



Machinery



TORQUE TALK

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CSIRO's new Phenomobile

SCIENTISTS from CSIRO's High Resolution Plant Phenomics Centre (HRPPC) have taken crop monitoring, literally to a new level with the development of its Phenomobile.

The unit, engineered by Tatura Engineering to meet CSIRO's requirements, is a modified golf cart mounted onto a wheeled gantry and is used for raised photography, imaging, sensing and measurement of crops.

The HRPPC uses high tech imaging to measure crops undergoing different stresses such as salt, drought or heat stress, with the aim of selecting and developing plants that can cope with these environments.

The Phenomobile is used to traverse the crops and capture images and data used to understand how the crops are performing during periods of stress.

Infrared thermometers, for example, are used to measure crop canopy temperature (this being a measure of plants' water use) while a PGR stereo system camera measures plot volume and crop density (plants per square metre, leaf area index).

The Phenomobile is capable of speeds between five and 10km/h.

CSIRO says it soon will reveal an aerial blimp to do similar crop monitoring.

Watch out, the robots are coming.



□ This is CSIRO's answer to crop monitoring. They call it a Phenomobile and from a scientific point of view, it is a great way to monitor crops with infrared cameras and thermometers. The drive-line is interesting attached to a golf cart mounted in the frame. The next job will be to design a quick-tach system to use the cart for a game of golf when you're not crop monitoring.

Gleaner on the Tube

AGCO's WA area salesman Joe Ford says Gleaner is evaluating a new combine harvester.

And AGCO has released a clip of the evaluation on YouTube.

The new model is similar to a conventional Gleaner with a cross rotor but a lot larger diameter and performance.

The YouTube clips are being posted during the current North America harvest.

If you search under Gleaner super 7, all will be revealed.

Joe says the clips are very informative with information on competitor machines.

Production of the new unit is expected to start next year and will be available in Australia in 2012.

If you're like Torque, you have to have your hand held to visit the site:

<http://www.youtube.com/watc>

[h?v=dwX2VFBwk4s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwX2VFBwk4s)

In the old days, you might have been lucky to receive a photograph of new models being tested before release, from a Deep Throat.

With today's technology farmers have taken on the role happily snapping away with their mobile phones.

Pushing the power

TALKING of Deep Throats, Torque's impressive list didn't shed any light on persistent rumours that Case IH is planning to build a new Steiger tractor with a power rating of 448kW (600hp).

"I've heard the rumours but nobody from Case IH is saying anything," one Case IH dealer said this week.

The rumour has gained traction, excuse the pun, because

of a recent photograph of a Steiger posted on a UK web site with a "600" decal on the bonnet.

Is somebody with Photoshop having fun?

For the record, the current top-of-the-range Steiger boasts a power rating of 403kW (540hp), the same rating as its stablemate New Holland T9060. John Deere's 9630 is rated at 395kW (530hp).

But Challenger holds the mantle as the world's most powerful production model tractor with its MT975C.

The company claims the MT975C has the ability to generate more than 630 engine horsepower (470kW) — more than any other articulated tractor in its class.

Farmers pick the trend

US farmers are ahead of the game, as usual, as marketers predict a return to better times on the back of stronger wheat prices.

Torque has heard that demand for farm equipment is partly driven by a farmer rush to avoid what they expect to be higher prices for new tractors from next year, when the US government will raise carbon emission standards on such vehicles.

It's a sure bet prices for other new equipment, such as combine harvesters and self-propelled sprayers also will rise.

And if prices go up in the US, there's no prize for guessing where else prices will spike.

So if you're in the market for a machine, it might be an astute move to grab a low hour used model now.

As new prices go up you can expect used prices to follow.