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NEW ZEALAND NATIVE

Words and images by Jaiden Drought

This month *Farm Trader* gets the scoop on the all-new Katipo range of sprayers, designed and built right here in New Zealand with Kiwi farmers and small contractors in mind.

It's not often you get invited to test a machine before it's even been launched onto the market, or be one of only a handful of people outside the company to have even seen the machine. This was exactly what happened this month when I made my way to Magpie country, which at the time was the new home of the Ranfurly Shield — a victory short-lived it turns out. But never mind, I wasn't there to talk rugby.

The machine I was witnessing for the first time was Hustler Equipments's new range of sprayer called the Katipo. This machine is targeted towards the farmer/small contractor market and for some reason (it may be the colour scheme or the name) every time I see it I think of New Zealand's native birds the kakapo and the kea.

Those of you familiar with Hustler's Spray Smart range will know they're predominantly manufactured overseas but assembled in New Zealand. However, the new Katipo range has been designed and built from the ground up by Hustler's Hastings-based branch here in New Zealand. According to the team at Hustler, there has been over 10,000 hours of research and

development put into this machine. Hustler enlisted the help of a Kiwi designer for the tank moulds. This particular designer is no amateur: he created moulds for Ferrari cars — so you can tell your neighbour your sprayer was designed by Ferrari and technically it's not bending the truth too far.

Fifty years ago Hustler was designing and manufacturing sprayers here in New Zealand for New Zealand conditions and is returning to its roots with this range. Hustler Equipment has a long history of building farm machinery in New Zealand and being based in Hastings has its advantages. The fact is, like the very first sprayer and the rest of its products, the Katipo range is a very sharp-looking piece of machinery.

Frame and tank

The chassis is standard from the 680 model through to the 1150 and has been designed in a U-shape where the plastic tank simply clips into the chassis. The chassis is hot-dipped galvanised and also has a large skidplate on the bottom to protect all the major components in the event you misjudge a hump or hollow.

Hustler has made up two violent shakers — one for the frame and the tank and the other for the boom. These have been used extensively during the R&D process and to prove how extensive the testing is, they have a tank graveyard for ones that didn't make the cut. Most of the failed tanks cracked in the same location, so the chassis and the plastic moulds have been slightly altered and further testing has resulted in the tanks lasting four times longer. Thus, Hustler customers can be confident with their product. During this testing phase, the nice sandblast finish on the tanks was tested for weak points by recreating what 20 years of farm duty could do to it, with particular focus on the rubbing against the chassis.

For filling, a patented two-inch coupling comes standard so you can hook the optional filling hose with a filter to pump from a water source, such as a river, with ease or if you are spreading liquid nitrogen, the two-inch hose from your mixing tank will fit straight on. This means you can use the mixing tank's pump to fill the Katipo quicker and with less fuel than the tractor would.



FMG tip:

Birds can gather enough nesting material to start a fire in the time you can take a 20-minute smoko break





The hand-wash tank has a capacity of 18L and a little tap at the bottom to make washing your hands easy, while an optional 100L clean-water rinse tank can completely rinse the tank in under a minute. This is located under the green cover on the right-hand side of the tank, which is handy for those using a lot of different sprays to ensure Farmer Brown's nice lush grass gets the liquid fertiliser and not the roundup treatment you were spraying at the previous job.

On the left-hand side is another optional extra with this green cover providing chemical storage and hiding all the filling apparatus and the filter etc., which both keeps it out of harm's way and clear of the mud coming off the back wheels.

For the occasional hose and gun user, there are nubs on the top of the tank for the hose without the expense of a reel. All you do is simply loop the hose over the top for safe storage — a genius feature showing the

extent of the research undertaken for this machine.

For the more regular gun user, a fold-out reel is available — meaning you can either pull the hose up the hill to the side by simply removing a pin, or leave it as it sits and pull directly behind you. Two reasons: the first being it will always be running straight, which is much easier to pull, and the second is the hose is less likely to get damaged and therefore will last longer.

Pump and electronics

Just like the new tank, it seems appropriate that Hustler has added the recently-released Comet 110 pump to it's all-new tank. This is rated to 116L/min and provides more than enough juice for these sprayers. During the test we were spraying at 150L/ha, which worked out at 16L/min on the auto-rate controller. This means 100L were being dumped back into the tank to keep the chemicals in suspension.

This pump has been designed with longevity in mind, as anything on this pump that comes in contact with chemicals is either plastic or stainless steel to provide corrosive defence. Hustler has used clear pipes wherever it is sucking so you can see if there is an air block, as air really is the only thing that can go wrong in that department. The black pipes on the boom and auto-rate controllers etc. are for aesthetic reasons.

The lines all run nice and neatly through the chassis, which protects the hoses out in the paddock and have additional protection to stop any chaffing of the hoses, and again shows the lengths and attention to detail they have gone to.

