

World's largest planter hits fields in '09

By WILLIE VOGT

THE largest planter drew plenty of attention at the National Farm Machinery Show recently, and John Deere was happy to see everyone stopping by. The company rolled out a 120-foot planter with 48 rows on 30 inches.

Key Points

- New Deere DB120 planter boasts world-record width.
- Planter has a \$345,000 suggested list price.
- A small number of planters will hit the field this spring.

Talk about a big machine. Rob Rippchen, marketing manager, seeds division at Deere, says the new DB120 is 33% larger than the DB90. Are farmers interested? "There's enough interest that we're entering the market," he says. "We've had the 90-foot planter for five years. Farmers are looking for added productivity." This is a proven concept,

taken to the next level with a few machines already sold for spring 2009.

The DB120 features 125 bushels of center-fill seed capacity. That's good because who wants to fill 48 hoppers every time?

To keep those row units at the right depth across the wide machine, the company relies on a pneumatic down-force system that has been popular with other Deere planters in the past.

No doubling up

This is a lot of planter to pull through the field, and it's important that on those overlap areas you're not double planting, as well. That can reduce field productivity. "We've got Row Command as a standard feature on this machine," Rippchen says. "And there are no markers on this planter."

Row Command means the planter shuts off row units when it overlaps an already-planted area. The system uses clutches to disengage each unit to prevent overseeding planted areas.

In addition, the planter is outfitted with the insecticide application system that allows you to load the machine with Force CS insecticide using a special dispenser system. John Deere and Syngenta jointly developed the planter add-on that puts insecticide on at planting while reducing farmer exposure to the crop protection product. There is research showing that even with a hybrid containing a rootworm gene, adding an insecticide at planting can boost yields.

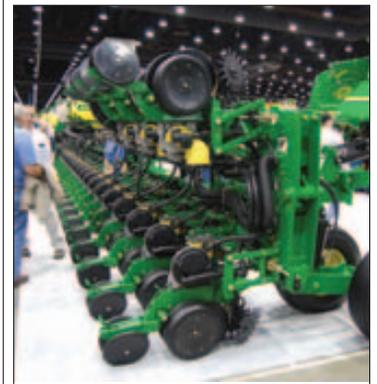
Planting muscle

Count on a tongue weight of about 17,000 pounds, so ballast the tractor accordingly. It folds to a 14-foot, 8-inch transport width and is 55 feet long for road travel.

"The planter retails for \$345,000," Rippchen says. "You can cover 90 to 100 acres per hour with this machine or about two sections in a day."

He also made another interesting observation: "This is the first planter that will cost more than the tractor that will pull it."

■ Learn more by visiting www.johndeere.com/ag.



BIG GREEN: At 120 feet long, the planter is hard to photograph. Farmers were plenty interested in this big rig, which will be available in limited supply for 2009.



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[35449-ILPork-1/09]

