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The theme at this year's Frankfurt Motor Show was definitely Green with manufacturers and suppliers demonstrating their credentials. Volkswagen, Renault, Ford of Europe and Opel/Vauxhall displayed fuel-efficient cars that will be marketed under green-sounding labels.

Ford's clean-burning diesel cars will be sold under the name ECONetic name; Opel will use the name ecoFLEX for its low-emissions cars and VW's Golf BlueMotion will be the latest addition to its eco-friendly range, along with new a City car - Up!. Similarly, parts producers presented some of their latest innovations for engines and transmissions - with the goal of burning less fuel and cutting CO2 emissions. These included Delphi's new-generation diesel and petrol injection systems, Japan's Denso promising a world first in common-rail diesel technology while Valeo and Robert Bosch showed engine stop-start systems which can reduce CO2 by up to 8%. One hot technology is the dual-clutch transmission combining the fuel savings of a manual with the convenience of an automatic. Getrag expects to unveil a family of six-speed dual-clutch transmissions which are destined for Ford brands.

Responding to legislative pressure to meet tightening emissions and fuel-economy standards, manufacturers are collectively investing billions of dollars to develop cleaner and smaller vehicles. However, most drivers have been historically reluctant to move to lower-emissions cars and many still go for the largest-engined and fastest they can afford. Manufacturers, unwilling to ignore driver's wishes in a harshly competitive industry, have in recent years given back to drivers in the form of more power, most of the vehicle efficiency gains they had made.

Manufacturers say they are being forced to shoulder most of the cost of cleaning up cars. In the end however, they are likely to pass many of these on to consumers. ACEA, the European industry lobby group, citing European Commission research, says the EC draft legislation to cut cars' average emissions to 130 g/km by 2012 (120 g/km by 2012) through vehicle technology alone - from 160 g/km now - will lead to a price increase per car of up to \$3,500. In the US, manufacturers cite US Government estimates made in 2003, to claim that an annual 4% increase in fuel-economy standards would add \$2,000 to the price of each vehicle produced by industry leader GM by 2017.