

Kesla Oyj

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COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN KESLA AND CASE CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT FOR EXCAVATOR BASED HARVESTERS

CASE XTIMBER:

Kesla has signed a cooperation agreement with CASE CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT (www.casece.com), hereinafter CASE, concerning excavator-based harvesters. Kesla's Xtimber is the first complete excavator accessory package on the market. It includes harvester heads, special booms, and safety and measuring equipment. The accessory package provides a quick and easy way to equip a standard excavator for a variety of applications: timber harvesting, excavation, earthworks and loading. CASE Xtimber packages are available for base units in the 7.5–25-tonne weight range.

EXCAVATOR VERSATILITY

Equipping excavators for additional applications has increased dramatically, particularly in emerging timber harvesting markets, such as Russia, Asia and South America, and also when harvesting and processing under special conditions, such as in bogs, plantations and mountainous regions.

The versatility of excavators makes them suitable for a variety of applications, enabling a high usage rate throughout a base unit's life cycle. Excavator base units are also manufactured in large volumes, making them affordable and reliable in comparison to traditional wheel-based forest machines. Excavators are covered by a global spare part and maintenance network. They can be used all over the world in all conditions, and base unit reliability has reached the highest possible level. The Xtimber package enhances an excavator's timber harvesting features without substantial alteration to the basic unit.

EXTENSIVE EXCAVATOR EXPERIENCE

Kesla built its first excavator applications over 15 years ago. One of Kesla's strategic goals for 2005 was to be one of the best forestry technology accessory manufacturers in the world. This strategy has borne fruit: at the beginning of 2007, Kesla signed a cooperation agreement with Japanese company Sumitomo. Cooperation with CASE is the next step. Cooperation is based on long-term, determined efforts to develop top-quality, economically efficient solutions for end users' various logging needs.

The cooperation agreement between Kesla and Sumitomo covers the ASIA-PACIFIC region, while the new agreement with CASE covers Europe and the European part of the Russian forestry market. Cooperation will be realised through both CASE and Kesla's extensive dealer networks. A basic fixed package will offer customers a workable excavator-harvester on a turnkey basis. As soon as they leave the factory, these harvesters will be covered by the same warranty as standard excavators. Both customers and retailers will then have a solid foundation on which to develop their own businesses with regard to Xtimber. In Sumitomo's network, spare parts for Kesla products are handled through exactly the same system as excavator spare parts.

Each year, Kesla manufactures over 200 harvester heads, the majority of which are used with excavator base units. Kesla seeks to strengthen its expertise in a variety of excavator applications through long-term development with partners.

WELL-BALANCED COOPERATION

Kesla will focus on manufacturing accessories and Sumitomo on excavator development. Sumitomo also manufactures CASE excavators, so the CASE network has access to the latest and most advanced excavation machinery.

Japanese company Sumitomo is known for its top quality and high level of finish. R&D pays attention to improving environmental friendliness. For example, the latest models are extremely competitive when it comes to fuel economy. These are also vital features in demanding timber harvesting conditions, which underline reliability, economy and environmental friendliness more than ever. Kesla and Sumitomo's cooperation naturally seeks to develop increasingly competitive excavator-harvesters with low usage and maintenance costs. Quality standards have been set high, as is the Japanese way, and Kesla has also risen to meet this challenge.

RESEARCH AND FIELD STUDIES

Excavator use has been studied in several research projects and field studies in recent years. The results have been encouraging and, in the correct conditions, the overall economic efficiency of excavators is extremely competitive. Central factors in their favour also include versatility and the potential to balance out seasonal fluctuations. The investment threshold for excavator-based harvesters is significantly lower and base units also retain their resale value, which reduces the financial risks associated with the investment. This goes a long way to explaining the competitiveness of excavators in emerging markets.

Excavator-based harvesters will not replace the current specialised machinery, but they are establishing a solid position in timber harvesting in special conditions. The relative amount of this type of harvesting is set to increase.

PLANTATIONS

One specialised application for excavator-based harvesters is South American eucalyptus plantations. Timber harvesting conditions are very stable yet also demanding, and owners expect extremely high usage rates from their harvesters. Eucalyptus harvesting requires debarking at the felling stage. Kesla provides a solution with its EUCAPro package. Eucalyptus plantations are also found in substantial quantities in Asia and South Africa. A growing amount of pulpwood will be harvested from eucalyptus plantations to increasingly strict efficiency requirements.

TIMBER HARVESTING IN BOG FOREST

Excavator-harvesters are also in their element in bog or peat forest. These features are exceptionally valuable in Finland and Russia. Excavators equipped with broad and flexible caterpillar tracks exert little surface pressure and can therefore move without damaging even softer ground. Their use in timber felling can therefore be extended beyond the frosty season, even though the majority of excavators will then be engaged in excavation work. Kesla's excavator-harvester solutions allow a change from bucket to harvester head – and vice versa – in under an hour, thereby enabling optimal year-round employment. Excavators can be equipped with the same information transfer and control and measuring equipment as standard harvesters.

SALVAGING STORM-DAMAGED TIMBER

Excavators are harnessed in large numbers to salvage timber damaged by sudden natural phenomena. They also have their strengths in extreme conditions. Excavator capacity can be rapidly increased when standard accessory packages are available.

ROADSHOW 2008

Kesla and CASE are organising a timber harvesting road show:

April: Spain, SMOPYC 2008 -exhibition
May: Austria, LUNZER dealer days
May: Finland, CASE info day
June: Germany, KWF Tagung -exhibition
June: France, Forexpo 2008 -exhibition
August: Finland, FinnMetko 2008 -exhibition

The fruits of Kesla and CASE's cooperation will also be on display at key forestry trade fairs in Moscow, St Petersburg and Vologda.

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Pictures 1 to 3: Kesla Xtimber (Case 135SR + Kesla 20RH)