

Mercedes-Benz Fuel cell fleet passes two million kilometer milestone

- Largest real-life test of fuel cell vehicles worldwide running strong
 - Customers in Japan, Singapore, USA, Europe, China and Australia try out fuel cell vehicles in everyday use

{mosgoogle right}Stuttgart, May 23, 2006 Fuel cell vehicles are used to deliver letters and parcels, as service vehicles, or simply as a means of transportation – completely free of emissions and with very little noise. Mercedes-Benz passenger cars, buses and vans with fuel cell technology – in total more than 100 vehicles – are operated by customers performing their day-to-day business and have covered more than two million kilometers to date. “Our world-wide fleet trial is running at full steam, and after two million kilometers covered, we are gaining valuable results and findings for the further development of the emission-free fuel cell powertrain”, says Prof. Dr. Herbert Kohler, Vice President Group Research and Advanced Engineering Vehicle and Powertrain and DaimlerChrysler Chief Environmental Officer. The first fuel cell vehicles were put into day-to-day operation in May 2003, successively followed by the delivery of Mercedes-Benz A-Classes F-Cell, Citaro buses and Sprinters for use by customers in Europe, the United States, Japan, Australia and China.

The 60 A-Class F-Cell vehicles have so far covered more than 705,000 kilometers in 21,600 operating hours under the most diverse application conditions. The bus fleet with its 36 vehicles has clocked up 1.25 million kilometers and close to 86,000 operating hours, while the fuel cell Sprinters have completed 58,000 kilometers and almost 2,200 operating hours.

Largest practical trial of fuel cell vehicles worldwide

The worldwide application of the fuel cell vehicles has been organized within the framework of various cooperation and technical development projects. Vehicle manufacturers, oil companies, utilities, government departments and authorities as well as universities and other scientific institutions are working together in order to prepare the market for the fuel cell and hydrogen technology of the future. The issues of infrastructure development and acceptance of hydrogen technology amongst drivers and passengers have also been part of the demonstration projects.

DaimlerChrysler is a pioneer and leader in the development of fuel cell technology for automotive applications. Since as long ago as the early 90s, researchers and engineers at DaimlerChrysler have been working on the implementation of this technology in the automobile. 1994 saw the launch of the first fuel cell-powered vehicle, the NECAR 1. More than 20 research vehicles and prototypes followed. Developers succeeded in significantly reducing size and weight of the powertrain system, and at the same time performance was increased. The pioneering role of the company is underlined by several hundred patent applications in the field of fuel cell technology.