

Passing the ultimate test

Cat® C1.5 engines score an A+ during a Louisville field test. As a result, Cat diesel engines power the city's Ferris mowers.

Tending to the thousands of acres of park grounds in the city and surrounding areas of Louisville, Ky., is always at the top of Joe Hamilton's mind. After all, it's his department's responsibility to maintain the turf equipment that tends the landscape for the Louisville Jefferson County Metro Government's recreation system.

"There are 122 parks in our city and county," explains Joe Hamilton, fleet

services supervisor for Louisville Jefferson County Metro Government.

The 12 mechanics in his department are responsible for maintaining all the engine-powered equipment the city uses. "Each of our 122 parks must be mowed regularly – this encompasses thousands of acres of landscape," he notes. "Jefferson Memorial Forest, for example, spans 6,000 acres alone."

Speed, efficiency and reliability are the keys to successful mowing in the Kentucky climate. With summer temperatures reaching well into the 90s, and precipitation often prevalent, the grass grows

quickly. Keeping up is challenging.

"We can't miss a day or we're playing catch-up," he explains. "We need mowers that can mow heavy grass quickly and evenly – the public depends on these mowers to enjoy the parks our city has worked so hard to obtain."

PUSH FOR CLEAN AIR

What's even more of a challenge is maintaining the manicured parks during the city's Ozone Action Days. As a metropolitan city of more than 4 million people, strict EPA requirements mandate that gasoline-powered mowers not be operated on Ozone Action Days.

"We do our part to keep clean air in our city," notes Hamilton. His department is contributing by utilizing Ferris IS5000Z mowers powered by Caterpillar® C1.5 (formerly called 3013C) engines. These diesel-powered engines provide 31.5 hp at 2,800 rpm and can be powered with biodiesel fuel – a huge benefit for Louisville.

The city added 12 Ferris IS500Z mowers powered by Cat C1.5 engines to the fleet of turf equipment last summer. The C1.5 engines required no modifications to run on biodiesel – the standard engine package can operate on biodiesel at any time.

The city of Louisville relies on its twelve diesel-powered Ferris IS5000Z mowers to keep the city's parks manicured.

PASSING THE TEST

Diesel-powered mowers are a new option for the Louisville Jefferson County Metro Government parks department. The current fleet of more than 100 pieces of mowing equipment is gasoline-powered, with the exception of the 12 Ferris mowers powered by Cat C1.5 engines.

The choice for the Ferris mowers powered by Cat diesel engines was solidified during an in-depth field test requested by Hamilton. Mower dealers from around Louisville, including Dan Denhard of The Mower Shop, brought several different mower models, each powered by a different engine.

"There were prerequisites of each mower included in the field test," explains Hamilton. "Each mower had to operate on biodiesel fuel, be equipped with at least a 30-hp engine and incorporate at least a 72-in. deck."

Seven different mowers participated in the field test. The mower that came out on top: A Ferris IS5000Z powered by a 31.5-hp Cat C1.5 diesel engine.

"This mower walked all over the other mowers," reveals Dan Denhard, general manager of The Mower Shop, a Ferris dealer. "Even though the 31.5-hp Cat engine was one of the smaller engines participating in the test, it outperformed a competitive 50-hp engine."

Hamilton required his entire staff to test each mower. "Several had a strong preference before they tested the Ferris mower," he recalls. "And no matter what their preference was before they tested the Ferris IS5000Z, they all

chose it as their favorite."

Hamilton also preferred the Ferris mower, citing these advantages:

- It's American made. "I trust and fully believe in American-made products."
- A standard Caterpillar industrial engine warranty.
- The patented independent suspension system makes for a smooth, comfortable ride. "We use the Ferris mowers as an incentive – those that work hard and do a great job can mow with these mowers."
- The 3-cylinder engine with a 1,500cc displacement offers between 55 to 61 ft./lbs. of torque at 2,800 rpm.

"These mowers can handle any terrain we've presented to them. They don't bog down in



The IS5000Z's 3-cylinder, Cat C1.5 engine provides 31.5 hp with 1,500cc displacement at 2,800 rpm.

heavy grass and we don't have issues with horsepower or torque."

- 50% less fuel usage than gasoline engines.

This last benefit is a big one. "We use more than 3 million gal. of fuel per year, and we've really noticed the

increases in fuel prices," says Hamilton. "We have to operate as efficiently as possible to remain within our budget. These Ferris mowers really help us to make a difference," he adds.

"The Ferris mowers powered by Cat C1.5 diesel engines use less fuel and they mow more grass faster than mowers powered by gasoline engines. We cut more grass in half the time," he stresses. "At one park, a mowing job that typically takes four hours with a gasoline-powered mower takes only 1.5 hours with the Ferris mower powered by the Cat C1.5 diesel engine."

"These mowers and engines are operating wonderfully. I couldn't be happier with them," he adds. "The mowers were also very well thought out. You can tell that both Ferris and Caterpillar did their homework. The pairing of the two manufacturers – and the mower that results – is an absolute win-win piece of equipment for our city."

The city's 12 Ferris mowers are a small portion of the fleet, but according to Hamilton, they are doing more than their share.

"We will purchase additional Ferris mowers with Cat engines in the future," he states. (Ferris is currently manufacturing a new model, the IS5100Z, powered by a 33.5-hp Cat C1.5.) "I would also like to see these mowers utilized into our other departments to mow the golf courses, community center and swimming pool grounds. These mowers have been a valuable addition to our fleet of turf equipment." ○

