Press information

# Success for Charlie the hamster at the wheel of a truck

## The film “The Hamster Stunt” has been a major success on Youtube and has been viewed more than 3.4 million times in just one week. It shows how a truck is steered along narrow, uneven tracks in a quarry in Spain. Who’s at the wheel? Charlie the hamster, weighing in at 175 grams.

In February Volvo Trucks launched new technology that makes even a heavily laden truck light and easy to manoeuvre. The driver can steer the vehicle without the least bit of effort, in fact all it requires is a single finger on the steering wheel. In the film “The Hamster Stunt” the technology is put to the test by allowing Charlie the hamster to steer a truck. A specially designed hamster treadmill is attached to the steering wheel and Charlie runs in his wheel, changing directions to get at his prize – a carrot. The tiny animal’s mere body weight is sufficient to steer the truck. The accelerator and brakes were operated by experienced stunt driver Seon Rogers.

“We had to go slow and steady and make sure that Charlie ran in the right direction,” says Seon Rogers.

Charlie was chosen in a careful casting procedure.

“Just like people, animals have different personalities. So we knew we had to interview a lot of different hamsters. By putting them through various trials, handling them and getting to know them we soon discovered which hamster would be the best for the job,” explains animal trainer Grace Dickinson, who took care of Charlie on set in Spain.

Charlie, who at the time of the shoot was a mature six months, trained for just over four weeks ahead of the event. He spent time running in the specially-built hamster treadmill, and he also learned to concentrate in a noisy, unfamiliar environment.

“Charlie’s our star! He demonstrated that he has the best strength, confidence and attitude to learning new ideas. And he’s very food-oriented so he’s willing to follow the target, which is a carrot,” says Grace Dickinson.

However, although all the prerequisites for success were in place, it was by no means certain that everything would work out as planned. Hamsters are often unpredictable and nervous.

“It was a big challenge. The driver had to hold the carrot in just the right way so he could lead the hamster. If he held it too high or too low Charlie would lose interest,” explains Grace Dickinson.

During the film shoot Charlie was treated like the star he is. Together with his trainer he had his own “trailer” in a tent on site. Everyone involved in the film was made fully aware that Charlie, who loves a lie-in in the mornings, should have plenty of time to wake up gently and prepare for his role.

“We were a great team and I’m looking forward to more road trips with Charlie,” says Seon Rogers and laughs.

See the film “The Hamster Stunt”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N87uxyDQT0>

See the film that shows how Charlie the hamster prepared for his challenge: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUF_PpJTwF8>

September 19, 2013

## Charlie the hamster

Species: Golden hamster.

Age: Six months (golden hamsters have an average life span of two years)

Weight: about 175 grams.

Home: Oxfordshire, England.

Miscellaneous: The golden hamster comes originally from Syria and is an active animal – in the wild they can run more than 10 kilometres a night. On average they are about 15 centimetres long.

Interesting facts: Charlie is a late riser, he loves carrots and enjoys running in his treadmill.

## The Volvo FMX

Type: Construction truck.

Weight: 15 tonnes in standard configuration with 4 axles and tipper.

Launched: 15 April 2013.

Made at: The Volvo plant in Tuve, Gothenburg.

Interesting facts: The unique technology behind Volvo Dynamic Steering makes the truck light and easy to manoeuvre. The truck and its trailer can weigh up to 100 tonnes. It handles tough work in difficult terrain.

For further information, please contact:

Marie Vassiliadis, Media Relations Volvo Trucks, telephone +46 31 3224127, e-mail [marie.vassiliadis@volvo.com](mailto:marie.vassiliadis@volvo.com)

Visit http://www.thenewsmarket.com/volvogroup to access broadcast-standard video about the Volvo Group’s various production plants and products. You can download graphic images in the form of MPEG2 files or order them on Beta SP tape. Registration and video are free to the media.

Images are available in the Volvo Trucks image bank http://images.volvotrucks.com.

Volvo Trucks provides complete transport solutions for professional and demanding customers, offering a full range of medium to heavy duty trucks. Customer support is secured via a global network of 2,300 dealers and workshops in more than 140 countries. Volvo trucks are assembled in 16 countries across the globe. In 2012 more than 105,000 Volvo trucks were delivered worldwide. Volvo Trucks is part of the Volvo Group, one of the world’s leading manufacturers of trucks, buses and construction equipment, and drive systems for marine and industrial applications. The Group also provides solutions for financing and service. Volvo’s work is based on the core values quality, safety and environmental care.