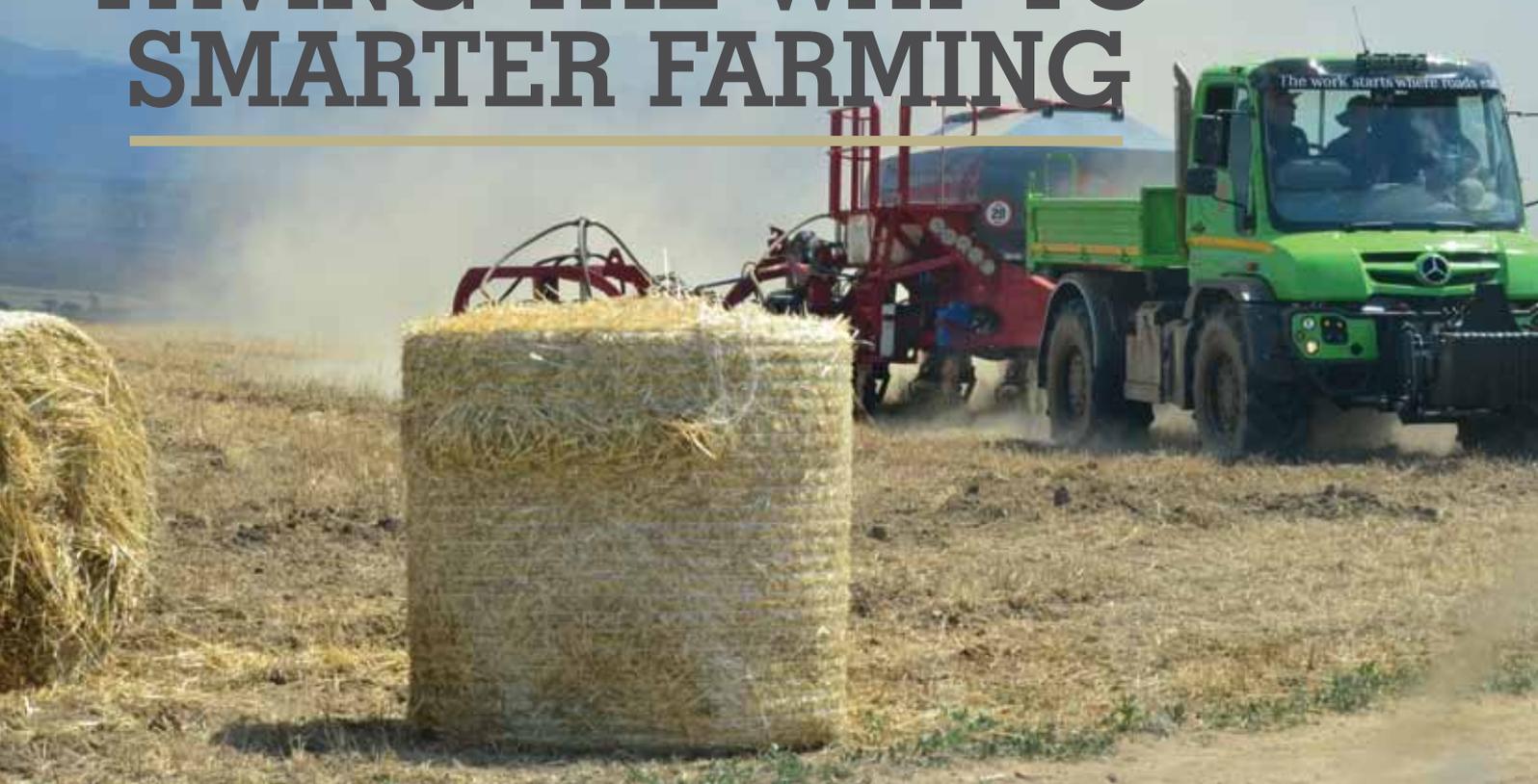
Tickets for the show cost between R110 and R120 at the gate, or between R90 and R100 if pre-bought through TicketPro. Gates open at 07:00 and close at 17:00 each day.

"You will miss out if you don't visit Nampo 2019 – it is the biggest outdoor show in Africa and one of the five biggest in the world, and it is on your doorstep," Wessels concludes. **F**

SCAN HERE TO FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NAMPO 2019



PAVING THE WAY TO SMARTER FARMING



LIANA SHAW EXPLORES HOW VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE ENHANCING AND ADAPTING THEIR SERVICE OFFERINGS TO THIS IMPORTANT MARKET SEGMENT

The primary agricultural sector in South Africa has grown by an average of about 2,2 percent per annum since 1994. Despite its relatively small share of the total gross domestic product (GDP), primary agriculture is an important sector in the economy. It is a significant provider of employment, especially in the rural areas, and is a major earner of foreign exchange. This is according to the Economic Review of the SA Agriculture 2016/2017.

THE MERCEDES-BENZ UNIMOG – A NEW CONCEPT TO MARKET

The new Mercedes-Benz Unimog U529 released last year is a new concept in the South African agricultural industry offering haul speeds of up to 80 km/h.

According to the manufacturer, the key concept behind the Unimog U529 is its versatility allowing it to be used in all four seasons. It can fulfil a variety of agricultural roles including manure and fertilizer spreading, high-speed haulage, crop spraying, mowing, raking, baling, firefighting and combine harvester chasing. It can also be used as an implement carrier. It has the speed of a truck and incorporates Mercedes-Benz safety technology.

The Unimog U529 is custom built to meet each end-user's requirements and can be specified in a large number of different configurations for specific applications.

Another notable feature is its central tyre-inflation system (CTIS), which allows inflation and deflation of the

vehicle's tyres while it is in motion. CTIS is said to offer excellent traction, protect the soil, prevent compaction and avoid wheel-spin that leads to excessive tyre wear when operating in a field.

The Unimog U529 has been designed for optimised weight distribution so that it can provide excellent traction when it is required to pull hard. It also features safe and predictable handling when running at high speed on the road.

The Unimog is ideal for those applications where power-to-weight ratio, speed and versatility are crucial. The idea behind a Unimog U529, according to Mercedes-Benz, is to buy the farmer or contractor time by performing those tasks not requiring massive drawbar power, faster than a conventional tractor, while using less fuel.

NEW TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS BY MAN

MAN Automotive is also rising to the challenge from its four and five-tonne nett payload TGL products, to the six- through 16-t nett payloads of its TGM products, right through to the multitude of off-road TGM and TGS traction vehicles, and finally, to class-leading TGS/TGX on-highway 4x2 and 6x4 truck tractors, thereby covering almost every conceivable operational requirement within the field of agriculture.

Dave van Graan, head of special sales projects, says: "MAN Automotive South Africa sees the agricultural sector as a very broad industry, which is why we offer transport solutions for many different applications."

These would include vehicles suited to a logistics company at the consumer end of the agricultural supply chain that delivers pre-packed fresh fruit from a processing warehouse to a premium retail food outlet, or a fresh fish merchant transporting fish from a Namibian harbour to the Johannesburg markets. Our vehicles are specifically designed to suit each application."

MAN has deployed a number of TG, CLA and VW vehicles into the Laser Logistics Group fleet that manages the Country Fair Chickens logistics supply chain. These vehicles are used in the transport of baby chicks to growing lots, and from there to preparation areas. Fresh chicken meat is then transported from the factories to retail outlets.

Companies such as Hestony Transport are clearly visible on southern African



roads using TGM and TGS trucks for refrigerated food distribution. Loads have to be temperature controlled, and delivery needs to be controlled and verified through the use of telematics. All this is achieved by means of the MAN Telematics system, which conveys data via satellite between the vehicles and the operational control rooms.

MIX TELEMATICS PROVIDING A VALUE-ADD SERVICE

The transport sector relies on fleet and mobile asset-management solutions to provide it with real solutions for efficiency, safety, compliance and security.

This is also true when it comes to agriculture. For example, Northern Ireland-based North Down Grain is a case study in the use of the flagship fleet-management solution from MiX Telematics. This system allows it to manage, monitor and measure the performance of its vehicles and drivers. (The company operates a fleet of 29 000-litre rotating tankers that collect milk from up to 160

farms across the country.)

Director of North Down Grain, Philip Davidson, explains: "While we had some concerns in the early days that led us to question the return on investment of a system such as this, upon expressing our concerns, we were assigned a MiX Telematics fleet consultant, who worked closely with us to achieve our goals.

"The investment ultimately paid off. One of the key drivers for implementation was fuel consumption. By analysing North Grain's fuel data, I understood that the

company required a set of reports that would allow it to oversee overall fleet and driver performance. Using these reports on a weekly basis enables me to make strategic business decisions," he adds.

"For example, we now rotate our drivers on different routes with different vehicles over specific time periods to help us identify our best drivers, our most efficient vehicles and the toughest route – all this is valuable information that we use to save costs."

He continues: "One of the greatest achievements of the system so far is that we have improved the average fuel consumption from 2.0 km/l up to 2.45 km/l. Overall, this has contributed to a 12-percent saving on the company's annual fuel bill."

Davidson concludes: "Best of all, I have the mobile app installed on my iPhone. It is the first thing I check in the morning. It allows me to run a smooth and efficient business operation and offers peace of mind when I'm away from the office." **F**



PLACING AN EMPHASIS ON INSPECTION

GAVIN MYERS SAT DOWN WITH GARTH JOHNSON, CEO OF DEKRA AUTOMOTIVE SOUTH AFRICA, TO FIND OUT HOW COMMERCIAL VEHICLE AND FLEET OPERATORS CAN BETTER MANAGE THE CONDITION OF THEIR VEHICLES



What is the general state of commercial vehicles in South Africa?

Dekra is very fortunate that 80 percent of the commercial customers to whom we render our services maintain their vehicles and keep them in a roadworthy condition.

However, there are large numbers of vehicles on our roads that are not in a roadworthy condition.

What are some of the most common failures seen on commercial vehicles?

These are certainly brakes and tyres. Air supply is another common issue.

Why do you think these are so common?

It all comes down to driver abuse and poor maintenance.

How often should commercial vehicles be tested for roadworthiness?

Commercial vehicles with a mass greater than 3 500 kg must be tested every 12 months for roadworthiness, and buses every six months.

What should vehicle operators do when preparing their vehicles for a roadworthy inspection?

Operators or owners should service their vehicles at a reputable service centre before they present the vehicle for roadworthy inspection. Some fleet operators have their own workshops that are operated by qualified mechanics, who maintain their vehicles and prepare them for roadworthy tests.

How can operators ensure their vehicles remain in a roadworthy state between inspections?

