

Herbicide	Crabgrass	Goosegrass	Foxtail	Poa Annua	Dallis	Spurge	Henbit	Chickweed
PENDULUM	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H
BARRICADE <sup>®</sup>	H	M	M	M	MH	M	H	H
DIMENSION <sup>®</sup>	H	M	H	M	H	M	M	M
TEAM <sup>®</sup>	H	M	M	M	M	M	NR	NR
RONSTAR <sup>®</sup>	M	H	NR	M	M	NR	NR	NR
SURFLAN <sup>®</sup>	H	H	H	M	MH	M	H	H
<b>Level of control</b>	Medium		Medium-High		High	Not Registered		

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**BASF**

## SMALL CONTRACTOR

**Name:** Kurt Bienmueller  
**Title:** Vice-president, part-owner  
**Company:** Four Square Landscaping Co.  
**Location:** Dallas, TX  
**2000 revenues:** \$1,000,000  
**Employees:** 18  
**Service mix:** 80% commercial,  
20% residential

**K**urt Bienmueller, vice-president and part-owner of Four Square Landscaping Co. in Dallas, TX, says quality, not price, was the issue when



Kurt Bienmueller, left, with co-worker Brett Chapman, listens closely to what his employees have to say about how his equipment is running.

he began his business five years ago.

"We wanted to get better and larger pieces of equipment to keep crews to a minimum," says Bienmueller, whose accounts are mostly commercial with 65% of services devoted to maintenance and the rest to design. "We bought mowers that

would have a minimum amount of breakdowns and would be easy to repair. Also, their parts had to be easily available, and they had to meet or exceed voluntary safety standards."

"We also looked at the weight of the equipment so it didn't wear people down,

*continued from page 49*

### Show me the money

Financing is a viable sales and inventory management tool for many mowing equipment manufacturers. At Husq-

## Mower buying tips from the pros

The next time you're in the market for mowing equipment, consider the following guidelines contributed by John Dingus, Kurt Bienmueller and Larry Burkland:

- Be familiar with the dealer. Make sure it's a product name that you can depend on.
- Check on customer service and whether or not on-time delivery and immediate part availability are options.
- Productivity vs. price: How often do you want to turn your equipment.

over? Consider your cash-flow situation. Can you afford to spend the big bucks up front?

- Safety standards have been met and training materials are readily available.
- User friendly.
- Easy-to-maintain.
- Visit trade shows and read trade journals to find the latest and greatest in mowing equipment and accessories.

varna, for example, they offer "credit card/revolving charge plans, deferred financing plans and leasing options."

"We encourage our dealers to consider return on investment when discussing solutions to end users. A solution, then, may sometimes require a greater investment, but the return will also be greater," says Taylor. "The initial cost of a unit is not the greatest an end user will face. Losses related to a downed unit, productivity, etc. may, in fact, be greater."

According to Gregg Breningmeyer, marketing manager for commercial mowing at John Deere, Triangle Park, NC, they have found that interest rates have not been an important consideration in a customer's buying decisions.

"What is important is cash flow — how much money is needed as a down payment and how much money it's going to cost on a monthly basis," says Breningmeyer.

### The value of dealers

In many industries, including the Green Industry, consolidation is an economic fact of life. Consolidation by mower manufacturers is paring down the number of dealers and, therefore, places to get equipment serviced. Manufacturers are responding by either making their dealers stronger, helping them service equipment more profitably or making mowers easier for contractors to fix themselves.

"We're consistently selling our product through the dealer channel only — avoiding the temptation of internet

*continued bottom page 54*

"It's also important to belong to ALCA and some of the other landscape organizations out there to see what their members are using and what conclusions they have drawn about a particular piece of equipment."

— Bienmueller

and whether or not it was self-propelled," he adds. "We looked at the deck to see if it floated and how accessible it would be to change a belt or a blade."

Bienmueller says a lot of his equipment purchases are based on what his crew members are telling him. "I'll try out a piece of equipment in the field and get input from my guys. We have a very close relationship with our employees, so we make our decisions as a family."

For mowing, Bienmueller uses walk-be-

hinds for turf and "around-a-pool" areas, riding mowers for open cutting areas and push and hand mowers for up-close work around decorative islands.



Four-Square Landscaping employee Jose Sanchez will give boss Kurt Bienmueller input on how this blower is running once through with the task.

The right equipment has been only one factor in the 35% a year growth rate of Bienmueller's business. Doing a quality job with that equipment, he says, advertises itself. "Dallas is a very competitive marketplace," he says. "Still, word-of-mouth has grown our business tremendously."

