

SEGWAY NEW ZEALAND NEWS

Six years on, PT “workhorses” are still going strong amongst Kiwifruit, students and traffic



Six years ago two very different customers put their Segway e167 models to work in very different – but equally demanding – roles. In 2010 these same PTs are still going strong – a testament to the robust engineering designed and built into every Segway product.

KIWIFRUIT:

Award-winning Kiwifruit orchardist Doreen Bendall had been using a small two-stroke motorbike to get around her Tauranga property for years, and took the opportunity in 2004 to begin using a Segway PT instead. The e167 model features twin pannier bags and a front bag for cargo. Compared with a motorbike the PT has much greater carrying ability, and over the years these bags have transported all kinds of tools and equipment: pruning shears and shovels, posts and battens, hammers and nails, coils of wire and strainers – you name it, the e167's has carried it.

Doreen prefers the PT over the motorbike for many reasons. Because all Segway models are completely stable even at stopped or traveling at slow speeds it allows observation of the vines without dismounting. Compared with a motorbike the PT is safer to ride – especially in wet, slippery conditions regularly encountered as part of farming. Another everyday benefit is that the electric, zero-emission PT is quiet and does not emit any fumes or blue smoke. The PT has proven maintenance free, apart from checking the tyre pressure every month or two. In comparison, the motorbike needed regular refueling with petrol

and two-stroke oil, and because it had so many moving parts there was always something that needed attention. This often resulted in down-time during which the motorbike was non-operational. Even on a 6 hectare (15 acres) orchard the productivity lost from having to walk from the house (or packing shed/workshop) to the particular part of the property where work was being done could add up to half an hour per day (add it up yourself: five there-and-back trips, with each leg taking 3 minutes longer to walk than by PT or motorbike – that's five times 6 minutes, or half an hour). For a small business, 30 minutes of lost time per day is a real cost to profitability.

Doreen Bendall (and her late husband Gordon) have received industry awards for Kiwifruit Growers of the Year, and Green-variety Kiwifruit Growers of the year. She regularly achieves some of the highest orchard gate returns per hectare in the industry. One of the ways such high productivity is obtained is through adopting the latest methods and technology – and being the first orchardist in the world to begin using a Segway Personal Transporter (PT) is an example of this.

STUDENTS AND TRAFFIC

In 2004 Massey University's Palmerston North campus became the first place in New Zealand to begin using a Segway PT for security. This visionary deployment was the touchstone for many more New Zealand Universities and private security companies gaining increased efficiency and delivering improved quality of service with Segway PTs. Although unproven (and virtually unknown) at the time, the advantages of putting security staff onto PTs is now well-established.

Today, this very same e167 model is still in everyday use. It is used daily for traffic control and parking enforcement, for rapid response to the far corners of the campus, and at a variety of special events.

Maintenance has been minimal: three years in, the original Nickel Metal Hydride batteries were upgraded to the then-brand-new Lithium option (delivering more than double the range per charge); and more recently the tyres were replaced (you can see the new, enhanced traction "IRC Snow Tyres" in the right-most photo). Other than these wear parts, it is the very same PT doing the rounds today as was first delivered six years ago.

Buyers of brand new Segway PTs today can expect utility from their products for many years because Segway's engineers have designed a high quality machine built to work hard and long. The 2003-06 models offered serious cargo options only on the i-167/170/180 and e-167 models (all had narrow wheels; there was no cargo option on the XT apart from a front bag). Every modern i2 and x2 Segway PT and Patroller can be fitted with your choice of Universal Cargo Plates and hard, lockable Cargo Cases. A Front Bag can be fitted to standard i2 and x2 models (and is part of several packages), while all Patrollers have built-in bags.

The image below shows the first-generation e167 model (2002-2006), facing an i2 fitted with Cargo Cases, an x2 Adventure package than includes a Front Bag and Universal Cargo Plates, and an x2 fitted with a Front Bag and Cargo Cases. Whatever your application, there is a Segway PT that will improve the productivity of your business.