They should develop a safety checklist and teach their drivers to inspect the vehicle accordingly every time they embark on a delivery, and report any defect to the fleet manager or workshop. The vehicle must be serviced on a regular basis. In other words, they should follow some sort of maintenance plan or schedule.

Dekra offers numerous corporate and fleet solutions. Please can you briefly detail these and tell us how they benefit commercial vehicle operators?

We offer a commercial vehicle inspection that highlights any defects on the vehicle. This can be undertaken annually and will give the owner a comprehensive list of anything that is wrong with the vehicle. We can develop inspection criteria according to customers specifics.

We do a number of inspections in the different transport industries and inspections can be tailor-made for any transport operator.

Dekra Automotive as a company wants to ensure that safe vehicles are placed on our roads and thus reduce the fatalities that occur every year as a result of vehicles not being in an acceptable condition. **F**

FIND OUT HOW DEKRA CAN HELP YOUR FLEET STAY IN TOP CONDITION



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JUST TRY TO NOT NOTICE THIS VAN...



THE THIRD-GENERATION MERCEDES-BENZ SPRINTER HAS ARRIVED IN SOUTH AFRICA AND, BY ALL ACCOUNTS, IT LOOKS SET TO REDEFINE THE LARGE-VAN SEGMENT. GAVIN MYERS SAMPLED IT AT LAUNCH

C

an you believe that, in 2020, the Mercedes-Benz sprinter will be 25 years old? Since it first debuted, more than 3,4-million Sprinters have been sold worldwide, while the vehicle range has also racked up its fair share of accolades and achieved notable success – even in South Africa where vans, of any size, have to try hard to be noticed.

Nadia Trimmel, vice president of Mercedes-Benz Vans, at Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA), states that, locally, the Sprinter holds the largest market share of the large-van segment in the world.

A key reason for this is its appeal with operators in the long-distance minibus-taxi market, which, she says, has collectively clocked up more than 40-billion kilometres in 20 years of running the Sprinter.

It's for this reason that the third-generation Sprinter includes a significant, locally developed model in its line-up: the Sprinter Inkanyezi 22-seater.

Designed to meet the needs of this market, the Sprinter Inkanyezi comes in three different grades, with options ranging from the basics like three-point safety belts on every seat, through to passenger USB ports, free-flow rear air-conditioning, rear speakers and many more additions, including an electric sliding side door at the top end.

Operators of the Sprinter Inkanyezi will also benefit from specific support services such as dedicated taxi service bays and flexible servicing hours.

In addition to the Inkanyezi, the Sprinter range consists

of 12 panel-van variants and eight freight-carrier variants, beginning with the new 311 CDI 3,49-t gross vehicle mass (GVM) model. This is another significant addition to the Sprinter range, as it allows drivers with a Code B (Code 8) licence to drive it without worrying about licence or weight restrictions.

The 311 models (3 490 and 3 550 kg) use the 84 kW/300 Nm version of the OM651 2,2-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel engine. Higher up the payload scale, the 316 (3 550 kg) and 516 (5 000 kg) models employ the 120 kW/380 Nm version of this engine.

Mercedes-Benz claims that these high-output engines offer up 10 kW more than the previous unit, while returning an 8,5-percent improvement in fuel consumption and 4,5-percent reduction in terms of cost per kilometre (CPK).

At the top of the Sprinter pecking order are the 519 models (5 000 and 5 500 kg), which boast the three-litre V6 turbodiesel that produces 140 kW and 440 Nm. New six-speed manual and Mercedes-Benz's 7G-Tronic seven-speed automatic transmissions are available.

As one would expect from large Mercedes-Benz vans, the new Sprinter is really rather nice to drive. The engines are all punchy and smooth and, while the manual transmissions aren't any chore to use, the 7G-Tronic is sure to find favour, due to its quick response and seamless shifts. The ride is comfortable and refined, even when the vehicle is unladen.

The cabin is very comfortable. Occupants sit on ergonomically designed seats and the minimalist design



means the controls and switchgear are easy to operate. There's a multitude of handy storage spaces.

Visibility, even in the panel van models, is very good, too; giving the driver the confidence to easily manoeuvre the vehicle into and around crowded spaces (which the Sprinter does without sweat). Manoeuvrability is even easier when the Sprinter is equipped with the Parking Package with a 360° camera (one can also have a reversing camera mounted the vehicle's rear-view mirror).

This system is one of a hoard of safety and convenience equipment that can be had with the new Sprinter. Buyers

navigation), which uses artificial intelligence to offer the driver maximum convenience. It's available with either a seven or 10,25-inch HD display, controlled either with touch-enabled steering wheel controls, or an all-new voice control system.

Drivers will also appreciate the keyless start, air-conditioning, wireless charging facilities and Type-C USB ports. Overall, Mercedes-Benz proudly proclaims that the Sprinter offers a best-in-class range of features.

However, vans are not bought for their gizmos and gadgets – they need to work. In this regard, Mercedes-Benz



TOP LEFT: With its wide range of electronic safety features, this high-spec Sprinter Inkanyezi proved to be unflappable at speed.

TOP RIGHT: From launch Mercedes-Benz will offer 23 basic Sprinter models – with more than 600 special-equipment options.

LEFT: The new 3 490-kg GVM 311 model opens up the Sprinter to drivers with only a Code B licence.

has endeavoured to meet as wide a variety of needs as possible. Two roof heights and three body-length options are offered. Maximum cargo volume is up to 15,5 m³, with a payloads of up to 3 144 kg. Trailer loads of up to two tonnes can be hitched.

A staggering 600 items of special equipment can be spec'd to a Sprinter, and MBSA has identified six ISO 9001-certified van partners that can do approved conversions to the new model. Anything from ambulances and car transporters, to custom luxury lounges on wheels or go-anywhere family camper-vans – and more – can be had.

The new Sprinter range starts from R461 783 and includes a five-year/100 000 km service plan (service intervals are 20 000 km) which is updatable to maintenance plans.

While large vans in South Africa continue to play second-fiddle to smaller van-bodied trucks, operators will have to try hard to not notice the new Sprinter ... which will surely continue its reign in the segment. **F**

can optionally spec up to five airbags, LED headlamps, DISTRONIC, Lane Keeping Assist as well as Active Distance Assist DISTRONIC – which automatically regulates the distance from the vehicle ahead. In the event of the vehicle in front decreasing speed, the system will slow the vehicle down to a complete stop.

The standard assistance systems available for the new Sprinter include rain-sensing wipers, Active Brake Assist that warns the driver of oncoming danger, Cross Wind Assist and Hill Start Assist.

The new Sprinter is also one of the few Mercedes-Benz vehicles currently available locally with the advanced MBUX (Mercedes-Benz User Experience) infotainment system (with

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NEW SPRINTER





CELEBRATING THE V8

A SCANIA TRUCK WITH A V8 BADGE IN ITS NOSE IS LEGENDARY PROPERTY AMONG TRUCKERS – AND FOR GOOD REASON

Power, performance and prestige are three words that probably best sum up the Scania V8 engine, as the brand celebrates 50 years of its production. With a reputation for groundbreaking technology spanning decades, these premium engines are designed to be about so much more than pure power.

With up to 373 kW (500 hp) and 2 400 Nm, these 16-litre powerhouses are already impressive on paper – but they're also designed to drive business efficiency. Their smooth power delivery and massive torque combine with excellent operating economy, rock-solid reliability and longevity.

Scania has created this ideal scenario with the use of high-tech components. For example, the Scania XPI fuel injection system works independently of the camshaft position, with multiple injections, for increased efficiency and emissions control. The Scania saver piston rings stop lubricating oil from reaching the combustion chamber, which means lower oil consumption and reduced maintenance.

Naturally, that power is there for a reason ... but a good engine is nothing without a good gearbox. The V8 can be had with 12- or 12+2-speed gearboxes that can be fitted with fully integrated Scania Opticruise and Scania Retarder.

These gearboxes are built to make the most of the V8's vast offering and tackle the most challenging operations. The closely stepped ratios and light weight of the 12-speed make it the choice in long-haul operations.

For applications that demand extra low-speed pulling power, the 12+2-speed gearbox has two extra crawler ratios – meaning it can be used in any application from regional or long-haul distribution to heavy construction.

The combination of V8 and advanced transmissions makes climbing a hill, conducting a safe overtake, or meeting a tight delivery schedule, effortless. The truck does the hard work – easily.

And while the truck is doing the work – backed up by services tailored to the application, from finance to servicing and telematics – the driver can do his job in a comfortable environment.

As with any Scania, every aspect of seating, accommodation and storage has been perfected and V8 drivers enjoy several V8-only interior features and options. Fluted black leather seats with an embossed V8 symbol and light grey stitching add a truly premium feel, while the black wooden steering wheel with black leather trim and light grey stitching quite literally puts the premium nature of the truck in his hands.

With its continuing drive to perfect the V8, Scania has become an innovator in high-output V8 engine technology. Yet, in doing so, it has created trucks that are about so much more than their engines. **F**



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6 ton

28.330 FL
14 ton

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NISSAN INVESTS BILLIONS IN ROSSLYN

A R3-BILLION INVESTMENT FROM NISSAN GROUP OF AFRICA TO MANUFACTURE ITS NEW NAVARA IN SOUTH AFRICA PROMISES TO CREATE NEW JOBS, INCREASE THE USE OF LOCALLY SOURCED PARTS AND SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS. MARISKA MORRIS REPORTS

Nissan Group of Africa announced a R3-billion investment in its Rosslyn plant to prepare for the mass production of a new model of the Nissan Navara for local and international markets, which is expected to start in 2020. The investment will also create around 1 200 new jobs at the facility and across the local supply chain.

Depending on the market conditions, an additional 30 000 units will be added to the existing 35 000 units produced at Rosslyn, which include the popular NP200 and NP300 models. The investment is part of Nissan's strategic plan to increase annual revenue by 30 percent over six years to 16,5 trillion yen (R2 trillion) by 2022.

Peyman Kargar, chairman Nissan Africa, Middle East and India, comments: "Africa is an essential part of Nissan's MOVE to 2022 midterm plan, in which we aim to double our presence across the Africa, Middle East and India region.

"We already have a strong industrial footprint in Africa including plants in Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa and a planned facility in Algeria. The announcement highlights the continuing evolution of Africa as one of the most important global markets."

Nissan has also partnered with Renault and Mitsubishi, which it hopes will also make use of the Rosslyn plant after production of the Navara starts.

Aside from creating jobs through its investment, Nissan Group of Africa is also further supporting local business by increasing the number of components sourced from local suppliers. Currently less than 40 percent of the vehicle parts are locally manufactured. The ultimate goal is to increase this to 60 percent.