"How well you take care of your customers and your employees is what counts, too," he adds.

Communication, Bienmueller says, is key in making sure crew members aren't putting themselves in dangerous situations.

"We're in touch constantly with our employees," Bienmueller says. "I make sure I see them throughout the day."

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Circle No.127

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selling and big box stores," says Walker. "If you don't do that, you will not have a viable service system to take care of your customers."

"Finding reliable dealers who will even service mowers purchased at big box stores is becoming more difficult for landscapers," adds Carol Dilger, marketing services manager at Gravely, an Ariens Company in Brillion, WI that makes riding and walking lawn mowers. "Also, as the number of dealers continues to decline, it becomes even more difficult to find someone who will service the unit."

According to Kadel, manufacturers who go to big box stores are after quick sales numbers with a short term plan. "They end up ignoring the value of the independent dealer and the role he plays in keeping equipment going," says Kadel.

As a manufacturer of walk-behinds, Bill Shea, vice-president of sales at Ferris Industries in Munnsville, NY, says "manufacturers have to partner with those commercial dealers who put the commercial cutter at the highest priority on their customer list."

Taylor adds, "At the same time we must understand the challenges the contractor is facing and make sure we are responding with solutions to address them. For instance, is it the actual price that is driving the contractors to the big boxes or the convenience factor?"

"Some of the ways we work with our dealers are by identifying the buying habits, shopping patterns and what drives key decisions of contractors," he adds.

Ease of servicing goes hand-in-hand with productivity. Not only does an equipment owner want servicing to be fast so he can spend more time mowing, but he also wants servicing to be easy and convenient so it actually gets done.

According to Warfel, the following are specific design features that make self-servic-

"Manufacturers must work with dealers to help them understand that service is a key factor to continued business success. While we are working to build equipment that will require less daily maintenance, dealer training is essential."

— Dilger

ing of products easier:

- ▶ The rear hood can be fully raised to provide full access to the engine area.
- ▶ All routine maintenance points can be serviced from the right side of the tractor.
- ▶ Engine oil can be checked without raising the hood. This is especially convenient if the unit is equipped with a grass collector system.
- ▶ A maintenance decal is located under the hood, making it easy to check for routine service intervals.
- ▶ Electrical components are located together to make troubleshooting and servicing quick and easy if a problem should occur.
- ▶ Engine oil filter, transmission filter and fuel filter are all accessible and replaceable.
- ▶ All mower decks can be flipped up for safe, simple, easy servicing and cleaning. No need to disconnect the PTO drive shaft when flipping up the deck and no tools required.

#### **To mulch or not to mulch**

Mulching is a hot subject among professional these days. According to Cuddihe, Great Dane is testing new designs so their customers have the best mulching capabilities available.

"We don't believe mulching has been perfected yet, but we think our mulch systems are the best there are," says Cuddihe.

Kilgas says many people have a misconception of mulching. "Yes, it's good for the soil and grass. However, most people want things done right now — they don't want the job to take any longer than it would if they were to use a side discharge mower," Kilgas says. "The only way to improve the mulching system is to provide a secondary chamber where the mulching process takes place."

Cloutier has his own ideas about the perfect mulching system. "It's not just closing off your discharge chute," he says. "It truly is a system of combining flow control baffles with the placement of mulching baffles, mulching blades and discharge cover."

#### **The safety factor**

Breningmeyer says watching a contractor disconnect the safety switch in a seat makes him cringe.

"Safety is of paramount importance with us," he says. "It costs more money to test and make sure products meet certain safety requirements which are voluntary, and few of our competitors meet that standard. Maybe they don't think they can compete from a financial standpoint and consider themselves suitproof."

Whurr says manufacturers need to pay more attention to legislation as it relates to noise pollution and alternative fuel systems. "We have to make sure we design our products to meet the various standards of the marketplace today."

"We believe professional landscape contractors are also concerned about safety, and while everyone wants to go faster, safety is foremost," adds Cuddihe.



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# MOWERS 2001

## Country clippin'

Country Clipper's zero-turn mower Zeton comes with either a joystick or conventional twin stick steering.



