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Ecoboost engine makes its debut in the Ford New Fiesta in June

André Barros | andreb@autodata.com.br

Starting in June, the Ecoboost technology, which has been available for Ford cars in Europe and the United States since 2010, will arrive in Brazil. However, it will not be produced locally, nor will it be offered in the flex fuel option: the New Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost, chosen as the first to be equipped with the engine here, will only be able to be fueled with gasoline.

According to Ford, the sales volume expected for the technology does not justify the development of a flex option for local production. As a result, the engines will be imported from Craiova, Romania - and, at least for the short term, there are no plans for local production.

The Ecoboost is Ford's turbo-charged engine. The 1.0-liter version chosen for Brazil has 125 hp, the same power as the current aspirated Sigma 1.6-liter engine that currently equips the New Fiesta with automatic transmission - the company confirmed that the catalog of the New Fiesta Ecoboost will have this option of transmission, but did not provide any additional details. The consumption-related numbers were also not divulged, only the acceleration from 0 km/hour to 100 km/hour, which, in the 1.0-liter Ecoboost takes 1.6 seconds, that is, 20% faster than the aspirated 1.6 L, which takes 12.1 seconds.

"The development of the Ecoboost generated more than 275 patents," stated Rogelio Golfarb, vice president of strategy, communications, and government relations for Ford South America. "It is not only an engine with direct injection, double variable valve command and a turbo-compressor."

Among some of the technologies present in the engine that are also patented by Ford, the oil-immersed belt. In addition to low noise level and a 1% fuel economy, the component does not require maintenance, according to the company's powertrain chief engineer, Volker Heumann: "The regular belts had to be replaced every 70-80 thousand km. This oil-immersed belt does not require replacement based on kilometers."

Golfarb said that, by the end of 2013, Ford had sold 2 million vehicles equipped with the Ecoboost, and, by the end of this year, this volume should total 6 million units. The company expects to reach total sales of 20 million units by 2020. "In North America, 100% of our model portfolio is equipped with the Ecoboost."

The family of engines is composed by 10 models, offered globally, ranging from 1.0-liter to 3.5-liter - which will gain a new generation still this year. At least for the meantime, only the 1.0-liter will arrive here. **WE**





Images/Nissan

Sentra opens the medium sedans season

André Barros | andreb@autodata.com.br

Every once in a while, a segment in the industry receives a wave of new models, facelifts, or new generations. Recently, this happened with the pickup segment in Brazil. In a short period of time, the following vehicles arrived: the Fiat Toro, Renault Oroch and the remodeled Chevrolet S10, Ford Ranger and Toyota Hilux.

The Nissan Sentra, introduced to the press on Thursday, 19, kicked-off this movement in the medium sedans category. Although in a smaller proportion

when compared to the pickups, this segment should receive changes in three of the five best selling models: in addition to the Nissan model, a facelift, the Chevrolet Cruze and the Honda Civic will enter the market with new generations in the coming months.

Starting ahead was important to the Sentra, currently the third best selling model in the segment with 3.4 thousand units licensed - only behind both of its Japanese competitors, the Toyota Corolla, by far the best

Product launch

selling medium sedan model sold in the country, with more than 21,000 license registrations between January and April of this year, and the Honda Civic, with slightly more than 5.5 thousand units sold during the period.

“We have an 8% market share in the segment,” explained Juliana Fukuda, Nissan’s marketing manager. “The objective is to hold on to this market share.”

In order to conquer the consumer, Nissan added new items to the entry-level version, the S, which is priced at R\$ 80,000. In addition to the package offered in the previous model, the company added a 5-inch display for audio command, traction control, automatic turning on of the lights, and parking sensors. The intermediary SV version is now equipped with the Nissan Connect infotainment system, rear camera, dual zone air-conditioning, leather seats, and automatic pilot. It is priced at R\$ 85,000. The top of the line SL comes with a Bose sound system, LED lights, and solar roof, priced at R\$ 96,000.