"The Navara will start with 38-percent local content next year when the first models roll off the line, growing to 48 percent very shortly thereafter. This will generate an estimated R5,8 billion in new economic value every year," says Mike Whitfield, MD for Nissan Group of Africa.

"We are striving to achieve the South African Automotive Masterplan (SAAM) 2035 goal of one percent of the global industry and 60-percent local content, while doubling



employment in South Africa and ensuring ongoing transformation," he adds.

The South African automotive industry contributes 7,1 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) and accounts for 14 percent of the total exports from South Africa.

Whitfield adds: "Navara production will allow us to expand Rosslyn's role as an export hub for light commercial vehicles and contribute further to the

local automotive sector."

In 2018, global sales of the Nissan Navara totalled 231 435 units, which makes it the top selling Nissan pickup globally.

Nissan Group of Africa is working with the Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC) – a government agency that promotes small businesses in the supply chain and skills development. Through the partnership, Nissan Group of Africa has identified 15 black-owned companies that it will support and partner with when manufacturing the Navara. To date, Nissan, together with the AIDC, has incubated eight new component manufacturers and related companies.

President Cyril Ramaphosa applauded Nissan for its investment. He said: "Nissan's investment is an expression of confidence in the country's economic position and in the nation's ability to overcome adversity. I urge other companies to follow the example of Nissan."

Whitfield concludes: "The real message is what can be achieved when there is meeting of the minds between manufacturers, government and labour. I believe that the investment shows us that we can build a sustainable and internationally competitive automotive industry for South Africa and create opportunities for people in our country in the process." **F**

AIR SUSPENSION – AN INDUSTRY STANDARD

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE COMFORT AND CONTROL FOR THE DRIVER, WHILE PREVENTING DAMAGE TO CARGO AND THE VEHICLE, MANUFACTURERS DESIGN VEHICLES WITH SUSPENSION. GARETH GREATHEAD ASKS WHAT DIFFERENTIATES QUALITY SUSPENSION COMPONENTS FROM CHEAPER ALTERNATIVES

Andre Cilliers, MD of BPW Axles, says that 90 percent of trailers sold in South Africa use air suspension. "There are a number of reasons why air suspension has become the standard. Chief among these is that leaf springs work best when loaded, while the 'spring rate' on air suspension varies depending on the load and the pressure in the airbag," says Cilliers.

This makes air suspension suitable for use in a wide variety of operating conditions and loads. "Air suspension ensures that the tyres have optimal contact with the road, which results in better driver comfort, better fuel economy, longer lasting tyres and less wear and tear on suspension components, while minimising the chance of damage to the chassis and the road surface," says Cilliers.

TIME TO REPLACE

Suspension components are subjected to a large amount of vibration, especially on poorly maintained roads. As such, suspension bushings require regular greasing and bolts must be inspected regularly.

Cilliers explains: "When suspension components are sold, we provide our customers with a service manual similar to the one that comes with an automobile. This enables transporters to keep track of routine maintenance procedures to be carried out on the suspension components.

"If an airbag has lost pressure, this is easily picked up. However, sometimes overlooked are the shock absorbers (*technically called "dampers" – ed.*), which should be regularly inspected for oil leaks."

If the shocks are not in good working order, the wheels will not have optimum contact with the road and will jump around, damaging the tyres and possibly even the chassis and road surface. "A transport operator should consider changing a vehicle's shocks every three years," recommends Cilliers.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING AFTERMARKET SUSPENSION

There is a large range of aftermarket parts available. Quality ranges from original equipment manufacturer (OEM), to quality aftermarket and inferior pirate parts from markets such as China.

"If the product comes in a plain white box, the distributor has no intention of helping the customer should something go wrong," says Cilliers. The provision of a warranty with parts means that the distributor has the technical support necessary to stand behind the product.

Ian Smith, parts and accessories manager at Afrit, says: "It can be difficult to tell the difference between a replacement part and the original replacement just by looking at it.

"For example, lubrication of bushes and other moving suspension components is vitally important. As such, a number of inferior lubricant manufacturers developed greases to cash in on the demand from the industry.

"This led a well-known manufacturer to develop an axle grease that was blue in colour. Needless to say, it wasn't long before unscrupulous grease manufacturers started colouring their grease blue," laments Smith.

Cilliers notes: "The technology found on quality suspension components cannot be matched. As an example, BPW uses stretch U-bolts that, once tightened, don't easily come loose and, therefore, require inspection less frequently. The same technique is used to secure the pivot pin into the hanger."

He concludes: "Quality aftermarket components enable transport operators to save some money when reconditioning assets that are out of warranty. Having said that, it is important to remember that, while not as costly as OEM parts, quality aftermarket parts are normally not the cheapest either." **F**

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THE BOLD NEW FACE OF TRITON

WHILE IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT MITSUBISHI MOTORS SOUTH AFRICA LAUNCHED ITS NEW TRITON, GAVIN MYERS HAS JUST DRIVEN THE LATEST VERSION

It was, in fact more than two years ago that the previous Triton made its local debut. Apparently 80 000 hours of development went into this latest model, which is a significantly revised Triton – sporting a bold new look and substantial revisions under the skin. Globally, Triton sales were up 10,8 percent in 2018, and it's not difficult to see why...

It's impossible to miss the squarer, sharper, bolder styling. It incorporates Mitsubishi's new-generation "Dynamic Shield" front design concept. Flared, squared-off wheel arches and revised rear-end treatment with new light clusters complete the new macho look.

While inspecting the Triton's rump, I was pleased to note that the tailgate now features a support strut that immeasurably eases the effort required to raise and lower it. I'd love to see this simple feature added to more bakkies!



The Triton's interior has come in for revision, too. The refreshed cabin boasts a new dashboard and trim pieces, USB charging points in the rear, as well as a colour driver information screen in the instrument binnacle. The main talking point, however, is the (optional) touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto as well as navigation.

The list of safety features is probably the longest on the Triton's spec sheet, with just some of the notable appointments being LED headlamps, seven airbags, a reversing camera, keyless entry and start, active stability and traction control and a suite of electronic braking aids.

Those who regularly travel off road will notice that the

electronic, shift-on-the-fly, Super Select 2 system has received a couple of new buttons... These are for the Electronic Off-road Assistance and Hill Descent Control (automatic models only).

Off-road Assistance offers settings for Gravel, Mud/Snow, Sand and Rock. The system adapts the engine power, transmission and braking, to regulate the amount of wheel slip and therefore aids progress over the relevant terrain.

Combined with the Super Select 2 rear and centre diff locks, the Triton's already impressive off-road ability has been enhanced. We were able to put the systems to thorough test on launch and, combined with the Triton's 220-mm ground clearance; 5,9-m turning circle; and small approach, departure and breakover angles, it didn't break a sweat.

Under the bonnet is the same 2,4-litre MIVEC turbodiesel engine. With its 133 kW and 430 Nm (combined-cycle fuel consumption is claimed at up to 7,6 l/100 km), it does feel slightly underpowered compared to some of the units in its rivals, however it gets on smoothly and without fuss.

Mitsubishi has (finally) replaced the old five-speed automatic gearbox with a new, smooth-shifting six-speed unit, while the six-speed manual remains available.

Significantly, the new Triton boasts a 3,1-t towing capacity thanks to the use of larger rear dampers, which are also meant to enhance ride comfort. Mitsubishi has also improved braking performance with the use of larger front discs and calliper pistons.

The new Triton undercuts its main rivals with pricing starting at R509 995 for the manual transmission 4x2, and going up to R589 995 for the automatic 4x4. A five-year/90 000 km service plan, five-year/unlimited mileage roadside assistance and three-year/100 000 km warranty are included. **F**

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NEW TRITON



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WILL SHIERS, EDITOR AT THE UK'S COMMERCIAL MOTOR, HEADS DOWN UNDER AND DISCOVERS THAT THE AUSSIES REALLY ARE ONTO SOMETHING WITH THEIR CRAZY 52-METRE, 120-TONNE (OR MORE!) ROAD TRAINS

“Emus explode in a colourful cloud of feathers,” explains the driver of a 53.5-m road train when we ask him what caused the bloody mess on the front of his bonneted Mack, but of course emus aren't the main reason why every heavy truck in Australia is fitted with a bull bar (aka roo bar).

There are considerably more kangaroos than people Down Under, and they have a nasty habit of hopping out in front of trucks. Hit a big one at 100 km/h and it will do some serious damage. Even with a bull bar in place, it's still likely that the initial impact will destroy a headlamp assembly, and then there's a good chance that the carcass will rip out airlines and fuel pipes as it tumbles under the truck.

Of course, no driver wants to intentionally kill an animal, but when you're running at 50 m and 120 t, sudden swerves and emergency stops just aren't viable options. There are, however, ways of reducing the chances of bending a bull bar, and we will find out what these are first hand while travelling into the outback in a 52-m Volvo FH16 road train.

But first of all, let us explain what we are doing here.

PLATOONING

The United Kingdom (UK) is about to embark on a platooning trial, which in our opinion is a waste of time and money. Daimler can't make the technology work on North America's big open roads, so why does the UK think it has potential on that crowded island? Instead of linking them wirelessly, does it not make more sense to join the trucks mechanically?

While numerous European countries have already introduced longer vehicles, the real experts are the

Australians, who have been refining the road-train concept over the past 80-plus years. With that in mind, we boarded a flight to Brisbane, the home of Volvo Trucks Australia, to learn more.