The position of the pump is offset slightly, mainly for agitation purposes but also so there is a high volume sump for high application rates. This offset doesn't impact on the longevity of the driveshaft as it is still well under the 30-degree threshold and sits comfortably behind the tractor with even weight distribution.



The patented 2" filling coupling makes filling from a water source or liquid nitrogen tank a breeze



View from in the cab on the 1180 model with the clip in modules for auto-rate, etc.



The optional chemical-holding cover keeps the chemicals and filling apparatus out of harm's way



The New Comet 110 pump fitted to the Katipo range



Adjustable agitation for a variety of chemicals



Drain plug is fitted as standard and the U-shape chassis provides great protection to the tank's vital components

The large lid at the top is the obvious place to fill if you are not set up with a two-inch hose, although this is the only downside of the machine for me. A large sieve here would be ideal. If your high pressure hose water isn't sparking, something needs to stop the bigger particles making their way into the tank so you don't have to clean the main filter as often. This also stops your tips regularly blocking up. The team at Hustler tells me the large sieve actually comes standard on all models but the test machine wasn't using one on test day.

In terms of chemicals and mixing, the agitation aggression can be adjusted for chemicals, such as roundup, where they foam up easily. The settings range from barely moving right up to a washing-machine-like setting. The tank has been cleverly designed without flat areas and therefore no settlement of chemicals, particularly when using powders. This also helps agitation, as there are no eddies of calm water and so a vigorous and constant agitation is maintained throughout the tank.



Various boom options are available in both manual and hydraulic folding

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My favourite feature of the sprayer was the click-in modules, where additional equipment is simply added to the valve block by merely clipping it on. This is particularly handy for dealers as they can have the modules in stock and clip on the particular requirements requested by each customer. For example, flow control, auto-rate controller and others can be added on without too much complication and, with a list of options as long as my arm in this department, I am sure you will find the set up for you.

Boom

Like most sprayers, the boom can be the make or break (quite literally) of a sprayer and with this in mind, Hustler built the boom shaker — which sounds like a '90s' hip-hop group but has a much more practical application. This machine tested these booms to 58,000 shakes before the 10m test boom we were using broke. This is impressive, nearly four times the industry standard of 15,000.

As I just mentioned, we had the 10m boom option with the auto-rate and three boom sections. There is a variety of booms available

but, because this is more of an entry level tank, there is no real sophisticated option with auto height and Yaw-control type setups available. This is not a bad thing, as the 10m boom used during the test was ridged and didn't flex at all — even across the paddock which had some quite nasty plough furrow ridges, saving cost and complexity that will be sure to suit most cockies.

Verdict

Hustler's imported range has been dubbed the Spray Smart range, but the new Katipo range could have been aptly named the Smart Sprayer range, because of its simplicity and the fact it was designed with the Kiwi farmer in mind. It's also been developed and tested to a very high standard with no leaf left unturned. I was very impressed with the looks and features of this machine and, to be honest, it's no surprise that while I was there, containers of these Kiwi designed and built sprayers were being packed up ready to be shipped across the world. Why wouldn't our international counterparts want a piece of this? ■



- Clip-in modules
- Thoroughly tested
- Variety of options to suit you
- Chassis offers high strength properties but doesn't rub on the tank creating weak points
- Patented two-inch filling system
- Optional chemical storage
- Lines are well protected from rubbing
- Designed and built in New Zealand
- High flow pump with optional electric flow controls etc.



- Needs a sieve for filling in the top with the high pressure hose so you don't have to clean the main filter and the tips as often

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Model	Katipo 1150	Katipo 890	Katipo 680
Tank capacity	1150L	890L	680L
Flushing tank capacity	100L	Optional 100L	Optional 100L
Hand-washing tank capacity	18L	18L	18L
Pump	110L/min rear-mounted Comet pump	110L/min rear-mounted Comet pump	110L/min rear-mounted Comet pump
Storage	Built in toolbox	Built in toolbox	Built in toolbox
Controls	Three-section ARAG controls with SlickFit system and PressureLock function	Three-section ARAG controls with SlickFit system and PressureLock function	Three-section ARAG controls with SlickFit system and PressureLock function
Agitation system	Adjustable MixMax agitation system	Adjustable MixMax agitation system	Optional adjustable MixMax agitation system
Gauge	ViziGauge	ViziGauge	ViziGauge
Lid size	455mm with basket strainer	455mm with basket strainer	455mm with basket strainer
Features	Utility bar	Utility bar	Utility bar
	Couple up tank-filling system	Couple up tank-filling system	Couple up tank-filling system
Booms	Six booms to choose from	Six booms to choose from	Six booms to choose from
Hose reels	Three hose reels to choose from	Three hose reels to choose from	Three hose reels to choose from