

■ FUEL

## High costs lead biodiesel haulier to switch back

By Roanna Avison

A HAULIER THAT switched its entire fleet to run on rapeseed oil has reverted to diesel for all but one of its vehicles because the cost became prohibitive.

Ludlow, Shropshire-based H Wragg Transport converted its 15 tractor units to operate on Verdant Fuel, which is made

from rapeseed ('H Wragg switches to 100% biodiesel', *CM* 27 March 2008).

At the time, the rapeseed oil cost 50p/litre (ex-VAT), but it has since soared to a peak of 95p/litre.

Malcolm Wragg, who runs the family-owned haulier, says it switched to biodiesel because of the reduced costs as well as the environmental issues. But after the rapeseed oil became more expensive, Wragg felt he had to return to conventional diesel.

"We will keep one tractor unit running on rapeseed oil as a longer-term test of the impact in terms of cost, MPG and carbon footprint.

"The overall cost of rapeseed oil per litre is prohibitive to running the whole fleet on it, particularly during the recession," he adds.



Image: Rex Features

▲ The price of rapeseed oil has soared to 95p/litre

■ SAFETY

## JOST offers free fifth-wheel safety checks

FIFTH-WHEEL manufacturer JOST-GB is offering its artic operator customers a free 10-point fifth-wheel safety check on their tractor units at its HQ in Heywood, Lancashire.

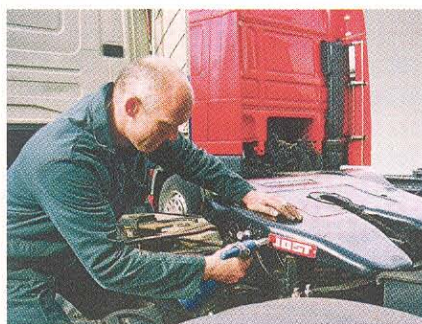
JOST-GB's technical director Dave Deri says: "With safety very much at the forefront of operators' minds, our 'Stay Safe With JOST' campaign has been created to encompass our existing and new safety-related initiatives ranging from training and technical advice through to our fifth-wheel safety wall chart and the JOST 'Guide to Safe Coupling and Uncoupling'."

Deri adds: "Most common problems we see occurring are purely down to a lack of maintenance, with fifth wheels all too often regarded as 'fit and forget' items – which is simply not the case. Maintained properly, a fifth wheel will give years of

trouble-free service. We are offering our free 10-point check to promote this fact and I'd encourage operators to take advantage of this essential safety service."

Under the scheme each fifth wheel will be evaluated using a 'traffic light' system, where green means OK, amber is advisory and red that urgent attention is required.

For more information, contact JOST on 0161 763 0225.



## View from the sharp end



Driver **L Radley** is pleasantly surprised by a Mini driving with all due care and attention.

**There's not a lot** that surprises me these days. I can't even be bothered to get irate when yet another car goes careering across my bows on the M25.

But I was pleasantly surprised last week when I came across a Mini doing less than the speed limit on the A13.

I was even more shocked when it indicated and carefully merged with the queue on the slip road to the M25 in a safe and polite manner. I almost fainted when it stalwartly refused to tailgate the car in front, instead letting several others in.

The picture started to look distinctly odd when our Mini reached the coned-off van that was causing the queue in the first place, and not only did it again merge safely, but so did the cars around it. As the road opened out again approaching the roundabout, there was no mad accelerating scramble to get to the lights. Instead, there was an orderly rolling into place.

This seven-or-eight-car oasis of manners continued around the roundabout as if they were all on test, and proceeded to accelerate smoothly down the motorway slip, matching their speed to the traffic and holding back to allow the lorry already on the carriageway to exercise his right of way. The Mini then sat quietly behind said truck until there was plenty of room to overtake, which it did in a textbook manner before indicating and returning to the left-hand lane.

The Mini concerned was five years old, had a set of toy boxing gloves hanging from the rearview mirror, and was driven by a lad in his 20s, who – judging by his attire – should have been bullying his way through the traffic like the world was going to end then roaring off across three lanes without so much as a mirror check. However, not only was he driving with due care and attention, but so were all those around him.

Then I looked closer. In the back window of the Mini were some white decals. They read: "LEE DALE. RIP. 25.3.85-23.1.08." A quick Google search when I got home revealed that Lee had sadly died in a car accident. Who says shock tactics don't work?

Image: Rex Features