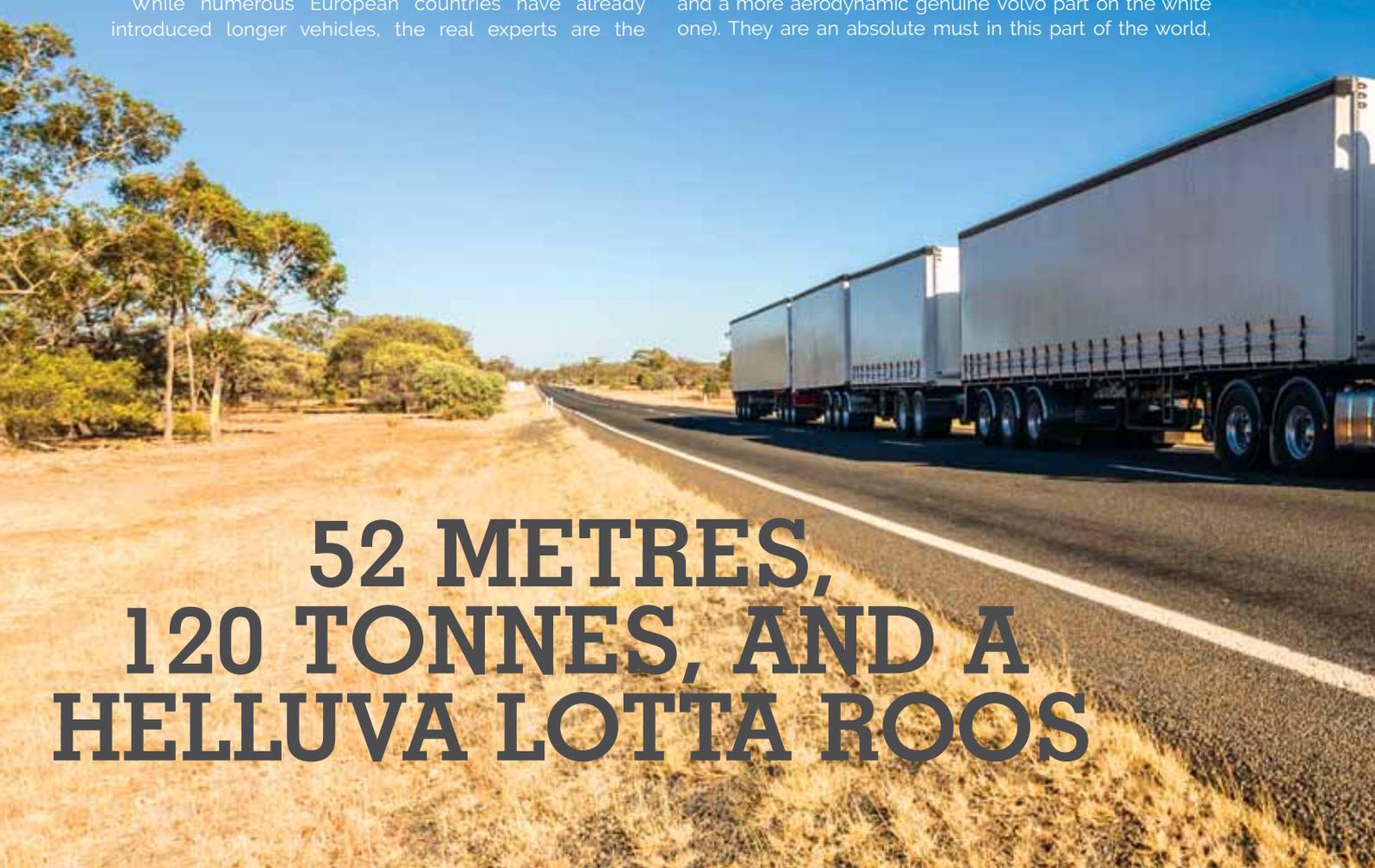
The plan, hatched by Volvo's driver trainers Bill Manton and Matt Wood, is to demonstrate three different truck and trailer combinations. We will gradually grow a truck as we head out of the city and into the Outback, adding trailers as legislation permits. This will allow us to experience three of the most popular combinations.

At our disposal are two locally built Volvo FH16 600s and four trailers. Volvo also offers the FH16 (a popular prime-mover for road trains) at 700 hp (522 kW), but we are assured that 600 horses (447 kW) will be more than enough for what we'll be pulling.

The Australian-built FH16 differs to the European spec version in a number of ways, most notable being that it's a Euro 5. As yet, Australia has no plans to adopt the latest European emissions standards. Like just about every other prime-mover sold in Australia and New Zealand, both of our trucks are 6x4s.

Unlike in North America where double-drive is frequently specified out of habit rather than necessity, the extra traction provided by the additional drive-axle is required for moving such heavy weights. The trucks' twin fuel tanks carry 1 220 litres of diesel (split into 690 and 530 litres), while a neatly designed 140-litre AdBlue tank is slung under each chassis.

Externally, the most obvious differences are bull bars (a heavy-duty aftermarket one on the green and yellow truck and a more aerodynamic genuine Volvo part on the white one). They are an absolute must in this part of the world.



**52 METRES,
120 TONNES, AND A
HELLUVA LOTTA ROOS**

and can easily prevent damage amounting to thousands of dollars in the event of an animal strike. Metal guards, which are fitted on the factory line, protect the windscreens from stones and bird strikes.

Unlike in Europe, where FH16s tend to have more bells than the Vatican and more whistles than a referee's convention, the interiors are poverty spec. Only one has a factory-fitted fridge, and you have to operate the blinds and sunroof manually.

B-DOUBLE

At the beginning of our 640-km journey both vehicles are set up as B-doubles. The "Proudly made in Australia" truck will gradually get shorter as its trailers are added to the white one in which we will be travelling.

B-doubles consist of a prime-mover with a pair of semi-trailers – "B" signifying a fifth wheel and 'double' because there are two of them. It is 25-m long, and is running at 60 t.

Although B-doubles have to operate on approved routes, they are widespread. Leaving Volvo's factory, we are immediately struck by how well the trailer tracks – which is just as well as Australian B-double drivers are very proud of their driving standards, and scuffed rear tyres are to be avoided at all costs.

As we navigate through the suburbs on our way to the main freight route west, we are impressed by how little the trailers cut in.

Out on the open road we discover this configuration to be incredibly stable, too. Our observation is confirmed by Manton, who reckons the B-double is better planted than a regular tractor unit and semi-trailer as the two trailers hold each other down. He says statistically it's safer, too, as it's heavier and therefore slower than a regular articulated unit.

While cornering, we notice the mirrors are different to those found on European-spec vehicles, as instead of being convex, the glass is completely flat. Apparently,

this makes it easier to judge distances; which is especially important when reversing a B-double.

"We prefer flat mirrors as main mirrors, but our smaller spotter mirrors are convex," explains Manton. "We use those for seeing where trailers are on bends, and for checking on vehicles overtaking us."

Although initially daunting, the truck turns out to be far more manoeuvrable around town than we had expected. In fact, once comfortable with the dimensions, it's no challenge at all.

Harder to get used to is the stone guard, which we find distracting.

About 136 km outside of Brisbane is Toowoomba, Australia's second-largest inland city. It's 700 m above sea level, and getting there involves climbing a four-kilometre, ten-percent gradient.

As competent as Volvo's I-Shift transmission is, at 60 t we are advised that it is better to select the manual override. We crawl up at 30 km/h in sixth gear, the rev-counter sitting at 1 200 r/min.

The B-doubles coming down the hill are likely to be in the same gear as us, slowly, but surely, descending with engine brakes on full. Manton tells us that the police regularly follow trucks down the steep gradient, issuing fines if brake lights illuminate.

The city is a transport hub, and the sheer variety of trucks on the road amazes us. This is one of the few markets where European, North American and Japanese trucks compete with each other.

In total, there are almost 20 marques to choose from, including three from the Volvo Group (Volvo, Mack and UD), all four from Daimler (Mercedes-Benz, Freightliner, Western Star and Fuso), Paccar's DAF and Kenworth brands, Traton's Scania and MAN, market-leader Isuzu, Iveco and even Dennis Eagle. The Chinese have had a few attempts at breaking into the market, but have failed so far.



The real experts are the Australians, who have been refining the road-train concept over the past 80-plus years.

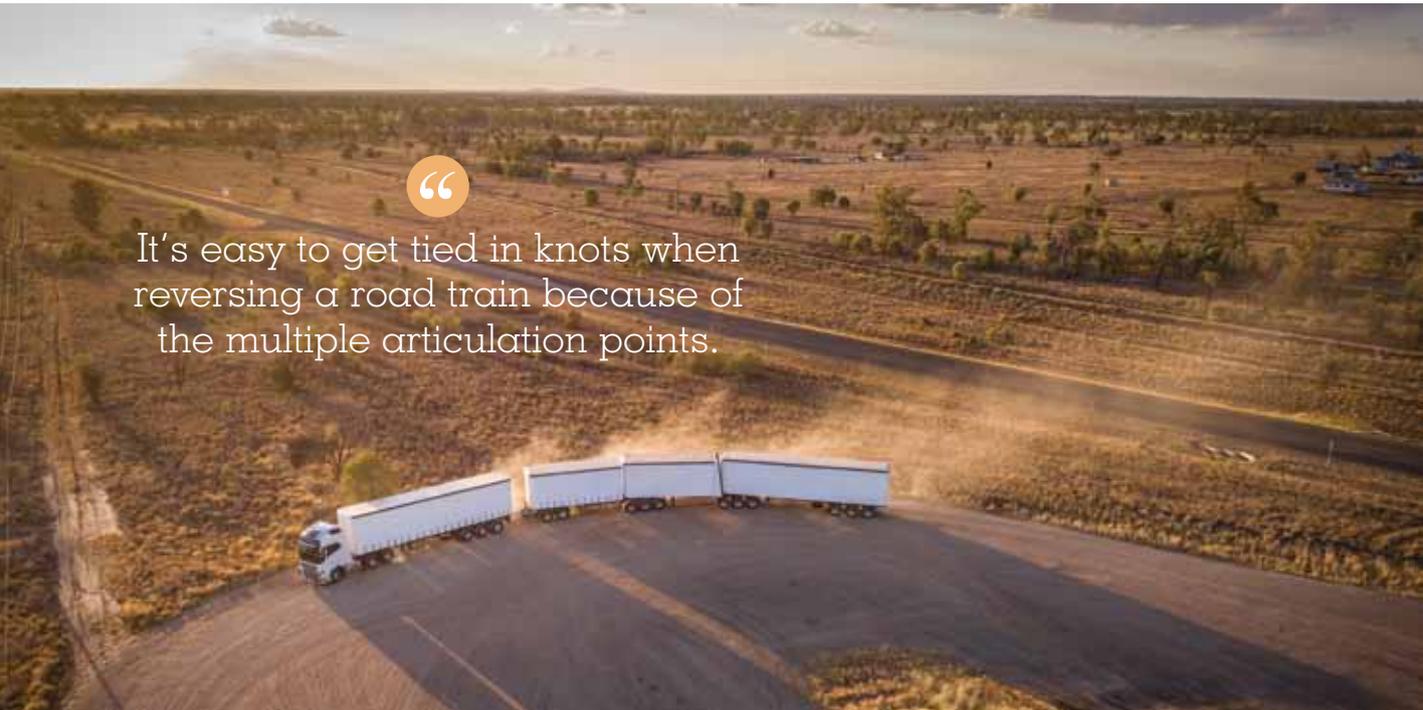


At Toowoomba we call in on Simon National Carriers. This operator is a Volvo customer, and has a good relationship with the manufacturer. In fact, it has been testing prototype Volvos since the 1980s, and currently has a Euro-6D truck on its fleet. Volvo carries out a lot of hot-weather testing in Australia, which it can do in parallel with winter testing back in northern Sweden.