There is only one transmission option, the CVT, with

a 2.0-liter flex engine, equipped with the Flex Start, which does not require the use of the small additional gasoline tank.

There are also other changes: visually, the Sentra has changed. In the front, new lights, front grid slightly bigger than the previous version, and new offerings and fog lights. The rear has a sportier bumper and a different design in the back lights. Consumers can choose among two new options of body color: red and graphite have joined the traditional white, black, and silver colors. **WE**



GM to hire 200 for the second shift in São José dos Campos

AutoData Newsdesk | redacaoad@autodata.com.br

A total of 200 workers should be hired by General Motors in São José dos Campos, in the state of São Paulo, still this month. According to information from the local metalworkers union, they will work in the second production shift of the S10 pickup, which was recently reformulated.

Hiring should begin this month, but the second shift should only go into operation at the end of June, as the workers will need to undergo training.

The addition to the workforce at the plant was approved during an assembly on Monday morning, 23, when approximately 3000 workers from the first shift also agreed with the profit-sharing proposal: the anticipation of R\$ 8.6 thousand, which should be paid still this month.

The value of the second installment, which should be paid in January of next year, should vary according to the performance of the unit. If 80% of the target is reached, the total value of the profit-sharing disbursement should reach R\$ 11,280. If it is exceeded, the workers should receive a total of R\$ 16,920. In 2015, R\$ 10,850 was paid out as profit-sharing.

“We managed to reverse the lower value imposed by the company last year,” stated Antônio Ferreira de Barros, known as Macapá, in a press release, who participated in all seven meetings between the union and GM this month. “This represents an important victory to GM workers.”

Engines and transmissions are also produced at the unit, which possesses a history of disagreements between workers and the company.

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Pirelli implements local production of the run flat tires for BMW and Mercedes-Benz

Marcos Rozen | rozen@autodata.com.br

Pirelli is ready to begin local production of the run flat tires in order to supply locally produced luxury models by BMW, in Araquari, state of Santa Catarina, and Mercedes-Benz, in Iracemápolis, state of São Paulo. The information was revealed by Fabio Magliano, manager of Car and Motorsports products for Pirelli Latin America, during his presentation at the AutoData Workshop Premium Vehicles, which took place on Tuesday, 24, in São Paulo, at the KPMG auditorium.

According to the executive, the models, which have higher technical specification demands from each manufacturer, are being produced at the company's unit in Feira de Santana, in the state of Bahia. "Pirelli has moved ahead and it is ready to supply this demand."

The reason for investing in this market segment through local production became clear when he presented the numbers. According to Magliano, the demand for premium tires in Brazil has grown significantly during the past five years. It is estimated that between 2011 and 2016, the total market for the product should grow approximately 6%, while the premium tire segment should experience and even more significant growth rate of 25%.

"The scenario reflects the growth of the premium of vehicles fleet in Brazil," he explained.

Pirelli classifies premium tires as those with diameters above 17 inches.

The growth of sales in this specific segment is also significant in a more recent analysis. In 2015, according to



Pirelli, while the total market registered a growth of 4.4%, the premium segment increased 9.2%. This year, it is estimated that growth will still occur, albeit more discrete, but in similar proportions: 2.9% and 6.4%, respectively.

"The segment is gaining market space. Vehicle manufacturers are taking advantage of this potential and this is why the segment should also remain the same (during the coming years)."

Pirelli is also investing in exclusive service centers for this consumer: by the end of the year, according to Magliano, there should be six of these stores. Overall, the Pirelli network is composed of 200 authorized distributors.

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Mercedes-Benz brings targets forward and wants to be the leader this year

André Barros | andreb@autodata.com.br



At the end of the first quarter, Mercedes-Benz's plans to become the global leader in the premium automobile segment suffered changes. Now, instead of becoming the leader in 2020, as planned more than 10 years ago, the brand plans to close 2016 already at the top of the ranking, ahead of its two major competitors - also from Germany - Audi and BMW.

