



SWINGING FROM THE TREETOPS

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Cummins QSL9 engines are assisting in the successful yields at one of Australia's largest olive groves.

Treetops Plantation near Goolgowi in the fertile NSW Riverina region is one of the single largest table olive groves in Australia. In 2018, around three million kilograms have been harvested from the grove which has over 100,000 olive trees.

Part of a boutique industry, Treetops Plantation is a 'tree to table' producer, claiming: "We grow and process our olives locally, naturally without chemicals and with full traceability."

Interestingly, a 2016 report by the Australian Olive Association stated that 80% of table olive producers had less than five hectares, while only four known producers had more than 40 hectares – by far the largest being Treetops Plantation.

Cummins' role in irrigation efficiency.

The drip irrigation system at Treetops Plantation is obviously critical to successful yields, and it's here that Cummins has played an important role in the last 10 years or so.

In 2006, two 300 hp M11 Cummins engines were installed by Griffith-based Watertek as part of an upgrade of the irrigation system at Treetops Plantation.

Late in 2017, the mechanically-injected M11s were replaced by the electronic QSL9 Cummins, an 8.9-litre engine that has established a best-in-class record for reliability, durability and fuel efficiency in a wide range of industrial, automotive and marine applications.

"The M11s did a great job at Treetops Plantation," says Watertek director Joe Catanzariti. "When they were replaced last year, each had done over 26,000 hours without any major issues."

The performance of the M11 engines along with the Cummins' proven aftersales support resulted in the obvious progression to the QSL9 rated at 330 hp.



QSL9 engines feature water-to-water heat exchangers instead of traditional radiators.



Irrigation is critical to successful yields at Treetops, a 'tree to table' producer.

"We also installed new, more efficient pumps with the QSL9 engines which now have the capacity to deliver 650,000 litres/hour – up to a 15% improvement," Joe Catanzariti points out.

'Excellent' fuel economy.

He describes the fuel economy of the QSL9 as "excellent", ranging from 33 to 37 litres/hour at the olive grove. "The bottom line for Treetops Plantation is a fuel bill that has decreased while capacity to the crop has increased," he says.

The combination of electronic QSL9 engines and a new control system also allows remote control of the pumping system via a mobile phone.

Another feature is engine cooling using water-to-water heat exchanger technology instead of a traditional radiator. The benefits include improved cooling stability in high ambient temperatures, low maintenance with the fan, fan drive and radiator eliminated, and quieter operation.

The processing plant at Treetops Plantation, which grades the olives and produces a small amount of olive oil, is also under the influence of Cummins power, a QSL9 generator set rated at 275 kVA providing the electricity for its operation. ■

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