Our reason for the visit is to use its yard to attach a third trailer, which we take from the green and yellow truck. For the next 320 km it will be following us with a single semi-trailer and a dolly – both of which will later be added to our combination.

mover will cover 250 000 km per year, and will spend its first few years hauling combinations over vast distances. During its second life, it is likely to move between major cities on the east coast, returning to base every night. At 1.2-million kilometres it may have an engine rebuild, and then shunt trailers locally. When it reaches two-million kilometres it will probably be sold to a farmer.

Australia's roads are in a poor state of repair and trucks suffer as a result. Tyre wear is accelerated, and suspension components take a lot of punishment. To reduce the impact of the bumps, truck drivers tend to straddle the central white line on quiet roads. Riding on the crest of the road



It's easy to get tied in knots when reversing a road train because of the multiple articulation points.

Before we add the third trailer, we have a go at reversing the B-double, which proves to be surprisingly easy after some coaching from Manton. It's simply a case of right hand down to get the trailer to go to the right, and vice versa.

B-TRIPLE

We now have three trailers, and three fifth wheels – hence the B-triple name. These combinations can legally operate at a maximum of 83 t and 36.5 m, but ours is slightly under at 82 t and 32 m. Like the B-double, it has a maximum permitted speed of 100 km/h.

We are 22-t heavier now, but the increase in weight is barely felt from the driver's seat. Although acceleration is slightly more lethargic, once cruising it doesn't feel any different to the B-double, nor does it handle any differently.

Manton explains that it is far more stable than conventional three-trailer road trains, which use two dollies, giving them additional pivot points. Even on rough roads the B-triple follows us perfectly, and we are surprised to see so little lateral movement in our mirrors.

We are in an agricultural area now, and start to notice some elderly vehicles parked up in farm yards. The average age of a truck in Australia is 14 years. Typically, a prime-

is considerably smoother, and is kinder on the truck, driver and the freight.

In rural Queensland roads are narrow, with barely enough room for two vehicles to pass, which makes meeting other B-triples something of a challenge. The recognised technique is to ease off the accelerator, manually change down a gear, drop your nearside wheels onto the dirt, and accelerate steadily. If the approaching truck does the same, you should pass each other with little drama.

Re-joining the road sometimes causes the trailers to dance somewhat, but applying the trailer brake (or stretch brake as it's known in Europe) soon sorts that out. At this point, with the passing truck disappearing into the distance, the drivers get on the CB radio and exchange pleasantries for a few minutes.

CBs are vital, and get plenty of use. Besides warning other truck drivers about potential hazards – like approaching wide loads, floods, bush fires or escaped livestock – striking up a conversation is a great way of fighting fatigue.

We are 400 km into the journey now, and the fields of cereal crops have been replaced by cows, searching for food in the dry scrub. Occasionally we pass a whole herd, which are being moved by cattle drovers.



Although they are supposed to erect temporary fencing to prevent the cows from wandering onto the road, we see little evidence of this. It's surprising that they should take this risk, because if a driver hits a cow on the road, they can sue the farmer/drover for any damage to their vehicle. Our next stop is a road train coupling site on the outskirts of Roma.

BAAB QUAD

The sun is setting when we arrive at Roma, and we have to be quick as there is no lighting here. Hooking up the fourth and final trailer is quite a time-consuming process, too, and



is far more complicated than simply attaching it to the end of our current combination. Instead, we uncouple our three existing trailers and couple the new trailer and dolly to the prime mover.

We then attempt to back it onto the three existing trailers. This proves to be more difficult than we expected; the dolly apparently having a mind of its own. It's easy to get tied in knots when reversing a road train because of the multiple articulation points. However, there is a golden rule to follow – every time a point of articulation is added, the way the steering wheel is turned needs to change.

"Not many road-train drivers can reverse them," says Manton, making us feel better. "The problem is the dolly, which kicks out and is difficult to control. My best advice

is not to get into a situation where reversing is needed in the first place."

Although it would have been easier to have attached the fourth trailer at the back of the existing outfit, Manton explains that this would have been dangerous. He tells us that the closer the dolly is to the prime-mover, the more stable the road train is.

Now we will be running at 52 m and 120 t, our maximum plated weight. If we wanted to, we could legally drive 4 000 km to Perth on the east coast with this combination. In reality we intend to drive just 160 km down the road to Morven, where our journey will end.

The Roma road train coupling site is a hive of activity. We speak to the driver of a BAAB quad like ours who has driven here from Darwin, and can't get any closer to Brisbane in this configuration. He drops his trailers and waits for a pair of B-double "dog-runners" to turn up. Between them they'll take his four trailers east, while he'll take their four in a westerly direction. It's certainly a logistical challenge.

We also witness a pair of B-double livestock trucks (aka stock crates) take turns at backing onto an empty livestock road train. Between the three drivers they transfer 250 cows into the road train, which leaves in the direction of Darwin.

Before leaving, we display the road train signs on the front and rear of our truck. From now on our maximum speed is 90 km/h. All that's left to do now is a walk-round check, which takes four times longer than usual.

As we set off, we make sure we press the minus button on the I-Shift control as we put it into gear. This lets the gearbox learn about the load, and must be done whenever a trailer is added or removed. It also ensures that it sets off in first gear.

The dolly, with its two pivot points, has made the truck slightly less stable. Small movements in the steering wheel are now amplified along the length of the truck. Manton explains that road train drivers must never hold the steering wheel too close to their bodies, and should instead push it towards the instrument cluster. This lets them hold it at arm's length, and steer with their shoulders, instead of their arms. It has the effect of keeping movements to a minimum.

We can see the trailers wobbling in the mirror on rough patches of road, and the trailer brake is used occasionally to keep them in check. Manton tells us that if it gets really bad, and starts to snake uncontrollably, the best thing to do is accelerate hard while engaging the trailer brake. Applying the footbrake, which might be a natural instinct, could result in a jackknife.

Despite its incredible length, the truck feels only slightly less manoeuvrable than the B-triple. The dolly acts like the drive wheels of a prime mover, so from there back it has the same swept path and turning dimensions as a B-double.

It does, however, feel very heavy, which is equally as obvious going up and down hills. That said, it doesn't feel 120-t heavy, which is testament to the torque characteristics of the 16-litre engine. When Australia gets the Euro-6 version, with its twin turbos, it will be better again.

The I-Shift continually switches between 11th and 12th on undulating hills, so we engage manual and select 11th. This allows us to maintain a faster average speed.

Volvo's I-See predictive cruise control would be handy,

but it currently doesn't work at this weight, having a tendency to back off the gas too early when cresting hills.

While old-school road train drivers are able to sense blow-outs on rear trailer tyres from the way that the truck behaves, less experienced drivers stand little chance of noticing them. This is of course even more of an issue when driving at night, when it isn't possible to spot the rubber disintegrating in the mirrors.

However, a far more worrying aspect of night driving in the Outback is hitting animals. Throughout the day we have noticed countless kangaroos sitting lazily in the shade under trees, but now they've come to life, and the headlights pick up hundreds of them at the side of the road. Every so often one wanders out into the middle of the road on our approach.

In days of old, road trains had similar stopping distances to their rail-travelling namesakes, but things have improved considerably in recent years. According to Manton, a typical one-trailer 43-t articulated unit with a Volvo prime-mover



will stop in 170 m when travelling at 90 km/h, or 195 m at 100 km/h. In comparison, a 120-t road train will take between 250 and 300 m.

However, the roos are quite big, and while the temptation is to brake or attempt to swerve around them, either evasive action would have disastrous consequences. All a road-train driver can do is wash a bit of the speed off, sound the electronic horn (not the air horn as this startles them) and turn the main beam off. Cutting the main beam is crucial, as bright lights tend to freeze them to the spot. Worse still, they cause a shadow of the kangaroo on the road behind it, which the animal believes to be another animal about to attack it, forcing it to run into the truck's path.

Although we have a number of narrow escapes, fortunately we don't wreck our roo bar, but other drivers have been less lucky tonight and kangaroo carcasses litter the road. The carnage is incredible, considering how few vehicles are actually using the road tonight. We pick our way through the remains, being careful not to flatten any dead ones, as the last thing we want is a rib cage puncturing a tyre. The dingos and wild cats are already

starting their evening meals, dragging dead kangaroos off the road to feast on.

"Bull bars are part of the circle of life," says Manton. "We kill the roos, which feed the coyotes, birds, dingos and wild cats." In his 30 years of driving road trains, Manton has had most animals bounce off his bull-bar, and has even had close encounters with wild camels.

"Probably the worst thing I've ever hit was a swarm of bees," he recalls. "As they hit the windscreen it was like a



shotgun going off. I put the wipers on but that just made matters worse, as they were all carrying honey. I couldn't see a thing."

We pull up at a cafe in Morven, which has a truck park the size of a small country.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

So, could a BAAB quad work in other countries? Of course it couldn't in a country like the UK, but we reckon a B-double could.

They're manoeuvrable, safe, productive and have the ability to slash the UK's carbon footprint. And we aren't the only ones of this opinion.

"This is exactly the kind of innovation your country needs to be looking at," says Manton, who has visited the UK. "The combinations can be changed around and have shorter trailers. If the first trailer is shorter and the second trailer longer, this will give a better swept path. All the regional distribution centres in the UK are close to motorways, and the motorway system is better than that of Australia."

If the UK was to go down this route, then obviously it would require some serious investment in infrastructure and training. We reckon that £8,2 million (R150 million) earmarked for platooning should be thrown into the fund! **F**

WANT TO SEE SHIERS LEARN HOW TO REVERSE
A QUAD-TRAILER ROAD TRAIN?
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As regular readers of **FOCUS** know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (IToY)! **FOCUS** is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for **FOCUS** by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.



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VISION ZERO STARTS WITH IMPROVED ROAD SAFETY

WITH THE NEW GENERAL SAFETY REGULATION, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, COUNCIL AND COMMISSION HOPE TO ACHIEVE ZERO FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES ON THE ROAD BY 2050. MARISKA MORRIS TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT

In March, the European Parliament, Council and Commission agreed on the revised General Safety Regulation, which includes 15 new safety technologies that will be mandatory in all vehicles in the European Union (EU). The Commission expects these technologies to save more than 25 000 lives and prevent at least 140 000 serious injuries by 2038.

