



CONTINENTAL

Investment in production of radial tyres for agriculture

Continental wants to invest 49.9 million euro in its business with agricultural tyres. The international tyre manufacturer will build up production of agricultural radial tyres in its plant in the Portuguese town of Lousado. In the framework of this project, 125 new jobs will be created in the production of agricultural tyres under the brand Continental. At the same time, the company is preparing the ground for further investment in the production of agricultural tyres, which will be carried out based on further market and turnover developments.

We will be sending a clear signal with this investment that Continental will again be active in the segment of agricultural tyres as manufacturer of radial tyres under the premium brand Continental. We dispose of an excellently organized location with a motivated and experienced team in Lousado. Innovative radial tyres for the demanding agricultural area will be produced in the cutting-edge production plant", said Nikolai Setzer, Member of the Board at Continental and Head of the Tyre Division, when signing the investment agreement in the Portuguese town of Lousado. Thorsten Bublitz, Business Line Manager for Agricultural Tyres at Continental, explained: "Because of the growing world population and an increasing need for crop plants, the number of large companies and thus the demand for efficient agricultural tyres will rise. We have got yearlong experience as premium manufacturer in this area." Continental plans to launch a complete tyre offer for tractors and harvesting machines in cooperation with leading vehicle manufacturers. The portfolio will consist of radial and cross-ply tyres in 150 sizes.

When launching radial tyres for agriculture under the brand Continental in the year 2017, the brand licence contract, which was signed between Continental and its licensee Mitas in 2004, will be finished. According to the latest decision of the competition authorities concerning the take-over of Mitas, Continental will get its brand rights already back before the contractually agreed expiry date in 2019. As a consequence, it will be able to launch its offer of agricultural tyres under its own brand before 2019. The production of radial tyres for agriculture will be started at the location in Lousado in 2017. Continental already produces cross-ply tyres for agriculture in Port Elizabeth/South Africa and in Petaling



Conti is heavily investing at the location in Lousado.

Jaya/Malaysia. Apart from an investment in the production plant in Lousado, Continental also invests 2.5 million euro in a new research and development centre at the same location in order to accelerate the growth of the new product portfolio for agricultural tyres. The centre will be closely linked with the central research and development department in Hanover and will employ five engineers first of all. It is planned to increase the work force to ten highly qualified employees.

Continental as well delivers components and systems for agricultural machinery and infrastructure. The production programme consists of complex instrumentation and camera solutions for sensors, rubber chains and conveyor belt technology and also exhaust gas treatment. When offering all these different components from one hand, Continental is able to offer comprehensive solutions for increased efficiency, environmental friendliness and saving of resources.

The investment in the production of radial tyres for agriculture at the location in Lousado is part of the growth strategy "Vision 2025", which was introduced in 2011. Thus,



Nikolai Setzer signed the investment agreement in Lousado/Portugal.

the Tyre Division was able to set course for strategic planning and systematic implementation of technological progress. There are further examples like an investment in the tyre testing plant AIBA (Automated Indoor Braking Analyzer) in the year 2012, the ContiLifeCycle plant for retreading of truck tyres and rubber recycling in Hanover-Stöcken (2013) as well as the High Performance Technology Center in Korbach (2014).

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ALL-SEASON TYRES

Increase in demand

Although specialized tyre trade does not like hearing and noticing this, there was an increase in demand for all-season tyres during the past winter months.

Mild winters in some regions of Germany are certainly one of the reasons. Furthermore, mandatory equipment of new vehicles with tyre pressure monitoring systems (TPMS) serves as another explanation. From a consumer's perspective, purchasing new sensors and/or new rims as well as tyres for a second set of wheels plays an important role. And finally, handling because of annoying tyre changeover as well as storing are no longer necessary.

This development is of course not very convenient for specialized tyre trade, as a considerable part of turnover has been generated because of the respective service fees. Nevertheless, specialized tyre trade will have to cope with this trend and will have to make the best of it. This means making use of its own market and product knowledge in order to offer and sell an optimum tyre to the customers. During consultations, the dealer should draw attention to the fact that all-season tyres always have to be considered as a compromise.

Explaining the pros and cons

Many experts recommend the use of all-season tyres only for small and compact vehicles and mileage under 10,000 kilometres. Users of bigger vehicles or drivers with more than 10,000 kilometres per year



Car drivers like getting advice when buying tyres.

should, however, drive with summer and winter tyres depending on the season. All-season tyres should not be an option for all the frequent drivers. Heavier vehicles with thus bigger sizes will have to cope with worse lateral guidance when driving on snow.

