

Take it for a test drive

By JENNIFER VINCENT

AG Expo is bringing in the horses — and not just the four-legged variety. One of this year's ride-and-drive opportunities includes row-crop tractors from 135 to 350 horsepower.

"They're not the big four-wheel-drive articulating tractors, but they're not compact either," says Tim Rogers, Ag Expo demonstration manager. "This demo is geared more to the progressive farmer."

The row-crop tractors replace the utility vehicle demonstrations and road course. "We've done that for the last four years. It was time for something new," Rogers says.

The south end of Ag Expo, where the new row-crop and the wheel loader ride-and-drives will be held, will also appear a little different to visitors. Michigan Farm Bureau has moved slightly east from its traditional tent and location to the old Wicks building. "Wicks built a new building right across the street, so we moved into their old building," Rogers says.

Ride-and-drive participants can climb into the cabs of at least four different row-crop tractor manufacturers. Visitors also can test-drive skid steers, articulating wheel loaders and zero-turn mowers.

"We'll have tracks set up for row-crop tractors to drive down and back [about 1,000 yards]. We hope they can get a feel for how it handles and some of the options available," Rogers says. "Some farmers are very loyal to their brands, and there's

nothing wrong with that, but we wanted to give them an opportunity to compare — to experience something different."

Row-crop tractor demos include:

- John Deere 8000 series
- Challenger MT675C
- New Holland 8000 Series
- Case IH (model unavailable at press time)
- JCB 8250
- Kubota M135X

"We're calling this the row-crop tractor demo, but some companies are also featuring their new technologies," Rogers says.

John Deere will showcase its iTEC Pro, which stands for intelligent Total Equipment Control. "This is the next step toward complete tractor automation," says Kevin Shelle, D&G Equipment. "It coordinates vehicle and implement functions consistently on headlands or internal boundaries. Customers won't have to steer at all or lift implements — just push a couple of buttons. It can reduce or eliminate skips and overlaps."

Going from green to yellow, Farm Depot is bringing its new Challenger MT675C tractor.

Future show dates

- Ag Expo 2010**
July 20-22
- Ag Expo 2011**
July 19-21
- Ag Expo 2012**
July 17-19
- Ag Expo 2013**
July 16-18
- Ag Expo 2014**
July 22-24

Mike Latheam of Farm Depot says the MT600C models are fuel efficient, easy to drive and comfortable.

The MT600C models feature a hydraulic cab suspension and a heavy-duty front-axle suspension, which can be turned off for loader or front three-point applications. Its new E3 engine technology provides industry-leading fuel economy.

Doug Rudd of Kubota Tractor Corp. will bring the M135XDTC. "Kubota's new M135X deluxe, midsize, ag-utility tractor is Kubota's most powerful M-Series tractor with a four-cylinder, turbocharged, direct-injection diesel engine that boasts 118 PTO horsepower," he says.



360-DEGREE VIEW: A new feature on the Challenger MT675C is a brand new cab. The four-post cab, surrounded by 67 square feet of glass, is almost 30% larger than the previous model.



KUBOTA'S NEWEST: The M135X offers electronic-engine system controls, bi-speed turning, electro-hydraulic shuttle shift and a power-shift auto mode with a new central command LCD monitor.

Schedule of events

Tuesday, July 21

| TIME | ACTIVITY | LOCATION |
|---------------|--|--|
| 9 a.m. | Show opens | |
| 9 a.m. | Profitable Environmental Options for Livestock Producers program | MSU Beek Cattle Research and Teaching Center |
| | FFA State Tractor Driving Contest | Special Events Area |
| 9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Tractor ride-and-drive | Avenue C and USDA Drive |
| | Articulating wheel loaders ride-and-drive | Avenue D and USDA Drive |
| | Lely robotic milking demonstration | Livestock Demonstration Area |
| | Zero-turn mower demonstration | Mower Demonstration Area |
| 9:30 a.m. | Is a Wind Turbine Turning in Your Future? program | CANR Tent |
| 10 a.m. | Soybean Research in the STARS program | Agronomy Tent |
| | Cattle handling demonstration | Livestock Demonstration Area |
| 10:30 a.m. | Improving and Maintaining Your Pond or Lake program | Henrietta Hills Trout Farm Area |
| 10:45 a.m. | Using Kitchen Incubators for Developing Food Products | CANR Tent |
| 11 a.m. | Thumb Agriculture Research and Education program | Agronomy Tent |
| 11:45 a.m. | Raw foods cooking demonstration | CANR Tent |
| Noon | Garden tractor pull | Special Events Area |
| 1 p.m. | MSU Archives birthday celebration (free cake) | CANR Tent |
| | Crop marketing with Jim Hilker | Agronomy Tent |
| 1:15 p.m. | Reducing risk in transition planning with Fraleigh Law Firm | CANR Tent |
| 2 p.m. | Bioenergy with Mark Seamon | Agronomy Tent |
| | Fish Stocking Strategies for Your Pond or Lake program | Henrietta Hills Trout Farm Area |
| | Cattle handling demonstration | Livestock Demonstration Area |
| 2:30 p.m. | Square-foot Gardening program | CANR Tent |
| 5 p.m. | Show closes | |

Wednesday, July 22

| TIME | ACTIVITY | LOCATION |
|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 9 a.m. | Show opens | |
| 9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Tractor ride-and-drive | Avenue C and USDA Drive |
| | Articulating wheel loaders ride-and-drive | Avenue D and USDA Drive |
| | Lely robotic milking demonstration | Livestock Demonstration Area |
| | Zero-turn mower demonstration | Mower Demonstration Area |
| 9:30 a.m. | Is a Wind Turbine Turning in Your Future? program | CANR Tent |
| 10 a.m. | Soybean Research in the STARS program | Agronomy Tent |
| | Cattle handling demonstration | Livestock Demonstration Area |
| | Antique tractor pull | Special Events Area |

History of Ag Expo

AG Expo began in Michigan's Thumb region as a demonstration of equipment and tools, especially for sugarbeet and dry-bean producers. As the event grew, it included demonstrations, information and research highlights for all growers.

Under the leadership of the Michigan State University Department of Agricultural Engineering, and with input from many producer groups and MSU departments and organizations, the event moved to its current location on the south side of the MSU campus in 1979.

Today, the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, or CANR, features exhibitors from 35 states and five Canadian provinces on the 35-acre site, as well as on-site demonstrations and side-by-side equipment test drives. Educational exhibitors from across the college and the university extend MSU's vast resources to the residents of Michigan.