

35th

ANNIVERSARY

Growing green

The John Deere Co. reports on advancements that have made mowers easier and safer to operate.



Many companies seek to meet or exceed ANSI safety standards in mower design features.

quickly and easily to switch over from one job to another efficiently.

Safety initiatives

Another area of primary concern to manufacturers of commercial grounds care equipment is safety. The American National Safety Institute sets safety standards for equipment manufacturers. These are not federal mandates, but many companies try to meet or even exceed the standards they set. For instance, John Deere includes a safety message in every advertisement, gives operational and safety videos in English and Spanish, uses bilingual decals on equipment, and equips machines with safety shielding. A variety of operator's presence controls are also present.

Manufacturers are challenged to design and build equipment that can be operated safely, at peak performance over its lifetime and is constantly improved to meet the ever-changing demands of the commercial customer.

Over the past 35 years the green industry has grown exponentially. Many changes have occurred with this growth, including the way commercial equipment is both built and used. Productivity, durability and versatility are major points that manufacturers consider when designing new machines.

Commercial mowing professionals are constantly seeking ways to mow larger areas in less time to save money. Manufacturers are doing their part to design machines that are higher in quality, more durable and have very little downtime. Enhanced customer support, which includes better trained technicians and parts services, are also increasingly important to commercial operators.

Generally, commercial equipment is being designed to be more powerful while being fuel-efficient and running quieter. It's also being designed to perform a multitude of jobs in a variety of conditions. Manufacturers are working their hardest to ensure that there's a machine on the market that can meet the challenge,

whether it's higher, thicker turf or moist conditions.

Capacity increase

To be able to do more in less time, mowers are now being designed with wider cutting widths and tighter turning radii for improved maneuverability. For example, John Deere's new wide-area front mower, available in summer 1998, features 11 feet of cutting width which allows operators to groom large open areas in half the time of traditional 72-inch mowers, saving both time and labor costs.

The variety of available attachments has also increased the commercial landscapers' productivity. Most tractors can accommodate attachments such as snow blowers, brooms, blades and tillers as well as side-discharge and/or mulching mower decks. Most of the attachments can be connected