

## Russian Combines Are Coming

It won't be tomorrow, and it may not even be next year, but Russian combines will soon be seen on American cropland. The purchase by Rostselmash of 80 percent of Canada-based Buhler Industries opens the door to combine sales here. The purchase was primarily to expand sales of Versatile tractors and other Buhler product lines in the Russian market. However, the opportunity exists, a spokesman acknowledges, to introduce Rostselmash combines here as well.

"The new owners are still evaluating the market to see if it fits into their five to seven year strategy," says Adam Reed, manager, Advertising and Communications, Buhler. "They are looking at our distribution channel, parts network and the competitive market. The last thing you want to do is introduce a new product and not have the support system in place."

Rostselmash combines are not totally new to Canada. Visitors to the Western Canada Farm Progress Show in Regina last summer

got a good look at the Vector combine, marketed in Canada by Python Mfg.

It's a low cost, lower power unit compared to many on the market, though the company recently introduced two larger models in Russia. These larger combines would be the likely exports to the North American market.

Reed describes the Rostselmash combine line as a value proposition without all the bells and whistles of competitive units. He likens them to Versatile tractors, known for power and ease of service. As an example, he cites Versatile tractors as GPS ready, but without in-house GPS technology.

If Rostselmash should introduce combines itself, Reed says they will be available through Buhler dealers. In the meantime, he says, increased production of Versatile tractors at its Winnipeg plant to serve Rostselmash's 200-dealer network is expected. "That will better serve the North American market as well," he says.



**Russian combines will soon be seen on American cropland. The purchase by Rostselmash of 80 percent of Canada-based Buhler Industries opens the door to combine sales here.**

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Buhler Industries, 1260 Clarence Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 1T2 (ph 204 661-8711; fax 204 654-2503; info@buhler.com; www.buhler.com).

## Plastic Grass Mats Reduce Farmyard Wear And Tear

If you want to keep tractors and trucks from damaging the grass around your farm, you'll be interested in this new plastic "grass protection" mat that embeds itself in the sod.

"It works great for protecting lawns, farm gateways, grass runways, etc.," says Mike Hunter, Tenax Corp., Baltimore, Md.

The grids are made from a heavy duty, extruded polymer that can withstand up to 8 tons per axle.

You simply roll out the mesh over the area to be protected and use 1-in. wide by 8-in. long plastic staples (supplied) to pin the mesh down.

For best results the mesh should be installed during the spring when the grass will grow quickly through the grid, forming a root mass around the mesh filaments, says the company. The area will soon resume its natural appearance, providing a stable surface for heavyweight vehicles.

If the mesh is laid over bare earth, apply

grass seed and fertilizer with a layer of topsoil and sand. The grass will grow in right around the grid.

A lighter weight turf reinforcement (TR) mesh product is also available. It can be used for pathways between the house and barn so you can keep the grass growing without muddy spots. It'll support cars and heavy foot traffic.

"Both products have been used in Europe for years but are just now entering North America," says Hunter. "Every time we display the mats at farm shows, farmers tell us they've come up with new applications for it. One Kentucky farmer plans to use the mesh on steep ground so he can drive his tractor without spinning the wheels in mud. He plans to seed the area first and then lay the mat down. The grass will come up through the mat.

"The GP mesh can also be used inside barns when stacking hay. It allows air to flow



**Plastic "grass protection" mats can withstand up to 8 tons per axle. They work great for protecting lawns, farm gateways, grass runways, etc., says the company.**

under the bales and keep them dry. The mesh can also be used in a temporary parking area and then rolled back up for later use. The TR mesh works great around the entrance to barns where it's typically muddy, in order to get grass to grow."

The green-colored mesh is sold in rolls that measure 6.7 ft. wide by 60 ft. long. Mesh size

is 5/8 in. square.

The GP mat roll sells for \$422 plus S&H. The TR mat comes in a 6.7-ft. wide by 100-ft. roll and sells for \$242 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tenax Corp., 4800 E. Monument St., Baltimore, Md. 21205 (ph 800 874-7437; info@tenax.com; www.tenax.com).

## Rare New Guinea Singing Dogs

Three Hills, Alberta, Canada is a long way from New Guinea, but zookeeper Irene Gustafson is passionate about saving the breed which is native to that warm weather country.

The New Guinea Singing Dog Conservation Society (NGSDCS) has evidence from a 5,500-year-old dog fossil and DNA dating that indicates Singers have been separated from modern domestic dogs for at least 12,000 years. They're considered rare, with some estimates that there may be as few as 150 Singers in captivity.

Gustafson met her first Singers when she married Bill Gustafson, caretaker and son of the owner of GuZoo Animal Rescue and Sanctuary in rural Three Hills. The zoo has a wide variety of wild and tame rescued animals and is open to the public.

Gustafson became enamored with the zoo's Singers and fascinated by the controversy that some experts consider them feral dogs. "I want to create some public awareness because they are a unique animal," she says.

According to the NSDCS website, Singers are about 17 in. tall at the shoulder and average 25 lbs. They have a short double coat and are golden red or black and tan with white markings on the underside of the chin, the feet and tail tip. Wide cheekbones, narrow muzzles, tulip-petal shaped ears and triangular, obliquely set eyes give their faces a dis-

tinctive appearance. Their joints and spine are extremely flexible. They climb and jump like a cat. Their eyes reflect a bright green glow in low light.

Named for their unique vocalizations, Singers make the sound of a wolf howl with overtones of a high-pitched whale song. Some sounds resemble birdcalls. They also whine, yelp, bark and scream. A sample of the dogs' sound can be found at the society's website (www.canineworld.com/NGSDCS/chorus.singers.mp3).

Due to recent DNA findings that Singers are a unique ancient population, accredited zoos are starting to exhibit them, says Janice Koler-Matznick of the NSDCS. "The world's premier zoo, the San Diego Zoo, put a breeding pair of Singers on exhibit in 2007.

"As for having them as pets, they're non-aggressive, but have wild tendencies," Gustafson says. "They're very people-friendly, but are prey-driven to go after a squirrel or cat, or little dog." They're escape artists, so if they are kept outside they must be in an enclosure with a floor, walls and roof, Gustafson says. Some people keep them as pets in their homes, with access to outdoor enclosures.

"There is room in some people's hearts for Singers," she says. "Singers are very affectionate, and they bond to people." They can live to be 19 or 20 years old and can handle



**New Guinea Singing Dogs are considered rare, with possibly as few as 150 in captivity. They make the sound of a wolf howl with overtones of a high-pitched whale song.**

both warm and cold climates.

When she sells Singer puppies for pets (\$800), she has them spayed or neutered to prevent crossbreeding with domestic dogs. Plus it makes them better pets, Gustafson says, because they become very territorial during breeding season.

The NSDCS sells one or two puppies a year to carefully screened and educated private parties for an adoption fee of about \$500.

They promote spaying and neutering at 9 months or later for health reasons.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Irene Gustafson, GuZoo Animal Farm, P. O. Box 898, Three Hills, Alberta, Canada T0M 2A0 (ph 403 443-7463; uraifriend@xplore.net.com; www.guzooforever.com) or New Guinea Singing Dog Conservation Society, jkoler@ccountry.com; www.canineworld.com/NGSDCS.