

**Editor's
Notebook**



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Is Cat Done With Ag?

If you bought a Challenger rubber-tracked tractor or a Cat Lexion combine on December 16th, you might be wondering what the resale picture is going to look like a year from now. That's because on December 17th, Caterpillar sold the Challenger tractor line to AGCO. What's unusual about this deal is that no one is really sure what it means.

"My understanding is that Cat's top management asked the ag products division what it would take to bring them up to a level with the rest of the company and they didn't like the answer," Bill Fogarty, editor of Ag Industry Watch, told FARM SHOW. "No one knows what's going on. Cat dealers are like everyone else. They're waiting to see what happens."

Sales of Cat Challenger tractors have grown steadily since they were introduced over a decade ago, and with the addition of Claas-designed Lexion combines to the Cat line, most observers thought Cat was getting into ag equipment for the long haul. But Cat's ag revenues are still just 2 percent of total revenue, according to Merrill Lynch, and press releases make it sound like the company plans to focus more on selling engines, drive trains, and other components to ag companies.

AGCO will take over the design and manufacture of the Challenger line but Cat dealers will still sell and service them. But will they be painted Cat yellow or AGCO orange? Will Cat dealers handle other AGCO equipment? Will AGCO put Cat engines in its other tractors, or stick primarily with Cummins? Will Caterpillar get out of the combine business, too? And now that Cat is no longer competing directly with Deere in farm tractors, is the door open to more engine sales to Deere?

A tragic twist was added to the story on January 4th, when AGCO president John Shumejda and Ed Swingle, vice president of sales and marketing, died in a plane crash near Birmingham, England. Cat and AGCO both say the accident will not affect their deal, which is scheduled to close in March. Robert J. Ratliff, chairman, has taken over again as president and CEO of AGCO.

Words Of Wisdom

"A banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining and wants it back the minute it begins to rain."
Mark Twain

"No government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size. Government programs, once launched, never disappear. Actually, a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth."
Ronald Reagan

"Good intentions will always be pleaded for every assumption of authority. It is hardly too strong to say that the Constitution was made to guard the people against the dangers of good intentions. There are men in all ages who mean to govern well, but they mean to govern. They promise to be good masters, but they mean to be masters."
Daniel Webster

"Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society."
Mark Twain

"Assuming that either the left wing or right wing gained control of the country, it would probably fly around in circles."
Pat Paulsen

What's That Old Thing Worth?

Got some old coins, stamps, silverware, furniture or other antiques? Not sure what they're worth? If so, there are websites that will give you an on-line appraisal, for a fee. The services use experienced appraisers, from many different fields, to evaluate your item.

You simply e-mail or snail-mail the details and photos to any of the services listed below and they'll get back to you. Price per item ranges from \$5 to \$35, depending on the service and the item being evaluated.

- www.WhatsItWorthToYou.com (48 Wilson St., Suite 4, Perth, Ont. K7H 2N4, Canada ph 613 264-9032)
- www.AppraisalDay.com (210 Park Avenue, #295, Worcester, Mass. 01609)
- www.AppraiseItNet.com (AppraiseItNet.com, Inc. P.O. Box 803, Chicago, Ill. 60690)

More On McCormick

Last issue we reported on the "new" McCormick tractors that had just become available in Canada (Vol. 25, No. 6). Since then, McCormick has announced a deal with Vermeer to make the tractors available to U.S. farmers.



Soon after our story ran, we got a call from J.L. Hans Bouwers, president of McCormick Canada, to correct some of the facts in our story: "I would like to set the record straight. Contrary to what was stated, there is no connection between McCormick and AGCO, or between Landini and AGCO, or between Laverda and AGCO. Also, McCormick Canada and McCormick International U.S.A. will be supplying McCormick dealers with parts - not Case-IH," Bouwers told FARM SHOW.

Part of the confusion grew out of the fact that Landini, which bought the old Case-IH tractor plant near Doncaster, England, used to have a marketing arrangement with AGCO, but that ended a year or so ago. Also, the tractors are similar enough to Case-IH tractors that many parts will be interchangeable - at least initially.

Vermeer made its move into the tractor market by striking an alliance with McCormick in England. Vermeer will provide the dealer network and handle parts and other logistics. McCormick International U.S.A., with its head office located near Vermeer in Pella, Iowa, will handle marketing, sales and customer support.

