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GRAZING SYSTEM
'BETTER FOR MAN & BEAST'**

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Feedback on
NERPO's regional conferences

Winelands winners

Kubota tractors have gained an international reputation for practicality and efficiency. They have also proved their worth in the orchards and vineyards of the Western Cape, says **Joe Spencer**.

The manager of Elgin Orchards, Neil Read, is one of the Western Cape's fruit producers who have found Kubota tractors ideal for orchard operations.

"We use the front-mount option for moving our apple bins and Kubota has made a palpable difference to my operation in terms of efficiency and bottom line savings," he says.

THE 4WD CAN BE ENGAGED AND DISENGAGED ON THE GO

"We bought Kubota tractors primarily because their wet multi-plate shuttle clutch technology facilitates manoeuvring and has a much longer life than dry clutch systems. We found that other transmission systems suffer undue downtime during the harvest season."

UNIQUE FRONT AXLE

According to Kubota technical specialist Mike Heath, the company's tractors, specifically the M7040N and M8540N models, are particularly well suited to front-mount operation because of the



unique front axle and transmission. The axle has a level gear train drive with no 'U' joints, sealed lubrication of the gears, strong cast-iron casings, easily adjusted bushed pivots, multi-plate wet-disc drive coupling and a robust front weight bracket that facilitates the mounting of the transporter hitch.

Kubota's Bi-speed turning system ensures excellent manoeuvrability, even in 4WD. The transmission has eight forward and reverse speeds and 4WD can be engaged and disengaged on the go.

A TOP COMBINATION

The KMS Rinklin pre-pruner and Kubota M series narrow tractor combination are well-suited to the Cape's vineyards, according to Christian Fersch of German Machine Services (GMS), distributors of KMS Rinklin viticultural products.

"These pre-pruners are light but also sturdy and designed for a long life. Every moving part has a grease point and the cutting discs are made

ABOVE: The Kubota M7040 Narrow pushes a chain trailer loaded with apple boxes on Elgin Orchards.

RIGHT: Kubota M series and KMS Rinklin pre-pruner at work. PHOTOS: SMITH POWER



from a special material that ensures they stay sharp for many years, reducing the load on the motors and drive system," he says.

The special design of the pre-pruner prevents it from cutting the crossed wires integral to a vineyard structure, while safety is a prime feature.

"For example, if the driver doesn't open the arms of the pre-pruner in time, which could lead to an impact with a pole, the machine has a 60-bar nitrogen

accumulator, which is activated immediately on impact, releasing the arms of the pre-pruner and preventing serious damage," says Fersch.

The pre-pruner can be handled by even the smallest tractor.

"The joystick is very easy to use and does not include electronic components, which makes it more robust and increases its longevity. Also, maintenance is reduced to a minimum, since all moving parts can be greased." ■FW



JOE SPENCER

For more information on the equipment mentioned in this report, phone 011 889 0836 or email farmersweekly@caxton.co.za. Subject line: Equipment.