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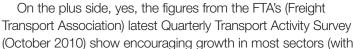
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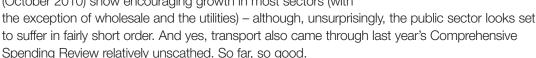


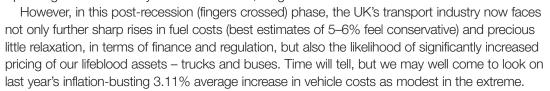
Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse

elcome to your first IRTE journal for 2011 – the issue that updates fleet managers on operator costs for the year ended and examines prospects for the 12 months ahead.

Steady as she goes is the main message (page 10). And, on the face of it, you'll find a fairly comforting read – also with plenty of detailed data against which to sanity check your own operation's achievements and future planning. But this could yet turn out to be the lull before a worrying storm.







Why? Perversely, one of the main drivers of increasing cost is upcoming engine emissions legislation from world regulators in general, but the European Commission in particular. Euro 6 may seem a long way off, but, with compliance for vehicle type approvals required just two years from now and mandatory Euro 6 registrations effectively starting at the end of 2013, its impact will certainly be felt sooner, rather than later.

Is it such a big deal? Well, yes. Achieving Euro 5 was one thing; taking these engines up to near zero NO_x emissions and vanishingly small particulate numbers – and guaranteeing their performance in use – is costing the major manufacturers a reported £1 billion each in R&D, some of which will inevitably be passed on. Then there's the fact of Euro 6 engines requiring not just either EGR (exhaust gas recirculation) or SCR (selective catalytic reduction) technology, but both – as well as a DOC and DPF (diesel oxidation catalyst, diesel particulate filter) combination.

That extra equipment adds up to between £5,000 and £10,000 on the price of a heavy-duty truck, and steals up to 150kg of its payload. Then there is the additional maintenance, estimated at another £10,000 (for the first five years) on top of current costs. What's more, no one is talking about better fuel economy from these engines: instead, industry experts are advising at best no change against Euro 5 fuel consumption, or at worst a 3% shortfall (page 18).

And with clear negative implications for greenhouse gas emissions and what is unarguably most hauliers' single greatest operational cost, you can bet that mitigating technologies, such as aerodynamics, telematics and direct fuel interventions, will rise up fleet engineers' agendas – adding yet more to the already stretched financial burden.

Forewarned is forearmed. A very happy and prosperous New Year to you all.

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