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Food giant goes Dutch

DAF gets a foothold in Australia, writes **GRAHAM SMITH**

DAF has landed a deal with Woolworths that could be the breakthrough the brand needs for a stronger position in the Australian market.

The Paccar-owned Dutch truckmaker has struggled to get a grip on the local market, despite having one of the most technically advanced and refined range of trucks available.

DAF is one of the biggest-selling brands in Europe, but it has been unable to get any real traction with Australian truck buyers.

The Woolworths deal for 18 CF85 prime movers, which were recently delivered, is a first for DAF and comes after months of tests by the national retail chain.

The DAF trucks will join Woolworths' Victorian fleet of more than 100 prime movers.

Woolworths' CF85s are the first DAFs in Australia to feature Paccar's high-performance, 12.9-litre MX engine, which meets Euro 5 exhaust-emission limits.

Australia's current emission limits are the equivalent of Euro 4. The tougher Euro 5 limits won't become law here until 2011, but as part of its commitment to the environment Woolworths is buying only trucks that comply with the more stringent limits.

"We have hundreds of trucks on the road every day," Woolworths national fleet manager Edwin Higginson says.

"We are mindful of our responsibility to help reduce our environmental footprint.

"That's why Woolworths is investing in leading-edge technologies, such as DAF's



Shake on it: DAF general manager Brad Wolstenholme with Woolworths national fleet manager Edwin Higginson and the 18 new rigs.

Euro 5 trucks, which are fuel-efficient and deliver the world's lowest emissions."

Higginson says his company's objective is to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from its fleet by 25 per cent in the next four years.

Woolworths' DAFs are all FTT CF85 6x4 prime movers rated to 70 tonnes GCM.

Each is powered by Paccar's 12.9-litre MX

engine rated at 340kW and 2300Nm from 1000-1400 revs.

They also have a 12-speed ZF AS Tronic overdrive automated transmission, Meritor RT46-160 rear axles, PACCAR Airglide 200 eight-bag suspension and a sleeper cab.

Safety features include an airbag for the driver, front and side under-run protection and EBS for trailers.

The trucks will haul refrigerated units or general trailers out of Woolworths' Mulgrave warehouse centre in Melbourne and distribute to supermarkets in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The trucks will be the first to sport Woolworths' new corporate livery as it moves to rebrand its Safeway supermarkets as Woolworths' stores.