

YOUR GUIDE TO FARM MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT BARGAIN BUYS

Vicon's biggest year



Vicon's RotaFlow RS-EDW fertiliser spreader is believed to be the first implement in the world compatible with the ISOBUS system, which allows the electronic controller in a suitably equipped tractor to operate compatible implements from any manufacturer.

By GRAHAM FULLER

FROM humble beginnings, a small Dutch firm has evolved into an international manufacturer of farm equipment with more than two million machines sold throughout the world.

The Vicon brand, established by Hermanus Visser, is this year celebrating 100 years of farm machinery manufacturing.

The original Vicon machine was believed to be a horse-drawn semi-automatic potato planter.

Today, Vicon (which stands for Visser Construction Nieuw-Vennep) is best known for its mower bars, finger-wheel rakes and pendulum-type fertiliser spreaders.

Expansion of the company got underway during the 1950s when Mr Visser's eldest son, Herbert Visser, took on the job of opening up new markets, including North America, and a larger factory was opened in Nieuw-Vennep to cater for the increased demand.

A sugar beet harvester was successfully developed in the 1960s, while Vicon also extended

its product program with a spading machine. The Vicon rotary mower was introduced later that decade as an important extension to the hay and grass harvesting line-up.

The company employed more than 1000 people during this era of fierce growth. A Dutch investment company acquired a majority share of the company and Herbert Visser stepped back from being managing director.

Thyssen Bornemisza, a large industrial group, looked at the agricultural industry as a growth market and acquired full ownership of Vicon during the early 1980s, making funds available and permitting expansion of its crop care product range with the acquisition of Belgian sprayer specialist, Allaey.

The forage harvesting product range was further strengthened by the takeover of French baler specialist, Rivierre Casalis, while, in Canada, Vicon purchased two manufacturers of cultivators, field sprayers, round balers and PTO-driven combine harvesters.

The company made a breakthrough with micro-electronics in agricultural machinery in Nieuw-Vennep.

One of the key developments was the HP1600 high density baler, which was the first electro-hydraulically operated baler capable of producing quality baled silage.

Vicon's Nieuw-Vennep factory also became a development centre for farm electronics and, in the early 1980s, pioneered the ISOBUS standard, which has now been adopted globally by the agricultural industry as the next generation of machine control systems.

Thyssen Bornemisza brought its Vicon, Zweegers, Rivierre Casalis and Deutz-Fahr implement companies together in one organisation, called Greenland, during a period of consolidation.

This newly re-organised company adopted the single and strongest brand name – Vicon.

The Norwegian Kverneland Group acquired Greenland in 1998.

Both manufacturers' product ranges complemented each other well and Vicon's worldwide distribution was further strengthened.

By 2008, the Kverneland Group had simplified its brand strategy to concentrate on its two strongest identities – Vicon and Kverneland.

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