When using all-season tyres, it is worth having a look at the situational obligation to use winter tyres in Germany. The lawmaker only prescribed that tyres need an M+S symbol. In the meantime, experts have already indicated that tyres with the M+S symbol do not necessarily dispose of good winter tyre characteristics. Who wants to be on the safe side, should focus on tyres with the so-called snowflake symbol, as they offer much better winter characteristics. All-season tyres with M+S symbol are accepted as winter tyres in the Alps region. Moreover, it should be explained that all-season tyres wear off faster as they are used during the whole year. Asking a tyre expert in a dealership for a scrutinizing look at the tyres makes sense.

Additionally, different braking distances on dry and wet roads should be mentioned

too. All-season tyres consist of specific rubber compounds. As a consequence, all-season tyres sometimes have a longer braking distance compared with summer tyres when having high temperatures. It will not be possible to outwit physics. The same is of course valid for all-season tyres.

All in all, specialized tyre trade should use consultations with its customers in order to find an optimum solution based on its year-long experience and product knowledge. In this context, we would like to refer to tests carried out by reifen.com. Car drivers were interviewed concerning saving potentials when buying a car. According to this survey, most German car drivers (45 per cent) are in favour of getting information on saving potentials from their specialized workshop or tyre dealer. Specialized tyre trade should make use of this opportunity to serve as a competent contact person. Denying the topic of all-season tyres, will not only mean losing business, but also losing customers in the long run. Specialized tyre trade will not be able to afford this.

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Changing weather conditions with mild winters are an argument for all-season tyres.



AUTOBILD FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE

Recommendation for Vredestein, none for Star Performer and Dunlop

All-season tyres can be an option for some car drivers in the city or for second cars. Nevertheless, they are a compromise. "Differences among all-season tyres are much bigger than those concerning tests among pure summer or winter tyre". "AutoBild Allrad" (No. 7/ 2016) announced this as result based on its current test of all-season tyres. The Vredestein Quatrac 5, which was mounted to the test vehicle Skoda Yeti, was able to win against six further test candidates in dimension 215/60 R16. According to the testers, the Star Performer and Dunlop, however, could not be recommended.

Vredestein Quatrac 5 showed "a similar performance on snow as a real winter tyre" with nearly the best German school mark "sehr gut minus" and received an overall "empfehlenswert / recommendable", as well as Michelin CrossClimate in second position. Although the manufacturer considers the CrossClimate as summer tyre with winter characteristics, it frequently reappears in tests for all-season tyres in an appropriate way. According to the

testers, the tyre is "good on snow and in summer disciplines". Nevertheless, its high acquisition costs and reduced aquaplaning safety are criticized. The Falken Euroall Season AS 200 and the Goodyear Vector 4Seasons followed with the second-best school mark "gut". While both tyres offer high aquaplaning safety, a "reduced lateral guidance on snow" is among their weaknesses. The Hankook Kinergy 4S H740 achieved "befriedigend" as it is to offer permanent good

grip on snow, but reduced grip on wet and dry roads. According to "AutoBild Allrad", two tyres should not be used at all: the Star Performer Winter AS and the Dunlop Grandtrek ST1 All Season. Both showed "reduced grip on wet and dry roads". Furthermore, the Star Performer has got "too long braking distances and only moderate steering reaction on snow" and Dunlop is characterized by "extended wet braking distances and reduced traction on snow".



The Vredestein Quatrac 5 is test winner in the current test of all-season tyres carried out by "AutoBild Allrad".

Safety and consultation challenge industry and trade

As consumers are increasingly interested in all-season tyres, the segment has considerably been rising for two years. Mild winters and trends like growing urbanization are considered to be the most important general boosters.

The tyre manufacturer Goodyear Dunlop can certainly be regarded as a pioneer of all-season tyres. The company has been looking back at decades of experience in development and production of all-season tyres. For more than 30 years Goodyear has been committed to this market segment and can thus be called innovation leader. The company expects constantly high growth rates in this segment in the two-digit area - as a minimum until 2020. Goodyear thinks that the market for all-season tyres will increase by 11.5 per cent until 2018. According to a study, the market share is supposed to rise to 15.2 per cent until 2020.

In the meantime, nearly all the tyre manufacturers have noticed this and correspondingly started offering new tyre developments concerning all-season tyres. At the moment, Continental and Bridgestone are the two only tyre manufacturers not offering any all-season tyre in their premium brand. Both make use of their second brands for all-season tyres, Continental has the AllSeason-Expert by Uniroyal on offer and Bridgestone the Firestone Multiseason. Last year, even Michelin, the French tyre manufacturer, started a change of paradigm in the run-up of the Geneva International Motor Show. Now Michelin offers an all-season tyre with the Cross Climate too, although it is called "a summer tyre with good winter characteristics" for marketing reasons. This rather wordy formulation will definitely disappear in the next years.

