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Advancing for a better tomorrow

The History of Austoft

Ken Schmidt





The first machine built by the Toft Brothers was a cane loader to reduce the backbreaking work of loading the harvested cane







The brothers then looked at the harvesting of the crop. This was the first machine built in 1944







Because of the interest in mechanisation and farmers wanting the Toft brothers to build them machines they built a factory on the farm at Avoca, Bundaberg







The brothers continued to develop their machines. These were made for their own use and some of the local farmers







As the idea of mechanization was accepted more farmers looked to the Toft brothers to supply machines. This was a small tractor mounted machine for the farmer to cut his own cane.







For the contractors bigger self propelled machines were made with larger capacity, and the ability to harvest larger crops.







With the machines cutting the cane, there was need for improved loaders. In 1956 Harold Toft introduced hydraulics into the loaders. This a tractor mounted WTL 250







A fully hydraulic 4 wheel drive version was also produced







A tracked version was made available for the wet areas of Northern New South Wales







The whole stalk machines continued to develop, culminating in the J150 and larger J250 models







In the mid 60's there was a push for chopped cane to be delivered to the mills. Toft answered the need by adding the option of a chopping mechanism and elevator to load the billets, to both the J150 and J250 machines.







Harold Toft then turned his attention to a designated chopper harvester. This was an "over the row" machine which featured a cleaning system to remove trash from the billets.







This range started with the CH 200 then CH250 with larger engines, culminating in the CH364 which had 2 x 6 cylinder International engines. One as a skid unit mounted under the rear for transmission and the other mounted behind the operator which drove the harvesting functions mechanically.







During this period, as part of the International Harvester company, the CH 400 was introduced, This machine was basically mechanical with 4 wheel drive, and a drum type chopper mechanism.







The development of the Toft machines continued with the CH 364 Robot. The "Robot" introduced increased hydraulics to the machine with one engine driving hydraulic pumps which drove the transmission and the harvesting functions.







To harvest canes in the wet areas the CH 464 was developed in Northern NSW. This used the proved harvesting system of the CH 364 Robot, with the addition of Caterpillar tracks which lowered the ground pressure enabling the machines to work in the wet.







The CH 364 Mk 2 was the next model which introduced more hydraulics. Positioning the engine to the top of the machine gave the option of introducing larger more powerful engines.







The CH 364 Mk 2 full track was introduced as a version of the machine. With the motor mounted behind the operator, the chassis could be shared with the rubber tyred machine removing the need for 2 engines







SLIDE 20

The final version of this design was the CH 564. This machine was designed to harvest the large (200 ton +) crops in Hawaii. It could cut a 12 foot swathe through the crop. It was powered by 2 x 375 hp Caterpillar engines







In the early 1970's Toft purchased the Don Agricultural company that manufactured the Don Mizzi range of harvesters and the Don Implement range.







This included the "Riverside" factory which became the main production facility







In the mid 70's there became a need for a "small" farmer machine. The CH 300 was developed. This featured a rotary chopper but still maintained the primary elevator of the bigger models







The "Thousand" series was introduced in an effort to produce an improved sample of cane to the mill with reduced maintenance. The 6000 replaced the large CH 364







The 4000 model replaced the smaller CH 300. Engines in the 1000's varied from 210 hp to 275 hp.







The tracked version was available in 4500, 5500 and 6500. The half track was a kit which could be attached to the wheeled machines when needed.







The desire to harvest green cane in commercially acceptable quantity and quality, resulted in the development of the 7000.







There was also a tracked version 7700







In the late 1980's the company changed to Australian ownership. This resulted in a change in color and the name change to Austoft.







The 7700 continued as a popular variant.







There were several specialized models for different countries and applications. Bin machines, Bag machines, wholestalk machines, were some of these.







During this time a small machine based on the 7000 design was produced for Okinawa







In the mid 90's Case IH purchased Austoft. The color changed to red for 1997 model year







In 2000 both the 7000 and 7700 were fitted with a new cabin to improve operator comfort.







In 2001 the small 4000 was developed for the Asian market, to suit small fields and narrow row spacing. The small Okinawa machine was used as the basis for this machine.







In 2003 the throat of the machine was enlarged to harvest the increasingly popular "pineapple" style of planting







Although there had been limited production of machines in Brazil since 1975, Full production transferred to Piracicaba in 2004







The factory began to produce the 7000 series for the world markets







In 2009 the 8000 was introduced. This featured a new improved cabin, cooling package and engine.







Along with the popular 8800, for wet conditions and steep hillsides.







In 2012, production of the 4000 transferred to India to be closer to the market it was designed for (Asia). Improvements to the design included dual crop-dividers and feeder type topper.







In 2018 the 8010 was introduced. Which featured improvements to the Chassis, Cabin and operating systems.







Also there was the tracked 8810. This machine is fitted with the optional shredder topper.







In 2019 the 4000 features the FPT NEF engine and improvements to the cleaning system (Anti-vortex) and operational improvements.