Other features include a stand-up deck, suspension seat and 24 x 12 x 12 rear tires and 13-in. front tires. It's available with either a 25-hp Kohler Pro Command or 26-hp Kohler EFI engine. For more information contact Country Clipper Division, Shivers Mfg., Inc. at 800/344-8237 / Circle no. 271

## Cut wide and fast

Woods Equipment Co.'s rear discharge Turf Batwing line features three models — 7144RD with

seven spindles and cutting width of 12 ft.; 9180RD with nine spindles and cutting width of 15 ft.; and 9204RD with nine spindles and cutting width of 17 ft. Mowers can cut up to 8.8 acres per hour. For more information, contact Woods Equipment Co. at 815/381-6028 / Circle no. 272

## Get a load of this

Walker Manufacturing Co.'s loader bucket attachment works with the



Quick-Change Implement Hitch System on the Walker tractor. It lifts 180 lbs. and 2-1/4-cu. ft. of material with 14-in. ground clearance. For more information, contact Walker at 970/221-5614 / Circle no. 273

## Cut everything

Woods Equipment Co.'s new BrushBull line of single spindle cutters are available in cutting widths of 48 to 84 in. The series includes rotary cutters, standard-duty utility cutters, medium-duty machines for mowing brush and heavy-duty cut-



ters. For more information, contact Woods Equipment Co. at 815/381-6028 / Circle no. 275

## Deck-orated

LESCO's Viper midmount zero-turn mowers have improved fabricated decks and three new deck widths: 48-, 54- and 60-in. A 19-hp Kawasaki twin-cylinder OHV power plant powers the 48-in. Viper, while a 23-hp engine powers the 54- and 60-in. models.



Each unit comes with an articulating front axle, and the decks are fitted with four adjustable anti-scalping wheels and adjustable anti-scalping rollers on the front and back. Decks adjust to cut from 1.5 in. to 5 in. by a foot pedal. For more information contact LESCO, Inc. at 800/321-5325 / Circle no. 276

## Less noise

New Holland's MC Series commercial mowers feature diesel engines that are isolation-mounted and have under-hood exhaust for quiet, vibration-free operation. They also have a large, unobstructed platform with lots of leg



room. A full suspension seat with weight adjustment is standard equipment. The steering column has telescopic adjustment to accommodate operators of all sizes. Cup holder and auxiliary power socket for cell phone are standard. For more information contact New Holland at 888/290-7377 or [www.newholland.com/na/](http://www.newholland.com/na/) / Circle No. 277

## Stable ride

Husqvarna's zero-turn ZTH6125 mowers feature a unibody frame for a low center of gravity and wide wheel stance for stability. Exactly 19 cutting heights fit any application need. The 52- and 61-in. decks offer 1.5- to 6-in. height in 1/4-in. increments. Maximum ground speed is 10 mph and fuel capacity is 11.4 gallons. They feature air-cooled, liquid-cooled and fuel injection engines. An optional foot assist lift mechanism lessens the effort of raising the deck over curbs or changing cutting height options. For more information contact Husqvarna at 704/597-5000 or [www.husqvarna.com/](http://www.husqvarna.com/) / Circle No. 274



## Smooth ride

Great Dane Super Surfer mowers feature a spring loaded platform set forward of the drive wheels to reduce bumps and jars. They also provide comfort and security to the operator during zero turning maneuvers due to the platform's position. They come available in cutting



widths from 36 in. to 61 in. and engine sizes from 15 hp to 23 hp. For more information contact Great Dane Power Equipment, Inc. at 812/218-7100 / Circle no. 278

## Brush up

The Swisher 44-in. Trailcutter is designed for clearing brush from overgrown fields, roadsides, fence-lines and trails. It features a 10.5 hp engine, heavy duty swinging blades which can handle brush up to 1-1/2-in. in diameter, universal articulating hitch and single-point height adjustment. For more information contact Swisher, Inc. at 660/747-8183 or [www.swisher-inc.com](http://www.swisher-inc.com) / Circle no. 279

## Making the cut

John Deere's 1400 Series front mowers feature gas or diesel liquid-cooled Yanmar engines from



28-hp to 31-hp. A 14.5-gal. fuel tank allows for all-day mowing. The air intake system allows air to enter from the rear and side of the mower for lower sound levels at the operator station and less debris buildup. Available are 60- and 72-in. 7-Iron side-discharge mower decks. A 20-in. turning radius to the trim side leaves only a 28-in. uncut circle of grass. For more information contact John Deere at 800/537-8233 or [www.john-deere.com](http://www.john-deere.com) / Circle no. 280

## Zip in a Z

Exmark Manufacturing's XP series of Lazer Z riding mowers features 27-hp liquid-cooled diesels or 31-hp liquid-cooled gas models. Each model is available with either a 60-in. UltraCut deck that mows up to six acres per hour or the 72-in. UltraCut deck that mows up to seven acres per hour. Ground speed is 11 mph forward and 7 mph in reverse. For more information contact Exmark Mfg. Co., Inc. at 402/223-6300 or [www.exmark.com](http://www.exmark.com) / Circle No. 281