Complex requirements

In the framework of Goodyear's study of all-season tyres it becomes clear that high requirements on safety and performance within a broad range of very contrasting weather conditions like coldness, heat, snow and rain have an impact on the purchasing decision. As a consequence, complex product and material requirements will be necessary, which will ask for a high level of technical expertise and innovative power on the part of the tyre manufacturers.

As the tyre is the only physical connection between vehicle and road, it plays a key role for the driver's and the passengers' safety. When taking a purchasing decision, product performance and quality are of crucial importance. "Because of the enormous complexity of developing high-quality all-season tyres, it is regarded as of the supreme disciplines of the tyre industry", says David Anckaert, Director of Development at Goodyear in Germany. "Finding an optimum balance between the most diverse requirements when standing at the crossroads of weather conditions, especially with regard to guaranteeing real winter characteristics, demands an extremely high level of expertise and innovative power". We have successfully been defending our key position in this area for more than 30 years, which is emphasized by continuous top ratings in independent tyre test", adds Anckaert.

High need for information and consultation
There is a high need for information and consultation, especially concerning the question when all-season tyres should be used and on what aspects consumers should focus, when buying them.

Individual mobility parameters like motorization of the vehicle, driving performance or area of living have a huge impact on the question, whether all-season tyres will be a good choice. "When living in warmer areas like Northern Germany or in less snow-rich urban areas, or covering mostly short distances, all-season tyres can be a good partner", explains Jürgen Titz, Group Managing Director D-A-CH at Goodyear. "When driving one's car around in snow-rich areas or for longer distances in wintry conditions, changing between summer and winter tyres will of course stand for safer driving."

All-season tyres for any requirement
Goodyear was the first tyre manufacturer, which developed and successfully launched an all-season tyre more than 30 years ago. Since then, the manufacturer has been using its expertise in order to continuously further develop its products in this segment thanks to constantly new technologies. As a conse-



Jürgen Titz (f.l.), Group Managing Director at Goodyear Dunlop Tires Germany, Mirjam Berle, Director Corporate Communications Goodyear Dunlop Tires, and David Anckaert, General Director Dunlop Development Center Hanau, presented the new all-season tyre strategy at the tyre trade fair REIFEN.



Goodyear has enormously influenced the segment of all-season tyres.

quence, it has been able to put its innovative power at the consumers' service. Apart from the latest generation of the Vector 4Seasons in the premium segment, the company also offers a reliable product in the budget segment under the brand Sava. Furthermore, Goodyear rounded off its range of products after launching its latest development in the medium price segment under the traditional brand name Fulda.

According to Goodyear, most of the vehicle manufacturers choose a Goodyear tyre in the all-season area for original equipment. Thus, this stands for a strong foundation with currently 69 OE releases in the market.

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MICHELIN

CrossClimate provides safety under all weather conditions

The French tyre manufacturer organized the elaborate product presentation of the CrossClimate shortly before the Geneva International Motor Show last year. Furthermore, the new tyre impressively demonstrated the shift of paradigm of the company.

Michelin launched with the CrossClimate the first summer tyre, which was also certified as winter tyre. Thus, it enables the uncomplicated and comfortable use of only one set of tyres in many regions for the whole year. The CrossClimate combines the advantages of a summer tyre like e.g. good performance when braking on wet and dry roads as well as high mileage with the advantages of a winter tyre concerning traction and braking in cold conditions or occasional snowfall.

No compromises

Thus, the CrossClimate will help many car drivers avoiding the seasonal tyre changeover without having to accept any safety declines in case of sudden weather changes. The developers emphasize that the all-season tyre offers similar performance characteristics as a summer tyre of the company, especially concerning braking performance on dry and wet roads. Moreover, grip and braking behaviour are comparable to a Michelin winter tyre and enable driving on snow-covered roads. The "three-peak mountain snow flake" symbol on the tyre sidewalls proves the high safety level. Only tyres with winter characteristics certified in standardized tests are allowed to wear the symbol.

Innovative rubber compound

The innovative and especially flexible material of the tyre maximizes grip in a particularly big temperature area. Thus, the tread perfectly adapts to uneven roads at every temperature and optimizes grip on snow-



The CrossClimate shows very impressively that Michelin would like to play a key role in the segment of all-season tyres.

covered, wet and dry roads. Moreover, an additional innovative layer underneath the tread improves energy efficiency of the tyre. As background information: After every revolution of the wheel, the tyre deforms because of the load of the vehicle and because of driving over uneven roads. Based on this deformation, energy is released in the form of heat. The engineers at Michelin were able to reduce this warming up in a considerable way by adding silica of the latest generation. As a consequence, there is a further reduction of the loss of energy. Additionally, rolling resistance of the tyre decreases and reduces fuel consumption at the same time.

