



2015

GETTING THE RIGHT AUTOMATIC LUBE SYSTEM FOR YOUR APPLICATION

Mississauga, Ontario - "I know we've just finished tax season, but sometimes I feel more like a Financial Planner than a Product Manager for an automatic greasing system company," comments Dave McDougall. His feeling is well founded. At his 'real' job, McDougall is a Product Manager for Beka-Lube Products Inc. and knows about protecting and enhancing the investment that was made in a piece of equipment.

Once you listen to the rationale, it's not hard to understand why McDougall thinks this way. "The business case for investing in an automatic greasing system is easy to justify when you look at the enhanced resale value of a piece of equipment equipped with a system. When you add the daily downtime needed for manual greasing or the cost associated with a pin that's missed and then fails, then your ROI becomes that much faster."

Fortunately, progressive equipment maintenance foremen and fleet owners also appreciate the ROI of an automatic greasing system. Experience shows that even considering the up front investment, the payback in reduced costs associated with daily maintenance and extended life of all moving points really shows up in the residual value. And, if the equipment isn't sold, the savings keep mounting through reduced downtime and increased machine availability and productivity.

Is an automatic greasing system right for me?

Does your equipment have daily and/or weekly greasing requirements? Does it work in dusty/abrasive or wet conditions? If so, you can really benefit from an automatic greasing system, both on the job and at trade-in time.

There are many factors to consider when determining if you are going to use an automatic greasing system. You need to consider where the equipment will work. Different types of dust and dampness that the equipment will encounter will directly affect the performance of the grease and its ability to do the job. A benefit of automatic lubrication is that moving points are greased while the machine operates. This means that a wider range of pin rotation receives fresh grease - displacing contamination and moisture. A grease 'seal' actually forms over time around the pin joint, becoming the first line of defense to keep out contamination and therefore, it protects your equipment investment.

There are some who believe; 'If my operator isn't manually greasing - how is he going to spot a problem developing?' Operators are always required to perform walk-around checks - that's a basic safety requirement. Automated lubrication systems make the walk-arounds faster and easier to do. This means that more time can be spent looking for worn hydraulic hoses and checking fluid levels.

Checklist of considerations

Not all lubrication systems are created equal, nor are all the claims made always supportable. There are many factors to consider when selecting an automatic greasing system. According to McDougall, "All of the major brands work fairly well and will supply roughly the same volume of grease over the lifetime of the installation. Think about it. If you are using the OEM recommended EP-2 grease and one brand claims to consume significantly less than another system, from an O&O perspective, then you need to question if it was set up and calibrated properly in the first place."

Many would guess that price is the key factor in making a purchase decision. They would be wrong. While it is an important consideration, it is not the first on the list for those with lubrication system experience. It is frequently fourth. Realizing that there are common components to all lubrication systems - they each have a pump, several distribution sources, hoses, fittings as well as many available options but come with additional cost that might not be offered by others. Ensuring that you are starting from the same point, developing a system that is right for your equipment, your application and needs without the added cost of unnecessary features, is the right place to start.

Reliability

System reliability is the most important factor when considering an automatic lubrication system. Buyers of auto lube systems should ask questions about the components used. This will help to identify the design strengths that will result in superior performance. Questions like: How is the grease delivered from the pump to the various lubrications points? How is the pump constructed? Will it provide the maximum durability in all environments/climates ensuring the grease moves through the system without trouble over the equipment's operating life? What happens if there is a problem, including whether their system has some form of indicator to notify the operator if there is a problem? It should be noted that systems can be equipped with many options including in-cab visual and audible alarms as well as notifications that can be sent wirelessly back to the dealer's shop so the maintenance crew is alerted even before the operator is aware there is a problem.

Getting the right installer

A good installer will know what the manufacturer's recommendations are for greasing frequency and amount of grease for each location before a system is installed. If the system is not installed properly, it can affect a user's perspective of the benefits of an automatic lubrication system. It is important that prior to installation, that information is collected by the supplier about where the machine is going to work. Factors including the different types of dust and levels of dampness that the equipment will encounter can directly affect the performance of the grease and its ability to do its job. The lubrication system must be configured in order to supply the correct amount of grease for each situation.

It is important to look at the experience of the company and the knowledge they bring to your application. Probably the biggest concern is the amount of care and thought that goes into the installation of your system. There are too many instances of where the lines weren't run and protected properly so they got snagged and ripped-off and places where the welding of guarding and drilling to secure P clamps just wasn't done right, resulting in poor installation. The attention to detail is important along with the ability and knowledge of the installer. According to McDougall, poor installation resulting in lost time is the single biggest factor in deciding not to have a system installed. "I would suggest that determining who is going to do the actual installation is just as important a question to ask as the decision on which system to purchase," offered McDougall.

After sales service

Service includes knowing what the manufacturer's recommendations for greasing frequency and amount of grease for each location and the grease specifications is an important first step. Choose a provider that has an extensive library of installations documented. You don't want a service tech showing up and saying, "Wow, never seen one of these before!" A combination of on-site support, as well as a centralized call centre is a must. McDougall indicates that at Beka-Lube they are able to resolve over 95% of customer requests for technical support through their call centre. This along with an in-house knowledge base is vital to the ongoing support of systems in the field. This all results with increased machine availability.

New or old

Whether you are considering an installation on an existing piece of equipment or contemplating a new acquisition with a factory installed system, established companies, including Beka-Lube have all the components on the shelf ready for literally hundreds of different machines. Beka-Lube works with OEMs to ensure that factory installed systems are working to spec regardless of where they are installed. And if it is a new addition to your existing fleet, your equipment dealer may not be an expert installer and may specify the lowest cost system he can find. For installation, they'll rely on the

expertise of a lube system manufacturer, so, it is even more important to do your homework first and become educated and an informed buyer to ensure you get what you need.

Value for the money

Once you weigh all of the considerations and determine which system offers the best combination of features and options you'll need vs. the ones you won't need, find out who will do the installation and provide your service. Only then, the true value of each system can be determined. Higher priced systems and installations generally indicate better quality components and superior after-sale service, not to mention a cleaner installation. The payback is realized through a number of ways, including a reduction in time lost for maintenance and repairs throughout the life of the equipment. The bonus is realized at trade-in time with higher resale values. A Financial Planner will always recommend that you 'buy value and sell high.' A quality lubrication system from a reputable company that is installed properly will give you that option.

The bottom line... know who you are dealing with, explore your options and ask questions, the cost is nothing. The cost of not knowing can be very expensive.

Beka-Lube Products Inc. / Beka-Max of America Inc. are part of the global network for Baier+Köppel in Germany to supply Beka-Max Automatic Lubrication Systems (ALS) for a complete range of Road and Off Road Equipment. Located in Canada and the U.S., we work with manufacturers, dealers and end-users of equipment to ensure each machine is lubricated automatically to provide optimal operation time. In business since 1927, our extensive R&D has resulted in "BEST IN CLASS" solutions for automatic lubrication systems across all markets. Beka-Max systems are known for their reliability and are built to last many years.

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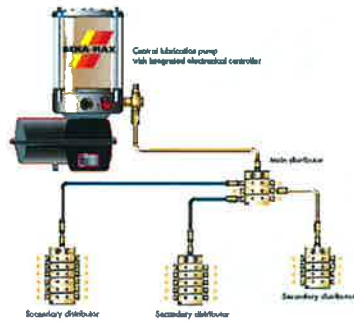
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From dump trailers to the tractors that pull them, automatic greasing systems have many applications.



Ready to work. A properly installed automatic greasing system reduces maintenance time.