

TAKING A STAND

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business-to-business for John Deere, which offers three models of its Quik-Trak mower. "In some cases, a dealer has to convince a customer to try it, but if he already knows a stand-on is a platform that will give him certain advantages, all you've got to do is sell him the brand."

The way manufacturers talk up the stand-on, it should be a pretty easy sale.

"It's the kind of product that is fast enough to handle a lot of the large commercial jobs, but still compact and nimble enough to be used on the residential properties, the smaller yards," says Edric Funk, marketing manager for Toro Landscape Contractor Equipment.

It's those benefits — along with a desire to increase worker productivity — that is getting contractors to take a closer look.

"We believe that's because of the tendency for commercial cutters to seek out more carefully, what is going to be their next machine, to make sure it is the very best purchase," says Bill

Wright, CEO, Wright Manufacturing. "People are scrutinizing their purchases a lot more than they were."

Though no hard and fast numbers are available, every manufacturer (at least those offering a stand-on) talks about stand-ons cannibalizing sales of mid-mount Zs and hydro walk-behinds.

"From last year to this year, the interest in stand-ons has greatly increased," says Trae Humphreys, product support leader at Ariens Co. "People are really starting to realize the benefits of a stand-on machine that we've been preaching for years."

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↑ EverRide's ScorpionFX

→ Great Dane's SuperSurfer

↓ Toro's GrandStand



With money tight, the most efficient use of a contractor's mower dollars might be a stand-on model.

A RISING TIDE lifts all boats, and when it comes to stand-on mowers, that rising tide is awareness of the benefits these machines have to offer.

Stand-on mowers have been on the scene for years, but only in the past few has word of their benefits reached a wide audience — so much so, that there is at least anecdotal evidence that stand-on mowers are cutting into sales of both

hydro walk-behind and mid-mount Z mower sales. And that reach has a lot to do with the increasing number of manufacturers in the stand-on space.

"The incoming brands into the marketplace, which raise the awareness for all, will give us lift in the stand-on," says Gilbert Peña, segment strategy manager,

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Ariens offers a series of mowers through its Gravelly, EverRide and Great Dane lines.

For those unfamiliar with the sermon, the message is that stand-ons offer the best of both the walk-behind and mid-mount Z mowers.

"People are looking at replacements for both, for all the same reasons, Humphreys says. "You gain some efficiency; you have better visibility. You're fit into tighter areas than a mid-mount Z."

Stand-ons have the power and speed of the mid-mount Zs, but they are typically lighter, which makes them safer.

"You don't get the tippy-ness on a hill," explains Wright, who in 1997 was the first to build and sell a stand-on mower. Today, the company offers a



↑ Wright's Stander ZK

variety of mowers in the Stander line. "A mid-mount Z, typically, will weigh 150 to 200 lbs. more than this machine. The stand-on design allows us to make (a mower) with less metal. It's lighter, more agile; yet it has the straight out speed and the power to drive these blades.

"You get the double whammy effect — a more significant machine, and you get the benefit of it being a stand-on," Wright continues.

For those not completely ready to give up their walk-behinds, Toro launched the GrandStand mower at the



EFFICIENT MOWING

Green Industry Conference and Equipment Expo last year.

"Where operators don't feel comfortable operating a stand-on in a ride-on mode, they can turn it into a walk behind," Funk says. "It saves them from having to make the trip back to the trailer to switch to a walk-behind."

Toro has been pleased with the response to its new mower.

"We've been surprised at how quickly things are taking off in those markets that were less well established," Funk says.

As word continues to spread, more contractors are taking a look at stand-ons as a viable replacement for hydro walk-behinds and the mid-mount Zs.

"We're getting the attention today, where people who've never had a Wright before — sort of dismissed us a bit — when they take a ride on the ZK, it's kind of mind blowing," Wright says. "It's a jaw dropper." LHM

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