## Nice blades

The Gravely 260Z comes equipped with stay-sharp Tungsten carbide-coated blades, maintenance-free Gravely XL spindles and a two-year limited commercial warranty. It's manufactured with either a Kohler Command OHV 25 hp engine or 25 hp Kawasaki engine. The air-flow deck's cutting chamber expels clippings faster using a 21-in.-wide discharge tunnel. For more information contact the Ariens Co. at 800/678-5443 or [www.gravely.com](http://www.gravely.com) / Circle no. 282

## Prowl around

Encore Manufacturing Co.'s Prowler Mid Cut features a front-cut style deck suspension on a mid mount. The full floating deck artic-



ulates, following terrain with front wheels that are independent of the mower so they can stay on the ground. For a level cut at high speeds, there's a PTO shaft which feeds power to the blades and a heavy-gauge welded steel deck with reinforcement channels controlling vibration. The 5-1/2-in. deep deck handles grass better than typical shallow decks. All Prowlers (52-, 61- and 72-in.) have a low maintenance blade spindle assembly for longer bearing life and easier routine maintenance. For more information contact Encore Manufacturing Co., Inc. at 402/228-4425 / Circle no. 283

## Tight maneuvering

Textron's Bunton BZT 1000 Series zero-turn mowers are powered by a 25 hp Kohler engine and come equipped with a 42- or 48-in. deck. Side-discharge and collection options are available for both decks. Twin steering levers control independent power to each wheel for tight maneuvering. For more information contact Textron at 262/637-6711 or [www.textron.com/](http://www.textron.com/) / Circle no. 284

## No fixin' a Dixon

Dixon Industries Inc.'s ZTR® 8000 Series commercial mower features a 25-hp Kohler Command or 26.5-hp Briggs & Stratton-Daihatsu



engine; white wheel motors and Hydro-Gear® BDU pumps; 60- or 72-in. cutting widths; "big rig" seat suspension and fully-adjustable seat; speed up to 10 mph; 11-1/2-gal. fuel capacity; and 1-in. front caster wheel. Attachments include broom, grass blower and catcher, snow blade, snow blower and carryall rack. All mount to mower with automatic-type receiver hitch. ROPS available. For more information contact Dixon Industries, Inc. at 800/264-6075 or [www.dixon-ztr.com/](http://www.dixon-ztr.com/) / Circle no. 285

## Endearing steering

Textron's Bob-Cat ZT 200 Series now includes a 20-hp Yanmar diesel engine. The liquid-cooled ZT 220D provides up to twice the reliability and fuel economy of gas engines. The ZT 200 Series offers a 19- or 23-hp Kawasaki V-Twin engine and a 25-hp Kohler Command engine. The mowers feature lever-type steering that controls independent power to each wheel. The hydrostatic drive enables the machine to reach speeds up to 8 mph. For more information contact Textron at 262/637-6711 or [www.textron.com/](http://www.textron.com/) / Circle no. 286

## Easy does it

Rich Manufacturing, Inc.'s Convertible features easy-access controls and a spring-loaded seat that can be adjusted forward and back. The platform is designed for easy mounting and dismounting. Its mower deck is made of 10-gauge steel, welded not stamped with a curve trimming edge to prevent deck damage. The deck lift system allows for seven different height positions. For more information contact Rich Manufacturing, Inc. at 765/436-2744 / Circle no. 287

# Effective, efficient hydroseeding

BY CURT HARLER / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**These contractors have found the right mix of materials, prices and products to make hydroseeding services profitable**



**I**t's summer and business is heating up. So are the chances of your hydroseeder plugging. One problem might be failure to rinse out the hoses. A minute with the rinse tank can save hours of frustration.

"Clogged hoses can be a real mess," says Rob Childs, owner of Outside Unlimited, Meredith, NH. He's found that keeping tabs on the paper material carrying the seed can reduce the likelihood of clogging.

Childs does about 70% commercial hy-

droseeding, including new houses and shopping centers. Most of the residential work is around the upscale homes of the Lakes Region. A two-man hydroseeding crew follows the grounds team onto job sites.

John Goode, who operates Easy Lawn of Ohio Valley, Circleville, OH, recommends using a paper-based mulch, especially on the smaller units. "Paper absorbs all the water it is going to take up in about 10 minutes," he says. "Wood will keep absorbing water for an hour or more."

*continued on page 60*

"Those home-built trailers are really versatile and mobile when we have to run them in between buildings."

— Wiggins



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