

## Electric - Powered Riding Mowers

### Mow Quiet And Clean With WhisperMow

Mow your lawn in quiet bliss and without the smell of gas with the WhisperMow™ lawn tractor, a new U.S.-made electric riding lawn tractor. With valve-regulated, maintenance-free batteries paired to a fully automatic on-board charging system, there's no guesswork about how to charge it and no worry about adding water to batteries.

"The only thing the owner has to do with this machine is plug it in after each use. The charger figures it out," says Rob Kress, one of the 11 owners of the Canastota, N.Y., company.

Kress and business partner Bruce Nielsen used their expertise at building electrical controllers and motors to design the rear steer lawn tractor.

"We chose to go with a rear steer machine to give the tractor better maneuverability and a front-mount deck. We have other attachments, such as blowers and sweepers, that mount on front," Kress says.

They designed the tractor chassis to efficiently hold three 12-volt batteries for the 36-volt tractor and four batteries for the 48-volt model. Both run a 42-in. mowing deck.

The tractor is built with powder-coated

10-gauge steel, with a configuration similar to large golf course mowers. It's designed for homeowners with lawns 1 1/2 acres or less. Fully charged, it runs 80 minutes or 100 minutes at about 4 mph, depending on the model.

The maintenance-free batteries are good for 300 to 400 charge/discharge cycles, or about five to seven years.

"The WhisperMow lawn tractor has zero emissions," Nielsen says. "It's totally quiet, easy to start and requires very little maintenance. It makes mowing the lawn enjoyable."

"I've always had mowers in my attached garage and that gas smell leaks into the house," Kress adds. "It was pleasant to get rid of the gas mowers and replace them with our machine."

The 36-volt model sells for \$4,995, and the 48-volt model is \$5,500. Both come with a two-year warranty. The WhisperMow lawn tractor is available through dealers, and the company is interested in adding more dealerships.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, WhisperMow, Canastota Industrial Park, 11 Madison Blvd., Suite 9, Canastota, N.Y. 13032 (ph 315 875-5600; sales@whispermow.com; www.whispermow.com).



The WhisperMow is a new U.S.-made electric riding lawn tractor.



Mower has a fully automatic on-board charging system, so there's no guesswork about when or how to charge it.

### Meet Zeon: Zero-Turn Electric Mower

If you'd like to try a battery-powered mower, but you still want top-of-the-line features, Hustler Turf Equipment will introduce its first zero-turn riding mower this summer.

The Zeon is powered by a computer-controlled system of four deep-cycle lead-acid batteries. The mower travels up to 6 mph and runs about 80 minutes/charge - enough to mow up to 1 1/3 acres. It has a 42-in. cutting deck and the twin lever SmoothTrak steering system that's available on other gas-powered Hustler mowers.

The mower recaptures energy back into the battery during braking. When battery

power is low, the system disables the blades so there's enough power to drive back to where it can be plugged in and recharged.

"It's much easier maintenance-wise. There are no filters or spark plugs to change," says Keith Skidmore, project engineer for Hustler Turf Equipment.

The Zeon should be on the market by late July or August and sell for \$6,500 to \$7,000 through dealers who handle Hustler products. The company's website lists dealers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hustler Turf Equipment, P.O. Box 7000, Hesston, Kansas 67062 (ph 620 327-1229; www.hustlerturf.com).

Zeon is powered by a computer-controlled system of four deep-cycle, lead-acid batteries. Hustler will introduce the mower this summer.



### GE Electric Mower Parts Available

There's a lot of interest in GE's Elec-Trak, electric riding mowers from the 1970's. Harold Zimmerman of Ephrata, Penn., sells parts and reconditioned Elec-Traks through his business, Clean Power Supply.

"What I like best about them is that they're quiet, easy to operate, and emit zero emissions," he says. "You can be out mowing the lawn and actually hear somebody talking to you. You can charge one of these for about 50 cents to get 3 1/2 hours of mowing time."

Elec-Trak mowers were built by General Electric in New York from 1969 to 1974. When Zimmerman saw one in a local ad several years ago, he purchased it and then found another for parts. By 2004 he had stockpiled parts and become serious about setting up a parts supply business.

"I've parted out about 30 of these tractors and bought out parts from approximately 15 former dealers," Zimmerman says. "I also have companies that reproduce parts specifically for me."

His parts also work for AVCO New Idea and Wheel Horse electric tractors

through 1983 after they took over the model from GE. Altogether there were 21 models with mowing decks ranging from 36 to 42 in., and Zimmerman has a library of parts books and manuals. As a mechanic he enjoys working on the old tractors, and he's found a market for them among older people who are nostalgic as well as young people interested in the environmental benefits.

"When I fix them up, I sell them for \$1,500 to \$3,000 with batteries," Zimmerman says. Though they're more than 30 years old, Elec-Traks were well-built, and ones that were stored inside are generally in good condition. Many were parked when the batteries wore out, because of the cost to replace them. The smaller models require three 12-volt batteries and the larger models use six 6-volt batteries. They are the same batteries that are used in golf carts.

"If you treat batteries right you should get about seven years out of them," Zimmerman says. "My motto is: Keep them watered and keep them charged after every use."

Zimmerman has a good supply of blades



Elec-Trak riding mowers were built by General Electric from 1969 to 1974. Harold Zimmerman sells parts for them and also sells reconditioned models.

and other parts to fit all size models as well as refurbished machines. He also sells some of the many attachments - blades, snow throwers, etc.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Clean Power Supply, 118 Royer Rd., Ephrata, Penn. 17522 (ph 717 859-4234; cleanpower@att.net).