Initially, McCormick tractors will range from 64 to 176 hp. According to the company, the tractors "parallel" the current Case tractors, but there are differences. Some of the tractors are powered by Perkins engines rather than Cummins. And some models have a different transmission. In addition, there are cosmetic differences between the two lines.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, McCormick International USA Ltd., P.O. Box 81, Pella, Iowa (ph 866 327-6733; Website: www.mccormickusa.com).

Get More For Billboards

Do you have a billboard on your land, or do you live in an area where you think you could generate some extra income by renting out space? Then you might be interested in the work of Jeff Thomas, who says land owners could get a lot more money for the use of their land if they knew more about how billboard companies operate. Thomas, who used to be in the billboard business, runs a website (www.UnitedLandowners.com) and has published a book called "Billboards: The Secrets Of Free Money For Doing Nothing".

According to Thomas, there are about 800,000 landowners across the U.S. with billboards on their property. "A large percentage of them are farmers. Unfortunately, they're scattered and act as individuals when dealing with these companies. They are often taken advantage of because they

don't understand the billboard industry. Most should be paid more for the use of their land but the billboard industry has the upper hand when it comes to negotiating leases."

Thomas has formed a group, the National Landowner Network, that's attempting to help landowners band together into one powerful block. "We're giving billboard landowners a chance to communicate with each other, compare leases, and negotiate as a block. That makes them much less vulnerable to manipulation or intimidation."

According to Thomas, revenue increases of up to 500 percent may be possible, depending on your current lease.

His book covers leases, advertising rates, and profit margins. It helps you evaluate your current lease and describes negotiating "tricks" used by the billboard companies. It also tells you how to use government databases to get the names and addresses of other landowners in your area so you can negotiate from a position of strength. In short, says Thomas, "It covers everything the billboard companies don't want you to know." Sells for \$11.95 plus \$6 S&H (call 888 280-7715 to order). Contact: Jeff Thomas, National Landowner Network; E-mail: biz@unitedlandowners.com; Website: www.UnitedLandowners.com.

And The Sign Said . . .

- In a veterinarian's waiting room: "Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!"
- On the trucks of a local plumbing company in northeastern Pennsylvania: "Don't sleep with a drip. Call your plumber."
- At a tire shop in Milwaukee: "Invite us to your next blowout."
- At a towing company: "We don't charge an arm and a leg. We want tows."
- At an optometrist's office: "If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place."
- At a car dealership: "The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."
- Outside a muffler shop: "No appointment necessary. We hear you coming."
- At the electric company: "We would be de-lighted if you send in your bill. However, if you don't you will be."
- In a restaurant window: "Don't stand there and be hungry. Come on in and get fed up."

Colin Powell's Rules

1. It ain't as bad as you think. It will look better in the morning.
2. Get mad, then get over it.
3. Avoid having your ego so close to your position that when your position falls, your ego goes with it.
4. It can be done!
5. Be careful what you choose. You may get it.
6. Don't let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision.
7. You can't make someone else's choices. You shouldn't let someone else make yours.
8. Check small things.
9. Share credit.
10. Remain calm. Be kind.
11. Have a vision. Be demanding.
12. Don't take counsel of your fears or naysayers.
13. Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.

Conversion Conversation

When Ole moved up north, he discovered that he was the only Lutheran in his new little town of all Catholics. That was okay, but the neighbors had a problem with his barbecuing venison every Friday. Since they couldn't eat meat on Friday, the tempting aroma was getting the best of them.

Hoping they could do something to stop this, the neighbors got together and went over to talk to Ole, eventually persuading him to join their church.

The big day came and the priest had Ole kneel. He put his hand on Ole's head and said, "Ole, you were born a Lutheran, you were raised a Lutheran, and now," he said as he sprinkled some incense over Ole's head, "now you are a Catholic!"

Ole was happy and the neighbors were happy. But the following Friday evening at supper time, there was again that aroma of grilled deer steaks coming from Ole's yard. The neighbors went to talk to him about this and as they approached the fence, they heard Ole saying, "You were born a deer, you were raised a deer, and now..." he said as he sprinkled seasoning salt over the choice tenderloin cut, "...now you are a halibut!"