

# World Ag Expo

## Highlights

Numerous machines of interest to vegetable growers — from tillage equipment to trucks — were on display at the 38th annual World Ag Expo.

By John Inman

**N**EW at the World Ag Expo held in Tulare, CA, was the California Crop Center dedicated by A.G. Kawamura, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The new center provides a location for educational seminars and also has exhibit space.

Weather is always a potential issue at this show since it is mainly an outdoor show and is held in February. This year the weather was good with no rain, reasonable temperatures, and some sunshine every day of the show.

With the physical expansion of the showgrounds completed in time for last year's show, the 2005 exhibition set a record for the number of exhibitors: 1565. The numbers also were up at the International Business Center.

By the final day of the show, more than 800 visitors were registered representing 60 countries. To help gauge the number of attendees, the Park and Ride, the shuttle service from offsite parking, reported that more than 19,000 riders used the ser-

vice on Tuesday and Wednesday of the show. In addition, there were 1200 volunteers involved in putting on the show and parking took up 120 acres.

### From Tilling To Trucks

Of interest to those vegetable growers in attendance, there were numerous machines displayed that ranged from tillage equipment and planters to harvesters and trucks. MaterMacc, an Italian planter manufacturer, showed several of their units including a vacuum planter for precision high-density planting on 80-inch beds and a vacuum planter with a unique toolbar that makes it easy to shift the metering units to different row spacings.

Kello-bilt, a Canadian manufacturer, showed several heavy-duty offset discs. California vegetable growers prefer offset discs because they leave the field level. Kello-bilt discs feature tapered roller bearings which operate in 90W gear oil and feature a unique seal design. This design provides for exceptional bearing life.

The Hahn Tractor Company stand featured the Hahn bed reworking machines for minimum tillage in vegetable

*continues on page 22*



Photos by John Inman

This high-density precision seeder from MaterMacc is used for planting on 80-inch beds.



A bed reworking machine for minimum tillage in vegetable production was featured at the Hahn Tractor Company stand.



California vegetable growers prefer Kello-bilt offset discs because they leave the field level.



California Tomato Machinery introduces a new tomato harvester that is smaller and lighter than its predecessors.

continues from page 21

production. The highlight was a unit for reworking three 60-inch-wide tomato beds. Reusing beds from the previous crop can save growers both time and money.

## Irrigation And Harvesting

Drip irrigation is becoming more and more popular in the California vegetable industry and is now used in a wide range of vegetables such as lettuce, cauliflower, celery, tomatoes, and even artichokes. The Andros Engineering stand featured the company's equipment for laying and retrieving drip tape and introduced a new machine for retrieving the so-called lay flat mainline for drip systems.

The lay flat mainline hose is col-



McCormick introduced its largest tractor yet, the ZTX with a 280-hp engine and an 18-speed powershift transmission.

lapsed when the field is not being irrigated and tractors can drive across it to do field operations such as cultivating and spraying. This would not be possible with conventional aluminum or plastic mainlines.

In the area of harvesting equipment, California Tomato Machinery, which in

the past purchased both the FMC and Johnson tomato harvesters from their respective manufacturers, introduced a new tomato harvester. The machine uses a Johnson-type shaker.

The side conveyors are replaced by a center conveyor, and hand sorting, if necessary, is done on the rear of the machine. The machine is smaller and lighter than its predecessors without sacrificing harvesting capacity. It is being field tested and will not be available commercially until 2006.

In addition, Meyer Equipment and Ramsey Highlander had a prototype vegetable haul truck on display. The unit is based on the Mercedes Benz Unimog, a four-wheel drive vehicle with a 230-hp Mercedes Benz engine. For vegetable hauling from the field to the cooler, a second rear axle is added and the vehicle is equipped with a live transfer bed. The unit is currently undergoing field testing.

## The Tractor Factor

Large tractors were in abundance, and McCormick introduced its largest tractor yet, the ZTX with a 280-hp engine and an 18-speed powershift transmission. This tractor gives McCormick tractors in all horsepower ranges.

Another notable display of tractors was at the Antonio Carrio stand. The company is an Italian manufacturer of medium-horsepower, four-wheel drive articulated tractors. A variety of tractor models were displayed that are well suited for smaller vegetable growers, greenhouse operations, and vine crops.

## Taking On The Town

Because this exposition just continues to grow, it's important to make sure you make your lodging arrangements several months before the show. Despite the building of many new motels in the area in recent years, some visitors were forced to stay in Fresno, CA, which is more than 50 miles away.

Therefore, if you plan to attend the next World Ag Expo, Feb. 8-10, 2006, you should make lodging arrangements sooner rather than later. **AVG**

*Inman is a professional engineer and farm adviser emeritus with the Monterey County Agricultural Extension, Salinas, CA. Direct comments or questions about this article to [jwinman@comcast.net](mailto:jwinman@comcast.net).*

## New Precision Ag Tool

In the area of precision agriculture, AutoFarm introduced its new AutoSteer System 2005. The new system uses a simplified antenna array, eliminates the in-cab computer box, and meets International Standards Organization (ISO) Standard 11783. This ISO standard supports the so-called CAN bus system being adopted throughout the farm equipment industry.

In practical terms, this means the AutoFarm AutoSteer system can host other systems such as equipment monitors and systems used for precision farming. Furthermore, the AutoSteer can be deployed on other manufacturer's monitors.

The new all-weather touchscreen is an intuitive unit which incorporates much of the electronics that were in the cab box while maintaining ATM simplicity of operation and multi-lingual capabilities.

The multi-antenna roof module is factory calibrated and can be installed without tools. It incorporates a built-in carrying handle for convenience. The new base station is tripod mounted for easier setup and is also available in a single pole mount for permanent or repeat locations.

"AutoFarm RTK AutoSteer is the result of listening to customer requests along with our corporate goal of providing leading-edge GPS technology that operates across all brands of equipment and is the most flexible and easiest to use," says Deane Malott, AutoFarm director of marketing. "We are also committed to continue to provide the sub-inch repeatable accuracy that makes AutoFarm the premier provider of hands-free steering solutions."

For additional information on AutoFarm equipment, call 866-428-8632, or go to [www.gpsfarm.com](http://www.gpsfarm.com).



A new feature of the 2005 system, this touchscreen incorporates many of the electronics that were in the cab box.



This AutoFarm base station is designed to withstand virtually any weather condition.