

Zero-turn tech zipping along

BY CURT HARLER

The zero-turn industry is growing and evolving the same way minivans have changed since their introduction years ago by Chrysler.

While many manufacturers changed both the look and role of minivans, look for zero-turns to change in the areas of maintenance and operator comfort.

"While the base platform of zeros continues to evolve, most of the changes will boil down to serviceability and maintenance," says John Cloutier, Product Manager for Exmark of Beatrice, NB (www.exmark.com). He notes that landscape professionals, like car owners, prefer to turn a key and go rather than deal with upkeep. "Commercial mid-mounts are the same," he remarks.

Serviceability is a given. After all, landscape pros make money running their mowers, not working on them in a shop. "People don't want so many service points. They want fewer places



Kubota's ZD Pro Series mowers feature 54-, 60- and 72-in. decks.

to grease," Cloutier says. As a result, manufacturers are designing-out high maintenance components. Examples include sealed bearings and spindle assemblies that don't require periodic greasing.

Room for improvement

Blade maintenance and air filtering are other areas ripe for improvement. Many blade manufacturers are looking at technology to extend blade life and to increase the time interval between sharpenings, Cloutier says, but most of them have yet to show the investment-to-value return that many professionals desire.

Air filters are another story. The industry is moving to a canister air filter fitted vertically above the engine. What used to be an option is now standard for many zero-turns. "They're more expensive," Cloutier says, "but they lengthen change intervals and even provide a slight horsepower boost."

Operator comfort is the other area where zero-turns are improving. With workers in the driver's seat 10 hours a day, many mower companies are looking for ways to add comfort with such items as seats or operator controls. Landscape pros are also interested in convenience items such as deck lifts.

4 key areas of performance

There are four key areas of mower performance, according to Harold Redman, vice president of product management for Simplicity (www.simplicitymfg.com, Port Washington, WI):

- ▶ cutting ability
- ▶ ease of use
- ▶ traction
- ▶ reliability

While some landscapers buy zero-turns on the basis of horsepower, it should not be the bottom line of a purchase decision. "Purchase a product based on its ability to provide lasting performance, not just on its horsepower or price," Redman says.

KUBOTA

888/458-2682

TORRANCE, CA

www.kubota.com

■ New ZD-28F is largest in ZD Series

■ Powered by a liquid-cooled, 3-cylinder E-TVCS diesel engine

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- Cut 60- or 72-in.-wide with three blades
- Circle #272

CUB CADET

877/835-7841

CLEVELAND, OH

www.cubcommercial.com



- M60 Tank series mid-mount zero-turn
 - Choose 25-hp Kohler Command or 23-hp Kawasaki V-Twin OHV engine
 - 60-in. Command Cut System deck
 - Marbane blades give 1.7-in. overlap (50% more than competition)
 - Dual 5-gal. fuel tanks
- Circle #273

ENCORE

800/228-4255

BEATRICE, NB

www.encoreequipment.com

- Prowler comes in 52-, 61- and 72-in. widths
 - New 25-hp Kawasaki air-cooled engine or 27 to 31 hp in gas and diesel
 - 5.5-in. cutting height
 - Mows at 10 mph
- Circle #274

THE GRASSHOPPER CO.

316/345-8621

MOUNDRIDGE, KS

www.grasshoppermower.com

- True ZeroTurn power units offer horizontal crankshaft OHV engines
 - 14 to 28 hp, liquid- or air-cooled
 - Gas, duel fuel LP/gas, or diesel
 - Mow at 10.5 mph
 - 52-, 61- or 72-in. decks
- Circle #275

HOWARD PRICE TURF EQUIPMENT

636/532-7000

CHESTERFIELD, MO

- New Blazer 360Z-80 features 80-in. cut
 - Mows 6.46 acres at 8 mph
 - Flotation for dips, knolls with wing operation to 20 degrees
 - 25-hp Kawasaki engine or 24-hp Honda
- Circle #276

JOHN DEERE

800/537-8233

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC

www.deere.com



- 797 Z-Trak is newest zero mower from Deere
 - Handles 60- or 72-in. side-discharge deck
 - 29-hp, liquid-cooled Kawasaki engine
 - Mowing speeds to 11 mph
 - Cut height from 1.5 to 5 in. in 1/4 in. increments
- Circle #277

DIXON

INDUSTRIES

800/264-6075

COFFEYVILLE, KS

www.dixon-ztr.com

- ZTR-8000 series commercial ZTR mower
 - 25-hp Kohler Command or 26.5-hp Daihatsu diesel engine
 - 60- or 72-in. cut widths
 - Attachments easily mount to mower with automotive-type receiver hitch
- Circle #278