The long-term goal is to have zero fatalities and serious injuries on roads in the EU by 2050. While annual road fatalities in the EU have decreased by 54 percent since 2001, there are still around 500 deaths on EU roads every week, notes Deirdre Clune, Ireland South MEP, in an article for news organisation *Irish Examiner*.

TECHNOLOGIES TO SAVE LIVES

The 15 safety technologies agreed upon by the Commission

will be mandatory in all the new vehicles on EU roads from May 2022. These include warnings of driver drowsiness and distraction (including using a smartphone while driving), intelligent speed assistance (ISA), reverse cameras or sensors and a data recorder or "black box" that can be inspected to learn the cause of an accident.

The ISA technology uses sign recognition, through a video camera and GPS-linked speed-limit data, to advise drivers of the current speed limit.

"This will actively assist drivers instead of just informing them of a problem. The technology does not apply brakes but inhibits engine power, ensuring drivers do not exceed the limit," says Clune.

"The system can be disengaged or overridden when necessary – for example when a vehicle needs to overtake, though under the new rules it must be operational upon starting a vehicle," he adds.



“
All blind spots will need to be removed in commercial vehicles to provide better vision for the driver.

“An impact assessment carried out during the drafting of the new legislation has indicated that universal adoption of the technology across the EU could reduce annual road fatalities by around 20 percent,” Clune notes.

In addition, cars and vans will be required to have lane-keeping assistance, advanced emergency braking, an enlarged head-impact zone and crash-test improved safety belts. Trucks and buses will also have systems at the front and side of the vehicles to detect and warn the driver of vulnerable road users – especially when turning.

All blind spots will need to be removed in commercial vehicles to provide better vision for the driver. These design changes will come into effect at a later stage.

IMPACT ON THE COST OF VEHICLES

While these mandatory technologies will assist road users to comply with road rules and minimise the human error

in driving, some have expressed concerns about whether they will make vehicles more expensive.

“I know there have been concerns raised by the Automobile Association (AA) and the Society of the Irish Motor Industry about the measures leading to a significant rise in the cost of a new vehicle, but I disagree,” Clune notes.

“The impact assessment that was developed for this legislation, in consultation with stakeholders such as manufacturers, concluded that there should be no substantial vehicle retail price increases due to the proposed safety measures expected in the medium and long term. It has been suggested that insurance premiums may in fact drop as a result of the new measures.

“These technologies are already commercially available, but are usually optional and, as a result, are expensive,” he explains. Clune adds that incorporating the technologies into the vehicles, would be less expensive.

TRANSITIONING TO AUTONOMY

The European Commission notes that, in addition to improving safety, the new regulation will offer new mobility solutions for the elderly and people with disabilities. It will also help with the transition to self-driving vehicles by assisting drivers to adapt to the technologies that will inform autonomous driving.

It may also improve the public's confidence in self-driving vehicles after a number of accidents involving autonomous cars. In 2018, Apple software engineer Wei Huang died when his Tesla Model X crashed while in autonomous mode. The vehicle manufacturer said that the cruise control was set to the minimum follow-distance and that the driver received ample warning to override the function before the collision.

Dan Howarth, in an article for news organisation *De Zeen*, quotes Tesla: “The driver had received several visual and one audible hands-on warning earlier in the drive, and his hands were not detected on the wheel for six seconds prior to the collision. The driver had about five seconds and 150 m of unobstructed view of the concrete divider with the crash attenuator, but the vehicle logs show that no action was taken.”

With new mandatory technologies to assist and warn drivers of their behaviour, similar accidents might be avoided as drivers engage better with the warning systems. This is especially important as the EU looks towards automated transport for its future.

John Koetsier, in an article for *Forbes*, quotes EU commissioner Violeta Bulc: “By 2030 we believe we will have the new generation of vehicles that will be fully automated. This year, auto manufacturers added 15 new safety and automation features to all cars of all price levels.” Autonomous vehicles are believed to help the EU reach its Zero Vision.

The agreement reached by the European Parliament, Council and Commission will now be subject to formal approval by the European Parliament and Council. **F**



BAUMA 2019: JUST BRILLIANT!

BAUMA 2019 SMASHED ALL ITS RECORDS – FROM THE NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE FLOOR SPACE OCCUPIED. I BRAVED THE CROWDS (AND, BELIEVE ME, THIS WAS NO EASY TASK) AND TRIED TO GET A REASONABLE OVERVIEW OF THE EVENT

I use the word “reasonable” because, in order to fully take in the show, you need to be there all day for each of the seven show days: bauma (always spelt with a lower case “b” for some unknown reason) is massive! (Just in case you’re unfamiliar with the exhibition, it’s the world’s largest construction machinery trade show and it takes place in Munich, Germany, every three years; the next one happens from April 4 to 10, 2022).

This year, the exhibitors occupied an unprecedented 614 000 m² of space – and there were 3 700 companies exhibiting from 63 countries. Accordingly, it was absolutely impossible to visit every stand, but I did race around like a mad thing, trying to gather as much useful and relevant information as possible. So, here goes (I have listed relevant exhibitors in alphabetical form):

CONTINENTAL

Continental presented ContiLogger, a new service concept that helps operators to keep their tyre costs under control. The ContiLogger process starts with a customer solution engineer, who conducts a field study to measure speed, distance, location, lateral forces, elevation change, road grade, cycle downtime and the pressure and temperature of the tyres. The engineer then makes recommendations aimed at optimising tyre life.

DAIMLER

In typical Daimler style, the company had a massive presence at bauma, with a total of 22 construction vehicles on display over an area of 2 700 m². From delivery vans to light, medium and heavy-duty trucks, to heavy-duty tractor units and individually adapted special-purpose vehicles, Daimler showed vehicles for almost every application in the construction segment.

However, I am going to focus on its most significant exhibits – those of the new Mercedes-Benz Arocs, which celebrated its world premiere at bauma. I was fortunate enough to be able to see the static displays of the vehicle on the stand, and I could also get behind the wheel at the Ebenhöf gravel plant outside Munich.

I was also able to drive a comprehensive selection of construction vehicles from the Daimler stable – from the Mercedes-Benz X-Class, to a heavy-duty all-wheel drive tipper, the Arocs 4153 AK 8x8/4 with a turbo retarder clutch and 80-t drivetrain. And, in between those, other Arocs with various-sized engines such as the 4143 K 8x4/4 and the Arocs 1853 K 4x2 were also available.

A Canter 4x4 and a Zetros 4043 A 6x6 for export completed the vehicle line-up (the Zetros was an absolute blast to drive), but, back to the star (no pun intended) of the bauma show: the new Arocs.

First, I need to clear something up. I am calling it the “new



RIGHT: More than 620 000 people attended this year's bauma.
BELOW: Much of the exhibition is dedicated to yellow metal. Caterpillar alone exhibited over 60 machines.



Arocs" – but it isn't completely new. Essentially it's the Arocs that we just got in South Africa with some pretty fabulous features added on (the most obvious is the MirrorCam – also available on the latest Actros).

Other innovations worthy of mention are the Multimedia Cockpit, Active Brake Assist 5, an enhanced version of Predictive Powertrain Control (PPC) and a newly revised Sideguard Assist. They're all massively impressive features (I wrote about most of them when the latest Actros bowed onto the global stage at the IAA last year). However, as I will explain in due course, they aren't all destined for South

Africa. So let's go through the new features and I will explain what they're all about.

As a driver, the first thing you notice about the new Arocs is the Multimedia Cockpit. The second is the MirrorCam. Personally, I love both of the features – and the great thing is that they may become available in South Africa as early as next year.

The Multimedia Cockpit is just so cool. It's like two large

iPads, seated side by side. The high-resolution colour display on the primary screen replaces the traditional instrument cluster with its speedometer, rev counter and fuel gauge. The secondary screen, which is a touchscreen, can replace the usual switches (those normal switches are still available should tech-averse drivers prefer to use them). It also displays information (tyre pressure, for instance).

Then there are those cameras. Wow, I love driving with them. You can see so much more – virtually the entire tipper trailer, for instance, making reversing so much easier. Because the cameras are so much more

aerodynamic than mirrors, fuel savings result while safety is improved, too (because visibility is so much better).

Then there is another pretty massive benefit that I didn't even think about. I was chatting to Christo Kleynhans, marketing manager for Mercedes-Benz Trucks, during bauma and he pointed out (quite rightly) that the cameras can be an important security feature in crime-ridden South Africa, too.

"If a driver parks his Actros or Arocs somewhere – at a truck stop, for instance – and he hears a strange noise in the middle of the night, there is no need for him to leave

the safety of his cab. He can inspect the visuals from the cameras – and see exactly what is going on outside,” he told me. That’s a feature that could save that driver’s life!

Speaking of saving lives, Active Brake Assist 5 is another new feature that we will get in South Africa – initially on the Actros only. The new Active Brake Assist 5 is able to slow down the truck to a standstill if there is the danger of a rear-end collision. This system is now even more powerful than its predecessor and no longer utilises only radar, but



ABOVE: Christo Kleynhans, marketing manager for Mercedes-Benz Trucks, believes that the MirrorCams are a terrific security feature (we fully agree!)

RIGHT: Yellow metal was to be seen everywhere! Many of the machines cost millions (of Euros, not rands).

RIGHT BELOW: The 65-t GVM Iveco Astra HDDg 8x6 is powered by the Cursor 13 engine.

a combination of the radar and camera systems. Among other things, the system’s response in a speed range below 50 km/h has been improved.

Yet another great feature of the new Arocs that will come to South Africa (initially on Actros only), is PPC. It will form part of an efficiency pack (which will also include MirrorCam and tyre-pressure monitoring). I don’t think I need to explain the benefits of PPC; we all know how it works – and the substantial fuel savings it affords. “Even a highly skilled driver with excellent knowledge of the route doesn’t achieve fuel consumption rates like those of the new Arocs (or Actros, for that matter) with improved PPC,” Kleynhans pointed out.

There are two other features of the new Arocs overseas that really impressed me, too: Sideguard Assist and Traffic Sign Assist. The former reduces the risk of dangerous accidents on the passenger side when turning to the right; the latter recognises signs and displays them to the driver.

Both are terrific safety systems. However neither are planned for South Africa at this stage – so I won’t go into more detail about them. Despite the fact that these two systems are missing (let’s face it, most people won’t even know about them let alone realise that they’re not there), I am sure that the very latest Arocs will be welcomed by South African operators with open arms (and maybe open wallets too!)