The objective has been partially achieved, stated

Dirlei Dias, senior sales and marketing manager, during his presentation at the AutoData Workshop-Premium Vehicles, on Tuesday, 24, at the KPMG auditorium in São Paulo. Mercedes-Benz achieved total sales of 650,000 units in the world, a volume that has positioned it as the global leader in the premium segment.

"In 2015, sales totaled 1.9 million vehicles, and we closed in the second position."

In Brazil, the objective was almost achieved last year: despite the record and a growth of 47% in sales when compared to 2014, the brand closed only 16 units behind the sales leader in the premium segment of the Brazilian market, Audi. It was, nevertheless, the brand that achieved the highest percentage increase in sales among the German manufacturers.

According to Dias, Mercedes-Benz is reaping the fruits of a strategy based on four pillars. The plant in Iracemápolis, in the state of São Paulo: despite being inaugurated only in March of this year, the quotas provided by the Inovar-Auto Program as a future producer allowed the company to import more imported vehicles, without having to pay the increased IPI tariff, and prepare the market for the launch of the locally produced models - for now, only the C Class and the GLA.

The reformulation of the portfolio that took place

during the past years also played an important role in the growth of Mercedes-Benz in this segment. “We brought new models, with products placed in the entry-level segment, such as the A Class and the GLA. Currently, our line possesses 57 different products, among models and versions.”

Strengthening of financial services, with more attractive financing options, and after sales, was another important strategy of the brand. Dias mentioned that consumer behavior changed, especially as a result of the entry of new consumers with different profiles: “Previously, the customer would leave the car at the dealership and drive away with another Mercedes-Benz vehicle. There was no need to deliver the vehicle the following day. We now have customers that only own a Mercedes-Benz vehicle, so we had to make this process become more agile.”

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Premium vehicles could reach 3% of the total Brazilian market

André Barros | andreb@autodata.com.br

The premium automobile segment as a potential to account for 2% to 3% of total sales in the Brazilian market, stated Luis Curi, director of Abeifa, the association that represents vehicle importers - some who are also local manufacturers -, during the opening of the AutoData Workshop-Premium Vehicles, at the KPMG auditorium in São Paulo.

“In a market of 3 million units, a level we believe we should soon be returning to, this share would represent between 60,000 and 90,000 units per year.”

This would still represent a shy volume and

percentage, according to the executive, who is also president of Chery. He mentioned that this type of automobile in the United States accounts for 10% of total annual sales, but that there are limitations such as inefficient road infrastructure and a lacking urban safety here. “A more fair income distribution would contribute to improve the level of sales in the segment.”

In 2016, however, the scenario has been unfavorable to the premium segment. Between January and April, sales dropped 14.3% when compared to the same period last year. The association expects to close



Images/Simão Salomão



the year with a drop ranging between 25% and 30% in the number of vehicles licensed in the segment - the premium entry-level models, priced around R\$ 120,000, could suffer an even greater decline of around 38%.

The lack of consumer confidence given the adverse scenario of the Brazilian economy was attributed as the main cause for the drop in the segment, which had been experiencing growth since 2010, when it held a market share of 0.9%. With the exception of 2012, when sales dropped due to the implementation of a higher IPI tariff and the delay in regulating the Inovar-Auto Program, the segment has registered increased market share, resulting in 2.6% last year.

Curi added that premium vehicles contribute to increase consumer demands, representing the entry door for a number of changes in the industry, such as

more attractive design, new technologies, materials, finishing standards, and connectivity, vehicle safety, new references in compact cars, and new standards of services at the dealers, and after sales.

New brand - The executive has been working to compete in the segment in the domestic market due to its enormous potential. Chery's Qoros brand from China should arrive in the Brazilian market soon, according to him. "Initially, it will be imported. Later, perhaps, we will be able to follow the steps of the other brands."

The executive stated that, because it is a premium brand, it is possible to offer the vehicles at higher price levels - especially because design, finishing, and other items offered are also steps above those found in less expensive models. "In China, the Qoros models have similar prices to the traditional competitors such as Audi, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz."

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