BOB-CAT

414/637-6711

RACINE, WI

www.ransomes.com

- Bob-Cat ZT-200 Series features 20-hp Yanmar diesel
 - Also comes with 19-hp or 23-hp Kawasaki V-Twin engine or 25-hp Kohler Command
 - Lever-type steering
 - Independent power to each wheel
 - Mowing speeds to 8 mph
- Circle #279

LESCO

800/321-5325

CLEVELAND, OH

www.lesco.com

- Viper is mid-mount zero radius turn
 - 48-in. deck standard; 54-, 60-in. available
 - Cut height from 1.5 to 5.5 in.
 - Powered by a 19-hp Kawasaki twin-cylinder OHV
- Circle #280



HUSQVARNA

704/597-5000

CHARLOTTE, NC

www.husqvarna.com

- Intermediate ZTH offers small, compact frame
 - Cut heights from 1.5 to 5 in., 1/4-in. increments
 - 11.4-gal. fuel capacity (in two 5.7-gal. tanks)
 - 18-, 21- or 28-hp Kawasaki V-Twin engines
- Circle #281

WALKER MOWERS

970/221-5614

FORT COLLINS, CO

- The MTEFI line now available



in a liquid-cooled package

- MTEFI29 combines fuel injection with liquid cooling
 - Kohler's 29-hp fuel-injected Aegis engine
 - Available in spring 2003
- Circle #282

JACOBSEN

866/522-6273

CHARLOTTE, NC

www.jacobsen.com

- JZT-2000 Series
- Choose 52- or 61-in. deck

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- Models with 19-, 23- or 25-hp Kawasaki
 - JZT-2230-LC has 23-hp Kohler liquid cooled engine
- Circle #283



Grazer-Ingersoll's front cut zero has up to 22 hp.

EXMARK
402/223-4010
 BEATRICE, NB
www.exmark.com



- LazerZ available with 27-hp liquid-cooled Kohler
 - 60- or 72-in. UltraCut deck options
 - Cuts six acres per hour
- Circle #284

- 52-, 62- and 72-in. side-discharge decks
 - Decks float with tilt-back for easy service
 - Add a grass collector, snow blower, cab or ROPS
- Circle #286

SCAG
920/387-0100
 MAYVILLE, WI
www.scag.com

- Tiger Cub is like the Turf Tiger, but in a compact package
 - 40- to 52-in. decks
 - Choose among five engines
 - 52-in. unit cuts 23 acres a day
- Circle #287

HUSTLER
800/395-4757
 HESSTON, KS
www.excelhustler.com



- Z-rider features 60-in. deck
 - 23-hp Kawasaki engine
 - Low center of gravity: seat height is just 29 in.
- Circle #288

YAZOO/KEES
877/368-8873
 BEATRICE, NB
info@yazookees.com

- Max 2 is large frame, mid-mount zero
- Seven engine options from 23 to 27 hp
- 52-, 61-, and 72-in. cutting widths
- Quick-lift deck adjustment cuts from 1.5 to 6 in.

Circle #285

GRAZER-INGERSOLL
920/582-5000
 WINNECONNE, WI

- Front-cut zero-turn mowers available in 18 to 22 hp



Dump debris right from your seat on this Toro rider.

SNAPPER
888/762-7737
 MCDONOUGH, GA
www.snapper.com

- New for 2003 are two Z-Force mid-mount zeros
 - 19-hp Kawasaki OHV V-twin with 48-in. deck
 - 21-hp Kawasaki OHV V-twin with 52-in. mower
 - Two 6-gal. fuel tanks
- Circle #

- Twin hydrostatic transmissions
 - High back seat with armrests
- Circle #289

THE TORO COMPANY
612/888-8801
 BLOOMINGTON, MN
www.toro.com

- Mid-mount Z287L has liquid-cooled 27-hp Kawasaki
 - 62- or 72-in. mowing deck
 - Z-Stand Lift raises deck without additional tools
- Circle #

FERRIS INDUSTRIES
800/933-6175
 MUNNSVILLE, NY
www.ferrisindustries.com

- IS 1000Z model features two-wheel front IS independent suspension
- IS 1000Z, 1000Z both have 21-hp Kawasaki engine for 48-in. deck



- 23-hp Kawasaki engine with 52-in. deck
 - Also available in a 23-hp 100Z with 61-in. deck
- Circle #290

SWISHER
800/222-8183
 WARRENSBURG, MO
www.swisherinc.com

- ZT17542 42-in. cut zero turn radius mower has three blades
- 17.5-hp Intek Briggs & Stratton engine