

Service Spot



by **Simon Duck**

New Oil Technology?

A new oil additive product has been released here in the USA, Extralube ZX1. It was originally developed for the North Sea oil industry in the UK as a friction reduction system in 1992. Is it any good? After-market oil additives are frowned upon by many mechanical engineers. Often they are not the magic ingredients many companies claim they are and some fall into the category of "snake oil." (A fake cure-all originally sold by travelling merchants in the 1800s).



Now, it is important to know what we are talking about here! Oil additives are commonly added to base stock oil by the manufacturer to do various things: cool, clean, as well as lubricate. Depending on the application detergents, friction modifiers, viscosity modifiers, corrosion inhibitors, anti-foam agents, etc. can all be added in various amounts depending on the application. Now when we, as the end user, add further additives, the delicate balance that has been calculated and tested over many hours by the manufacturer, is lost.

Off-the-shelf oils are designed to work in many different environments and still protect your equipment. An additive could genuinely increase performance in your specific application or it may clog up your filters, damage bronze bearings, or catalytic converters.

Tufoil (www.tufoil.com) is an example of a blended product for engines

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that has polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) and molybdenum in micro particles that will not clog filters. The PTFE and moly give additional protection if the base oil is lost or damaged due to excessive heat or prolonged use. The general opinion is standard oils and filters changed regularly do a great job without the extra cost. Do your homework first. What do you want the additive to do? The common answer is, "Save me money." The common result is it costs you money. So how do we get the former, and not the latter?

Use the Internet to do some research. Many products use PTFE. Slick 50 from Shell (www.slick50.com) is one of the more well-known names. This stuff does reduce friction. It also can clog oil passages and filters. The short-term benefit will probably give more power, better fuel economy in cars, but in the long run can increase engine wear if oil delivery is impeded! If this stuff was great for your engine, then the car and oil manufacturers would be using it, right? Well, sometimes they do, but in quantities that will give you the advantages, but none of the problems. So more of a good thing is not necessarily better. PTFE in a simple gearbox can work wonders - but use caution. Are there small channels that could get clogged? Is a filter used in the system? If yes, large PTFE molecules may not reduce your costs. Again, do your homework.

OK, that's the negative side of additives. What about the positive? The drilling industry has found Extralube ZX1

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(www.team-zx1.com) can reduce wear in drilling applications. The environment we work in is often dirty, and lubrication infrequent. Constant oil lubrication may not be possible. (Like in an engine.) Once the oil has been washed away with the additive, there is still a layer of protection. It coats metal bearings or wear surfaces and increases part life. There are many of these dirty no-lubrication areas in drilling applications. Adding products like Extralube ZX1 or molybdenum disulfide to oils or greases can be very cost effective. This is a new product that has worked well overseas. Why not look into it? You may find it effective.

Simon

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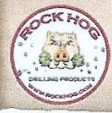
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