John Deere's new Turf General 2030 utility vehicle can be used as a general materials transporter or with specialist turf maintenance equipment for a wide range of applications in the golf & turf and commercial groundcare markets. It was previewed at BTME99, before being officially launched in the UK and Ireland in the autumn.

The standard tipping cargo box has a capacity of 876kg, and towing capacity at the rear hitch is 689kg. Overall capacity, with driver, passenger and loaded attachment is 1203kg, while unladen weight is 841kg.

In addition to the cargo box, it can be fitted with a range of different attachments utilising the vehicle's hydraulic services and mechanical pto. These include sprayers, spreaders, top dressers, materials collection systems and adapter kits for other turf maintenance equipment.

The new 180A walk-behind greens mower made its first ever appearance in Europe at the show. This is an 18in version of the John Deere range as a result of customer feedback, and provides an alternative choice for greenskeepers working on undulating greens, where the narrower configuration provides better corner following and reduces the risk of scalping.

The 180A mower incorporates an 11-blade, 46cm reel, delivering a high quality cut at up to 3.4mph, with adjustable cutting height. Dual aluminium traction rollers are fitted, covering the entire length of the bedknife. An external differential drive splits power to both the rollers, allowing straight tracking and easy turning.

Toro launched a new subsurface injector at BTME99 is designed to save greenskeepers' time and money in controlling soil-borne pests and diseases, as well as being safer and more environmentally friendly.

The unit employs a sprayer with a 160-gallon tank hooked up to a coulter blade system, and is towed behind a tractor. There are 16 blades and spraying is carried out at low pressure up to 200psi to a depth of up to one inch.

This also can mean savings on chemicals through reduced application rates and frequency of treatments - while putting chemicals directly into the ground eliminates drift and run-off. Toro Commercial Products' UK distributor, Lely, expects a lot of initial interest from greenskeepers as the product has some unique features.

The new Toro Reelmaster 5400-D four-wheel-drive fairway mower introduced at BTME is designed to offer a more powerful alternative to the company's Reelmaster 5200-D launched last summer. Both machines are Toro's response to customers who want extra horsepower for more demanding applications.

Hydraulic frame for the H models has been simplified and now runs on four small low ground pressure transport wheels reducing ground compaction and the price.

The central quick adjustment lever for ease of adjustment of the tine angle has already proven itself with the 7212 and 7316 models. Now this special feature has been built into these bigger machines. Maintenance free self lubricated sealed bearings on all pivot points. This innovation saves the operator many hours greasing. Only the crank shaft and rollers retain their grease nipples.

All models are supplied with a standard rear roller. These not only provide the customer with an extra facility but also acts as a storage stand too. Both front and rear rollers have integral scraper bars.

A standard tool box is integrated in the Vert-Drains, containing the manuals and a combi-tool. Turf Fingers are optional. These can be used when working with weak turf and helps to keep the turf in position while verti-draining.

Excellently low working speed of 7.5 mph (12 km/hr) Power steering, tiltable steering column and hydraulic frame for the ‘H’ models has been built into these bigger machines. Maintenance free self lubricated sealed bearings on all pivot points. This innovation saves the operator many hours greasing. Only the crank shaft and rollers retain their grease nipples.

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Tastron Turf Care and Specialty Products launched new products under the Jacobsen, Ransomes and Izeki names. Jacobsen has added two all new light weight fairway mowers to its range of high performance turf care machinery. Labelled the LF 3400/LF 3800, the five unit mowers combine durability and productivity whilst retaining low ground pressure.

Available with two- or four-wheeled hydrostatic drive, the new LF models are powered by 34hp (LF 3400) and 36 hp (LF 3800) water cooled diesel engines, producing a maximum working speed of 7.5 mph (12 km/hr). Power steering, tiltable steering column and hydraulic oil monitor with horn alarm, all are standard.

The five cutting units span 8ft 4in and use Jacobsen's well proven FastAttach reel mount system for fast, easy maintenance, adjustment and changeover to verti-cut rollers, available as an option. The reel diameters are 7-blade Sinch for the LF 3400 and 11 blade inch for the LF 3800.

The operator's platform offers clear, uncluttered access from either side and the controls are ergonomically placed to one side of the driver. All regular service points are easily accessible. Both models are supplied with an integral roll bar. Price of the LF 3400 begins at £25,840.00 + VAT (4-wheel drive £29,215.00 + VAT), and the LF 3800 at £33,150.00 + VAT. The Ransomes G-Plex 11 supersedes the acclaimed Greensplex 160.

Containing a host of features designed to enhance performance, productivity and ease of servicing, the G-Plex 11 is available with a choice of high-efficiency 18hp
petrol or 18.8hp diesel engines. Tandem hydrostatic transmission and reel pumps are direct driven by the engine, eliminating the need for belts and pulleys, reducing sound levels, vibration and maintenance.

A notable feature of the G-Plex 11 is its patented centre reel which pivots sideways clear of the mower for convenient adjustment and servicing. In work, an automatic time delay lowers and raises the centre reel after the front two units to maintain an in-line finish at the perimeter of the green.

It also has a number of design points which help enhance mowing performance and ease of use. These include a patented stabiliser linkage which levels the cutting units parallel to the ground during lifting and lowering, ensuring an even, level cut on undulating terrain and eliminating unit bounce in transport. Two new ride-on rotary mowers were introduced by Iseki for the 1999 grass-cutting season.

Known as the SF200 and SF230, these new mowers are powered by 20hp and 22.5hp water-cooled diesel engines respectively. Both have two pedal hydrostatic transmissions offering infinitely variable forward and reverse travel up to a maximum speed of 8.4 mph. Maximum cutting performance is assured by rugged, shaft-driven Iseki mower decks available in 48in and 54in working widths. An hydraulic weight transfer system between the deck and power unit maintains maximum traction at the driving wheels while helping minimise grass damage.

The Iseki SF200 and SF230 ride-on front mowers are priced from £7325.00 + VAT (SF 200) & £8890.00 + VAT (SF 230).

Scotts UK Professional launched an exciting new product at BTME which can halve the amount of time grounds and greenkeeping staff need to spend mowing grass freeing up valuable man hours for deployment on more meaningful tasks. The product is Scotts Shortcut, a grass growth control agent which, unique among currently available growth regulators, reduces grass growth without sacrificing sward vigour and appearance.

Shortcut contains the new active ingredient trinexapac-ethyl, and has been the subject of an exhaustive series of UK trials over more than three years. The development work on Shortcut has involved research work at Scotts Levington Research Station as well as “in use” trials at a number of prestigious venues around the UK, including Wentworth and Loch Lomond Golf Courses.

Consistently, Shortcut has successfully reduced mowing requirements by 50% on fairways and tees, freeing up labour at times of peak demand for mowing and other cultural activity. Crucially, turf responds positively to treatment with Shortcut, with trial sites also reporting enhanced colour, thickening of the sward and improved root development following application.

It works by restricting the lengthening of leaves and internodes over a period of four to six weeks. Because of this mode of action, Shortcut is able to reduce mowing requirements by 50% without sacrificing sward vigour and wear resistance.

Scotts UK Professional launched a new, improved turf wetting agent at the BTME exhibition this month.

Aquamaster replaces the old Levington Aquamaster and offers greenkeepers and groundsmen a better performance in use and improved value for money. Aquamaster is designed to improve water penetration in turf areas, reducing surface water, encouraging deeper rooting and combating dry patch.

Importantly in this market, given recent publicity, Scotts Aquamaster does not contain environmental oestrogens.

Aquamaster is available through the Scotts Master Distributor network in 10 litre packs, two to an outer.

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