

Challenging times for field days

MORE than 48,000 visitors attended the four-day Farm World field days last week at Lardner Park near Warragul.

Lardner Park chief executive Mark Cockrell said the numbers were down about 2 per cent on last year, attributed to the blustery weather and also the tough conditions on the farms of Gippsland.

“With the lower commodity prices and the extended dry season in this area, it has been chal-

lenging already for a lot of farmers,” he said.

“But there were still a lot of discussions about future uses for the ideas and exhibits at Farm World.

“A number of exhibitors reported it was difficult to get negotiations across the line.”

Nevertheless, some exhibitors were able to sell machinery or sign new customers.

The Lardner Park organising committee also announced a new partnership with the Baw Baw

Shire Council, which bought a 9ha block of land next to the 120ha Lardner Park site.

The extra land can be used to enhance Lardner Park as a regional events hub in Gippsland.

Mr Cockrell said Lardner Park hosted 80 events in the past year, including a national dairy conference, automotive and motorsport events, and also featured three charity events that raised more than \$300,000.

The theme next year for Farm World is Health and Wellbeing.



Irish ingenuity: Gendore Tractor & Machinery's Derek Genoni (above) with the award-winning Kettec Bale Slice. Picture: ANDY ROGERS

Bale slice cut above the rest

By GLENN MULCASTER

EUROPEAN makers were recognised with the top farm machinery awards at the Farm World field days in Gippsland last week.

The Kettec Engineering Bale Slice, shown by Gippsland farm machinery dealer Gendore, was named the best unpowered machine at Farm World in the awards held in conjunction with the Tractor and Machinery Association.

The hydraulic bale slice, mounted on a front-end loader, was designed and built in Ireland. It allows a tractor driver to pick up a wrapped round bale of silage, hay or straw then slice open the bale with a row of hydraulic knives, unwrap the plastic and netting, and then drop the fodder into a mixing bin or round feeder, or on to a feedpad, all without leaving the tractor cabin.

The implement has two long clamps that grip the plastic, which allows for easy retrieval of the plastic for disposal or recycling.

The TMA-Farm World award for best powered machine went to the new Claas Axion 900 series tractor.

This new series is built in France at the former Renault tractor factory, acquired a decade ago by the



High Claas: The Claas Axion 900 series tractors are built in France.

German farm machinery maker Claas. It was launched in Australia earlier this year by Landpower, the New Zealand company that distributes Claas equipment in Australia and New Zealand.

The new Axion 900 series tractor was exhibited by Claas Harvest Centre South Gippsland, which was also named best farm machinery site at Farm World.

Other awards at the field days recognised dairy services company GEA Technologies, which was named best agricultural stand.

Best innovation in agriculture award, sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank, went to veterinary services company, Coopers Animal Health, for its Rotavec Corona Vaccine.



Test drivers: Wai Edgar, Jamie Watson and Andy Baxter check out Kubota vehicles at Farm World. Picture: ANDY ROGERS

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