IVECO

Iveco showed the natural-gas powered 44-t Stralis NP 6x2 crane-tipper truck, which is ideal for recycling applications. It is clean and very quiet. The Stralis X-Way rigid three-way tipper truck on display is ideal for road-building applications. It is available with a switchable hydraulic front-wheel drive, which means fewer moving parts.

Also on display was the top-of-the-range Iveco Daily 4x4; the first seven-tonne gross vehicle mass (GVM) 4x4 vehicle



with a payload up to 4 300 kg. The exhibit also featured the 65-t GVM new Iveco Astra HDDg 8x6 Euro 6 in dumper configuration with a 24 m³ reinforced body and an automatic transmission.

HELLA

Hella had a world premiere on its stand in the form of a beacon that combines design and state-of-the-art LED technology. The first-of-its-kind design beacon is black and

futuristic-looking, and it fits perfectly into the existing vehicle silhouette thanks to its design and compact dimensions (around 60 mm in height). The beacon is maintenance-free.

MAN

MAN had lots and lots of world premieres on its stand – plus a number of driveline innovations too.

The really big news on the stand was the arrival of the company's new Euro-6 standard nine-litre D15 engine, which will be replacing the tried and proven D20 engine in the MAN TGS and TGX truck series in 2019.

The straight-six engine achieves higher power, lighter weight and better fuel efficiency, despite a smaller cubic capacity. The engine's light weight is a massive benefit; payload is increased by about 230 kg! Three power ratings – 330 hp (243 kW), 360 hp (265 kW) and 400 hp (294 kW) – are up for grabs.



ABOVE: MAN exhibited new (much lighter) engines on its stand. These engines afford massive payload gains.

A number of trucks that were enjoying their world premiere also caught my eye. These included the TGS 33.470 6x6H BL mobile crane tipper and the TGX 18.510 4x2 BLS tipping semi-trailer tractor. The former boasts a medium-height chassis with MAN Hydro Drive on the front axle providing traction as required. It is equipped with the new Euro-6 D26 engine, ComfortSteering, Lane Return Assist and a GVM of 59 t. The latter featured the XLION specification level, a spacious XLX cab and the Euro-6 D26 engine uprated by 10 hp (7.4 kW) and 100 Nm of torque.

It was also interesting to learn of a further development when it comes to concrete mixers. MAN launched the lightweight hypoid tandem axle unit at bauma in 2016, which offered a weight saving of 180 kg compared to the previously installed 13-t axles. The upgrade to the new MAN D15 engine series will further reduce the chassis weight by approximately 230 kg, meaning a whopping 410 kg payload gain. That will be music to operators' ears.

MERITOR

Meritor announced the launch of several new braking solutions for multiple off-highway applications at bauma, including a full line of wet disc brakes, a high capacity hydraulic disc brake and a 500 mm drum brake.

MICHELIN

Michelin presented its E3/L3 tyre – for ADTs, graders and wheel loaders – on two Caterpillar vehicles and two Volvo vehicles. The company also presented advanced new tyre technology. Constructed from pure rubber and patented composite material in a honeycomb spoke design, the tyre/wheel fusion also features built-in suspension.

PALFINGER

Palfinger presented a new digital tool in the form of "data glasses" called Smart Eye. They help the service technician when he's conducting fault analysis and repairs to Palfinger products – the glasses contain a built-in camera, so a service expert can keep an eye on things and provide advice and input. Smart Eye speeds up fault diagnoses, thereby maximising the uptime of the company's products.

SCANIA

Scania celebrated 50 years of V8 production at bauma, while also displaying six construction trucks, which can all run on hydrotreated vegetable oil. Scania also showed connected engines for equipment, vehicles and vessels that facilitate fleet monitoring and optimised uptime.

VOLKSWAGEN

The new Transporter 6.1 made its world debut at bauma. It is available as a panel van, a Kombi and as a single or double cab pick-up. Highlights of the new model include a switch from hydraulic to electro-mechanical power steering and lots of new driver assistance systems (Lane Assist, Cross Wind Assist, Park Assist, Rear Traffic Alert and Trailer Assist, for instance).

The Transporter 6.1 is being launched with 2.0-litre turbo-diesel engines delivering 66 kW, 81 kW, 110 kW and 146 kW. An electric derivative with a payload of almost 1.2 t and a range of more than 400 km is also coming soon.

VOLVO

The emphasis on the Volvo stand was obviously on construction equipment, and the company's 2 293 m² indoor and 5 870 m² outdoor stands were hives of activity, with 50 machines moving around non-stop.

During bauma, the company announced that it would go electric on its Volvo-branded compact excavators and wheel loaders in 2020. The Volvo FMX – a capable and powerful construction truck – was also on display. **F**



 @womanonwheelsza

CHARLEEN CLARKE is editorial director of **FOCUS**. While she is based in Johannesburg, she spends a considerable amount of time overseas attending international transport events – largely in her capacity as associate member of the International Truck of the Year Jury.

SHORT HAULS

CUMMINS POWERS UP

As it celebrates its centenary, Cummins Inc. has opened The Power Hub at Waterfall Logistics Precinct in Waterfall City, Midrand. This means that the company has relocated the following from its Kelvin and Longmeadow offices – the Power Hub houses the Cummins Southern Africa Regional Headquarters, the Master Rebuild Centre (MRC), Africa Learning Centre and Gauteng Operations.

The R350-million, 15 355 m² facility is geared to ensure ease of business dealings for customers, while being the base for the Gauteng and Limpopo field-service technicians. It's been designed to support the Cummins vision of exceeding customer expectations while improving operational efficiencies in a collaborative manner.



MD of Cummins Southern Africa, Racheal Njoroge, comments: "The architectural layout has been optimally and uniquely designed, adopting the Cummins smart office concept (CSO) to create a space that enhances internal collaboration, encourages engagement and thereby accelerates a solution-orientated approach. As always, we are driven by a customer-centric outlook to provide quality performance and service."

The consolidation of the various businesses at the Power Hub provides a suite of products and capabilities under one roof. The central hub provides power solutions for customers across the southern African region, while bringing together a host of technically advanced Cummins expertise in mining, power systems, automotive and technical training.

The Power Hub launches new progressive build processes in the MRC that substantially reduce the overall build time while improving quality output.

The facility provides the latest cutting-edge technology to meet industry needs such as a precision-driven spray

booth that is large enough to accommodate the largest Cummins engines, and a 3 500 hp AVL Dyno Test Cell that can test some of Cummins's most powerful engines to full power.

Infrastructure for a second dyno installation is in place, while 20-t overhead cranes support the new work processes.

Similarly, the flow of counter sales of parts has been enhanced. The on-site warehouse measures 9 650 m² and houses inventory, valued at approximately R200 million, that feeds the production line of the adjacent engine rebuild centre and service bays.

As part of the Cummins Distribution Business Unit, the facility also focuses on sales and aftermarket servicing.

Six truck repair bays are available, while the MRC has capacity to rebuild 240 engines a year. The training facility has a capacity to accommodate nearly 100 students per month.

There will be two 1,1 MVA back-up generators, while 650 kVA solar photovoltaic panels will be installed in the first half of 2019. The on-site water sprinkler tanks are powered by Cummins-powered fire pumps. There is also an efficient waste-water treatment system, which recycles 80 percent of the water used in the Master Rebuild Centre.



Acknowledging the strategic significance of the new premises and showcasing Cummins's vote of confidence and commitment to the southern Africa region, visiting dignitaries from the global headquarters in Columbus, Indiana in the United States, included the company's chairman and CEO, Tom Linebarger; the VP and president – Distribution Business, Tony Satterthwaite; and the chief HR officer, Jill Cook.

FORD RANGER NOW WITH 2.0 BI-TURBO AND TEN-SPEED AUTO!

With an extensive range of mechanical, technological, feature and comfort upgrades, the 2019 Ford Ranger has made its South African debut. While its looks remain familiar, having been nipped and tucked for a slightly more chiseled appearance, it's what's behind that revised façade that will surely get bakkie enthusiasts talking...

The existing engine line-up – the 3.2-litre five-cylinder Duratorq TDCi engine and the 2.2-litre TDCi in two states of tune – remains on offer, but is now complemented by an all-new 2.0-litre, four-cylinder range of turbodiesel engines.



These new engines are produced locally at Ford's Struandale Engine Plant in Port Elizabeth and are available as the Single (SiT) and Bi-Turbo (BiT) variants.

Maximum outputs are rated at 157 kW and 500 Nm of torque from 1 750 to 2 000 r/min, for the BiT variant; and 132 kW and 420 Nm between 1 750 and 2 500 r/min for the SiT.

The BiT engine relies on a variable-geometry, high-pressure turbocharger along with a fixed-geometry low-pressure unit. The two turbochargers work in series at lower engine speeds for enhanced torque and responsiveness, while the smaller turbo is bypassed at higher speeds so that the larger turbo can provide boost to deliver high power.

Ford claims overall better performance, fuel efficiency and refinement with lower noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) levels compared to the existing engine range. The BiT engine is currently available on the range-topping Wildtrak, while the SiT engine is offered on the Double Cab XLT 4x4 and 4x2 derivatives.

The other bit of news likely to ignite conversation around the braai is that these new motors are paired with an all-new, ten-speed automatic transmission.

With a wide spread of ratios this transmission uses real-time adaptive shift-scheduling that, says Ford, allows the transmission to adapt to changing conditions and select the optimal gear for performance, fuel efficiency or refinement in any driving scenario.

There's also a Progressive Range Select (PRS) function with a Select Shift Transmission (SST) program that locks out selected gears from the automatic shifting range, which can be beneficial when towing, driving in slippery

conditions or climbing a steep gradient, we're told.

Ford claims the BiT engine with this gearbox will be nine-percent lighter on fuel than the current 3.2-litre TDCi and six-speed automatic gearbox.

Ford has endeavored to improve the ride and handling of the Ranger by relocating the front anti-roll bar and decreasing the front spring rates. In addition, four damper rates have been developed for the New Ranger, tuned according to the front kerb weights of the individual models.

Towing capacity (up to 3 500 kg), load capacity (up



to 1 199 kg), the 800 mm water wading depth and 230 mm ground clearance remain unchanged. Ford has also equipped XLT and Wildtrak models with the EZ lift tailgate that reduces the effort required to close it by 70 percent.

XLS, XLT and Wildtrak models now receive acoustic laminated front side glass, which, with a specially designed B-pillar margin seal, reduces interior noise levels. The 2019 Ranger also sees the introduction of Active Noise Control (ANC) on the Wildtrak BiT – making it an additional five-percent quieter inside.