Technical details

The V-shaped tyre tread was combined with self-blocking 3D sipes. They are hidden deep in the block, extremely waved and improve the grip of the tyre thanks to its elaborate geometric structure. The cuts are becoming bigger when getting to the bottom of the tread. Thanks to its drop-shaped form the sipes are getting broader with increased wear of the tread. Effect: the function of the tread cuts - interrupting the stream of water, evacuating the water or in

case of snow serving as grip edge - will be maintained during the whole life cycle. This provides reassuring safety reserves under all weather conditions until reaching the wear limit.

The bevelled edges of the tyre's tread blocks optimize the link between tyre and road and reduce braking distance on dry surface. The tread block, which is combined with complex sipes, guarantees good braking behaviour and good traction on snow.

The CrossClimate completes the offer of summer and winter tyres of the manufacturer, which will continue to be indispensable in markets with difficult climatic conditions in the future. The innovative tyre is produced at the Michelin locations in Bad Kreuznach and Bamberg in Germany. The range of product has been extended since the product launch. It is available in 42 different sizes from 15 to 19 inches at the moment. Michelin offers a total of six partly new sizes from 16 to 19 inches in the growth segment of SUV. It will become clear in the next months, whether a trend will develop concerning the use of all-season tyres for bigger SUV too. Michelin is well prepared for this. (oth)



The tread of the CrossClimate offers good braking behaviour and traction on snow.

NOKIAN WEATHERPROOF

Innovative all-season tyres

Looking at the growing trend towards all-season tyres, the Finnish tyre manufacturer Nokian Tyres also has - apart from its summer and winter tyres - with Weatherproof an all-season tyre family in its programme.

As the most northern tyre manufacturer in the world and renowned winter tyre specialist Nokian wants to meet the increasing demand of trade and consumers for such products. When the company developed the Weatherproof, the company felt obliged to its particular requirements. Thus, they did not follow the usual procedure of combining a summer tyre compound with a tread typical of winter tyres, but it went just the other way round, as the Weatherproof product family was designed from scratch as absolutely reliable all-season tyre for wintry conditions.

Instead of an all-season tyre with below average performance Nokian Tyres presented an all-season tyre family which combines winter safety of a Nokian winter tyre with driving stability and exact handling of a Nokian summer tyre. As a consequence, the products are even able to withstand inhospitable Scandinavian conditions with temperatures of up to -30°C , a matter of honour for the Finnish manufacturer.

Extreme driving conditions during all the seasons and under all weather conditions are simulated in the Nokian Tyres test centres in Ivalo, north of the Arctic Circle and also called White Hell, and on testing tracks in Germany and Spain.

An innovative all-round talent

The rubber compound of the Weatherproof, which was particularly developed for all-season tyres, guarantees optimum stability in a broad temperature range from -30°C to $+40^{\circ}\text{C}$, has an extremely high longevity, great wet grip and low rolling resistance. The design of the tread was carefully optimized in order to provide excellent grip on snowy and wet road, good characteristics concerning slush and aquaplaning as well as high driving stability and short braking distances.



Its manufacturer calls the Nokian Weatherproof an "innovative all-round talent".

Furthermore, other characteristics, which are typical of the Weatherproof family, were integrated. Polished grooves, optimized aquaplaning features and the WSI (Winter SafetyIndicator). This stands for a patented indicator of tread depth in the tread as well as an information screen on the sidewall, which offers real added value to the consumer and trade will get a welcome unique selling point and selling argument. The Weatherproof products certainly dispose of the "three-peak mountain snow" symbol.

Aramid-sidewall technology

The Nokian Weatherproof family offers the Weatherproof SUV too, which is a model especially designed for the use on heavy SUVs. It also consists of Aramid-sidewall technology, which is well known because of other Nokian Tyres SUV products. Based on the unique use of Aramid fibres, the manufacturer achieves an extremely high resistance against damages and cuts. It goes without

saying that this material has already proven its usability in aviation and arms industry, above all concerning bulletproof vests. Nokian Tyres stresses confidence in this technology by even offering an Aramid Guarantee on sidewall damages as exclusive instrument for its specialized tyre dealers.

The Nokian Weatherproof offers one of the biggest ranges of products in the all-season tyre market. It consists of 55 different articles from 13 to 19 inches, with speed indicators up to "V" for passenger car and SUV models as well as two different treads for transporters, delivery vans and vans. This tyre line will enable specialized tyre trade to cover all the customer inquiries from the portfolio of one individual supplier. (oth) Its manufacturer calls the Nokian Weatherproof an "innovative all-round talent". The tread depth indicator in the tread, which is patented as Winter SafetyIndicator (WSI), offers a useful added value to the customer.

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