

## Landwards Gleanings. #2

From time to time, one of our *Landwards* web “bots” picks up some useful (or if not useful – interesting, or if neither - amusing) articles or publications relating to the world in which we work.

Rather than keep these to themselves here at the Secretariat, Gleaner feels they should be shared. Some you may have seen, others you may not. Look on them as a series of disconnected jottings.

### **Biofuel production from marine resources**

For those of you who have been following news items on the use of marine resources for biofuel production, the report ([MICRO- AND MACRO-ALGAE: UTILITY FOR INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS](#)) may be of interest. The report explores opportunities for energy and non-energy products, encompassing both marine and fresh water macro- and micro-algae, and forms part of the output from the EPOBIO programme.

EPOBIO was an international *Science to Support Policy* project funded by the European Commission and included the co-operation of the United States Department of Agriculture. The aim of the project was to realise the economic potential of sustainable plant-derived raw materials. A key objective was to design new generations of bio-based products derived from plant raw materials that will reach the market place 10-15 years from now.

Sadly, this project is at an end but there are some useful reports on their website ([www.epobio.net](http://www.epobio.net))

[Partners \(New Holland Maga\\*ine\)](#) (from CNH) contains a number of interesting articles on subjects ranging from oenology (Mrs Gleaner informs me this is the science of viniculture – she should know as she is determined, single handedly, to keep the vineyards in business) to the Basildon tractor and engine plant. Gleaner has it on good authority that the 2007 Young Engineers Competition was held at CNH Basildon on March 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 and a good time had by all. Sadly, CNH chose to relocate engine production to Italy late in 2007. Good news (on the grapevine of course) is that the tractor line is being extended to meet demand.

[An earlier edition of this maga\\*ine](#) carries a good article on rice production.

Whilst on the subject of wine, an issue of the [JD Powersource](#) maga\*ine has articles on the use of their engines in high clearance vineyard tractors and grape harvesters.

Also from the CNH stable is a [brochure from Case-IH](#) which updates the info on bio-diesel given in the last edition of *Landwards* Gleanings.

The [Douglas Bomford Trust](#) has a new website. <http://www.dbt.org.uk/> For those of you not familiar with this trust, it has the overall objective of advancing knowledge, understanding, practice, competence and capability in the application of engineering and physical science to agriculture, horticulture, forestry, amenity and allied land based and biological activities for the sustainable benefit of the environment and mankind.

This it does by providing funding to enable competent individuals and organisations to pursue:

- Education, training, research and knowledge transfer
- Innovation and the application of science and technology with respect to the design, development, evaluation and construction of machines, systems and techniques
- Travel to acquire or disseminate knowledge
- The development and maintenance of professional competencies
- The development or acquisition of new skills, techniques and capabilities

The March 2006 edition of the John Deere Difference maga\*ine had an interesting article on the John Deere Autotrac automatic steering system. Gleaner also spotted, in this edition, a picture of IAgRE Fellow Peter Leech looking somewhat surprised. Unfortunately, this issue

does not appear to have been archived on the JD site. Luckily for us (not Peter), his picture appears again in the [March 2007](#) issue which includes an article on how JD try and break their tractors (well, stress test actually) before shipping from the Mannheim plant.

Unfortunately, one of the Gleaner Grandchildren saw the advert for the JD 6920 pedal tractor and has asked Grandpa Gleaner to see about a trade in for his current scoot along. Interestingly, the warranty period for these is somewhat longer than the real thing! One can only assume that children can be trusted whereas farmers can't

For those of you who doubted that the current UK government knew anything about agriculture, a recent issue of MF news showed that Tony Blair has at least (or should that be at last) seen a tractor. Again, unfortunately, this issue does not seem to have been archived on the MF site. Believe me, it happened! The [latest edition](#) has a couple of interesting articles on combines including rotary developments (fore and aft rotary rather than "drums" which I always understood to rotate!) and eight straw walkers.

And as soon as Ed Miliband (in his position as Secretary of State for the Environment) had seen a tractor close up, he was moved to "greater" things. Typical. At least we have a [picture of that!](#)

The July 2006 edition of [Serious Machinery \(from AGCO-Challenger\)](#) has a good article on tracks (from the Challenger perspective) and a preview of a new Challenger artic. (Thank goodness there is no pedal version of that.) The [November 2007](#) issue contains an article celebrating 20 years of Challenger tracks.

Ref: Gleanings #1. For those of you with too much time on your hands or a particularly sad interest in the energetics of biofuels (where does that leave me?) visit [here](#) to see the source of the tyre pressure quote.

Also Ref: Gleanings #1. The suggestion that Mrs Gleaner should run faster with the vacuum cleaner did not go down well at all. It will not surprise you to know that as a result of these comments, I now seem to be in charge of this chore. Being an engineer and an environmentalist, it was not difficult to justify a new machine and so we are (I suppose that means I am) now the proud owner of one of those purple machines that looks not dissimilar to a grain cleaning cyclone. This satisfies both the engineer (clever lateral thinking) and the environmentalist in me (no destruction of the forests in repeated bag replacements). It came with a flexible crevice cleaning tool which I thought would be just right to clear the remnants of the many digestive biscuits from my computer keyboard. Sadly, the crevice cleaning tool did what it said on the tin – sucked just about every thing up in its path.....including many of the keys. After raking around in the container, I have managed to recover all save one letter. No pri\*es for guessing that there will no longer be a place for the letter \* in any future missives until Mrs Gleaner relents and allows me a new keyboard.

For those of you who missed it, [Landwards Gleanings. #1](#) can be found on the IAgRE website. Sorry if all the links don't connect.