Other nifty new features include the Semi-Automatic Parallel Park Assist (SAPPA) – that detects and steers the vehicle into a parking space (only on Wildtrak models) – and the new keyless entry and start system (XLT and Wildtrak). The Wildtrak also now boasts HID headlamps and LED daytime running lights.

Vehicles equipped with the Sync3 infotainment system can now project real-time traffic and navigation to their vehicle via the Waze mobile app and control it through voice command. A full Category 1 Thatcham-specification alarm is now standard on all Ranger XL, XLS, XLT and Wildtrak models, complemented by a spare wheel lock across the range.

The 2019 Ranger kicks off at R287 100 with prices rising to R678 200 for the range-topping 2.0 BiT Wildtrak 10AT 4x4.

All models come standard with a four-year/120 000 km comprehensive warranty, three-year roadside assistance and five-year corrosion warranty. A six-year/90 000 km service plan is included, with 15 000 km service intervals.

HOLLARD SEARCHES FOR ITS NEWEST HERO



Hollard Trucking has launched its 2019 Hollard Highway Heroes campaign to find South Africa's best truck driver.

Competitors will once again have to prove that they drive better than their peers in terms of speed, harsh braking and fatigue driving. The 2019 Highway Hero will take home R100 000, while the top 50 runners up will also be rewarded for their driving efforts.

This year's Hollard Highway Heroes competition is open to all truck drivers, irrespective of their insurer. This gives more drivers the opportunity to win big, and encourages thousands more to drive better – which amplifies the road safety benefit offered by the competition.

"In previous years we've measured a 65-percent improvement in the behaviour of truck drivers during the competition. That's huge – and what's more, the drivers retain their good driving habits long after the competition is over, and they inspire non-participating colleagues to also up their game on the road," says Elka du Piesanie, the competition manager.

In 2018, Stephen Meje of Pretoria-based Faith Wheels pipped over 1 600 competitors to the title. The success of the Hollard Highway Heroes competition is clear – in 2017 there were 890 entries, while the very first competition in 2015 attracted 220 competitors.

"The very definition of a hero is 'an ordinary person who does extraordinary things'. The tagline for the 2019 Hollard Highway Heroes competition reflects that: 'Rewarding the extraordinary,'" concludes Wayne Rautenbach, head of Hollard Trucking.

The competition runs from April 1 to October 15, and entries will only be accepted until May 31.

SCAN HERE TO ENTER THE COMPETITION



COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR MARCH 2019

Note: For the time being, Mercedes-Benz SA (MBSA) will only report aggregated sales data. The MBSA commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 14 994
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles South Africa	29
Ford Motor Company	2 404
GWM	188
Hyundai Automotive SA	242
Isuzu Motors South Africa	1 607
JMC	34
Kia South Africa	118
Mahindra	341
Mazda South Africa	13
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	109
Mitsubishi	51
Nissan	3 390
Peugeot Citroën South Africa	2
Renault	2
Suzuki Auto	61
Toyota	5 983
Volkswagen SA	420

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 775
FAW	14
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles South Africa	3
Ford Motor Company	4
Hyundai Automotive SA	19
Isuzu Motors South Africa	144
Iveco	53
JMC	15
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	175
Peugeot Citroën South Africa	2
Powerstar	4
Tata	26
Toyota	188
VECV South Africa	1
Volkswagen SA	127

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 474
FAW	51
Isuzu Motors South Africa	101
Iveco	5
MAN Automotive	13
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	51
Powerstar	8
Tata	58
Toyota	110
VECV South Africa	6
Volvo Group Southern Africa	71

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 1 046
Babcock DAF	50
FAW	28
Isuzu Motors South Africa	42
Iveco	23
MAN Automotive	161
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	269
Powerstar	16
Scania	119
Tata	10
Toyota	24
VECV South Africa	1
Volvo Group Southern Africa	303

Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 81
Isuzu Motors South Africa	1
Iveco	3
MAN Automotive	32
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	16
Scania	27
Tata	1
Volvo Group Southern Africa	1

*Source: National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa).



TMH

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TECHNOLOGY FINALLY DISRUPTING MINIBUS- TAXI INDUSTRY

WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY EMERGING AND THE LAUNCH OF THE UBER BUS SERVICE IN AFRICA, THERE MIGHT FINALLY BE A FORCE TO DISRUPT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINIBUS-TAXI INDUSTRY. MARISKA MORRIS REPORTS

The South African minibus-taxi industry was once thought to be untouchable. Despite its informal and unstructured nature, the industry is the main mode of transport for about 7,2 million of the 14,2-million households in South Africa and carries 3,7-million employees to work, according to a Stats SA report by statistician-general Pali Lehohla.

Its success is mostly due to the industry's ability to cater for an underserved population. It often operates in remote areas, transporting some of the poorer South Africans at an affordable price, although it also caters for a large portion of the middle class in urban areas.

Government has attempted to disrupt the industry a number of times, with the introduction of bus rapid transport (BRT) routes being the most recent example. Despite BRT systems buying out taxi owners and employing former taxi drivers, minibus taxis have remained on the roads.

Some BRT routes, like the MyCiTi in Cape Town, are now trying to integrate minibus taxis on certain routes to provide a better service and increase the number of commuters.

However, it seems that a worthy adversary for the minibus-taxi industry might have finally arrived: technology.

More specifically, e-hailing technologies made popular by ride-sharing services like Uber are challenging how the mostly informal industry operates. These technologies give commuters more control over their transport experience.

BENEFITS OF E-HAILING TECHNOLOGIES

Commuters determine when and where the vehicle will collect them. While the taxi industry does offer quite a bit of flexibility in terms of pick-up and drop-off points, it can still be challenging for commuters to find a minibus taxi travelling in the correct direction that is not already full.

The e-hailing technologies also automate the payment process, which can make transporting commuters even easier for urban minibus-taxi drivers.

A further benefit to drivers is that they will be able to easily see the number of commuters requesting transport on a specific route, which reduces their need to drive around looking for commuters to fill up the vehicle. Owners can also have more transparency regarding the number of commuters and income they can expect.

TECHNOLOGY ALREADY AVAILABLE

In February, **FOCUS** reported that the new transport-

UBER'S MINIBUS TAXIS

Uber launched its Uber Bus, or high-capacity vehicle, service in Egypt and Mexico in December. With the new service, commuters can request a ride through the app and are matched with passengers travelling in the same direction. The shared ride service is also said to reduce the cost.

James Thorne, in an article for news website *Geek Wired*, quotes Miraj Rahematpura, product manager at Uber's high-capacity vehicles team: "We're seeing the growth of this product take off faster than UberX did when it launched in those cities – really early on there are signs of product market fit."

Since the launch of the service, Uber has also acquired its taxi-cab e-hailing competitor Careem, which operates in the Middle East, for US\$ 3.1 billion (R43 billion). Before the acquisition, Careem bought out Indian bus shuttle service app Commut.

Uber is now planning to launch its high-capacity vehicle service in India and Kenya next. South Africa will most likely see the service launched locally soon thereafter.

Editor for news organisation *The Infonomist*, Wesley

Diphoko, in an article for *Independent Online*, says: "There's little that the local taxi industry can do to stop the entry of Uber Bus into South Africa. There's only one option for the local taxi industry and that is innovation. The local taxi industry should embrace technology.

"The local technology ecosystem should support the local minibus-taxi industry in this regard to avoid losing this lucrative market to a foreign-based technology entity." Diphoko is not the only one calling for government to support the minibus-taxi industry to implement technology.

In a separate article for *Independent Online*, Clayton Naidoo, GM for Cisco Systems sub-Saharan Africa, notes: "A future where taxis can operate efficiently and profitably, while improving safety and providing a more convenient customer and employee experience, is possible. However, digital business transformation is required.

"There are some caveats, though. International experience shows that these solutions are best implemented alongside awareness campaigns for commuters and government incentives to drive adoption, as well as ensuring the regulatory environment is conducive."

While it might take government some time to join in on the revolution, it would be best for minibus-taxi owners to adopt technology and optimise their services before the global e-hailing giant steps in and disrupts the biggest public transport market in South Africa. **F**

management technology platform AftaRobot had launched in South Africa. The system, which was designed for mobile devices, is used by the Johannesburg Southern Suburbs Taxi Association.

Obakeng Morapeli Matlhoko, founder of AftaRobot, said: "Commuters will be able to use the app to book a taxi in advance. Taxi drivers will also benefit. As a load and route-based service, commuter behaviour and routes will now become clear, resulting in more efficient operations."

While the system has been implemented with only one taxi association out of the many operating in South Africa, Matlhoko hopes to implement it with more than 10 000 vehicles and 4 000 owners over the next couple of years.

There is sure to be some pushback, but the industry can't afford to delay the technology revolution much longer – especially if Uber's latest venture is successful.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

FOCUS ON MEDIUM COMMERCIAL VEHICLES



FOCUS finds out in what condition the medium commercial vehicle (MCV) segment finds itself during 2019.

NAMPO REPORT



Nampo Harvest Day 2019 is expected to attract the biggest number of visitors and exhibitors yet. It is a show not to be missed.

FLEET FOCUS



South Africa has a number of bus fleets of which to be proud. We meet some of them.

DRIVETRAINS



We explore alternative power and visit a company that offers electric-vehicle conversions to operators on local soil.

WORLD ON WHEELS: RUSSIA



From infrastructure overhauls to expansion of businesses, we take a look at the transport and logistics industry in Russia.

AFTERMARKET FOCUS: LUBRICATION



FOCUS finds out if there is any merit to using additives with drivetrain lubricants.

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: FOOD AND BEVERAGE



Food and beverage transportation is important to the South African economy. We investigate some of the key aspects of this type of transport.

FOCUS ON AFRICA



FOCUS reports on the transport conditions in a few north African countries.

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Hollard.



We need more

heroes!

Stephen Meje, Hollard Highway Hero 2018

True heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things – without expecting recognition.

Hollard Highway Heroes is an annual competition to identify and handsomely reward the best truck drivers in South Africa. Better truck driving benefits us all: drivers, fleet owners, Hollard and, importantly, every road-using South African.

Hollard Highway Heroes 2019 is special: for the first time, the competition is open to all truck drivers, no matter who their insurer is. We believe every truck driver deserves a crack at winning the title of Highway Hero.

The overall winner of the 2019 competition will win big: a whopping R100 000 in cash and prizes!

If you're a long-distance truck driver, enter today for *mahala!* And if you're a fleet owner, encourage your drivers to do so. You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain!

Entries for the 2019 Hollard Highway Heroes competition are now open. Visit hollard.co.za/highway-heroes for more information.



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T's and C's apply, for more information visit hollard.co.za/highway-heroes

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