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Renault and DAF Trucks NV announced a preliminary agreement to jointly manufacture a line of trucks in Britain and France.

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Philippe Gras, a Renault managing director, said the new line will cover trucks of between 2.5 tons and 4.2 tons and will be built at Renault's Bapilly plant in France and at DAF's British plant.

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The French state-controlled auto group and the Dutch truck maker plan to incorporate the new trucks into their product lines when they begin production toward the middle of the 1990s.

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Mr. Gras said he expects a definitive agreement between the two companies to be completed in the next few months.

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The venture is the latest example of the trend toward cooperative projects in Europe ahead of the 1992 deadline for eliminating trade barriers within the European Community.

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Mr. Gras said the joint venture represents considerable savings for both Renault and DAF, since both companies would in any case have had to renew their existing ranges of light goods vehicles.

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By pooling their resources, the two groups have effectively halved the design and development costs that would otherwise have been entailed, he said.

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Renault officials said the potential European market for light trucks in the 2.5-ton to 4.2-ton range is between 700,000 and 800,000 vehicles annually, and Renault and DAF are aiming for a combined market share of about 11%.

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Both Renault and DAF will have world-wide marketing rights for the new range of vans and light trucks.

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Under a separate arrangement, British Aerospace PLC's Rover Group PLC subsidiary will also be able to offer the vehicles through its dealers in the U.K., and Renault's truck-building subsidiary Renault Vehicules Industriels will have similar rights in France.

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DAF is 16%-owned by British Aerospace, with a further 6.5% held by the Dutch state-owned chemical group NV DSM.

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The van Doorne family of the Netherlands holds an additional 11% of DAF's capital.