

# SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

- News
- Industry
- Dealers
- Training
- Shows
- Reviews
- SME Digest

March/April 2024

## BRIGHT START TO SHOW SEASON

BTME and LAMMA kick off the year with positivity and causes for optimism

### WE STRIVE EVERYDAY TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

EasyLife GM say their family-owned dealership prides itself on honest, professional advice on all machinery requirements

### BE AWARE & STAY SAFE

Health and safety in the dealership



### CHALLENGES OF TERRITORY EXPANSION

Oliver Landpower tell us about the hurdles they experienced recently opening and purchasing new depots

## KRESS PARTNER PROGRAMME

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**Safe earnings calculator**



**Just in time delivery**



## Letter from the editor Steve Gibbs

steve@servicedealer.co.uk



**W**elcome to the March/April 2024 edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

Within these pages, you'll find comprehensive coverage of the major national trade shows that kicked off the year, for both the agricultural machinery sector and the commercial turf care markets – LAMMA and BTME.

Martin Rickatson, our agricultural machinery editor, reported that, at the NEC's ag exhibition, numbers were up, both from visitors and exhibitors, giving cause for optimism. However, he did pick up on some distinct caution expressed around the halls regarding what the purchasing habits of farmers might look like this year. Certainly, with the extensive flooding that huge swathes of the country saw in the first couple of months of 2024 – with tracts of farmland underwater – one can understand where this uncertainty was coming from.

A couple of weeks later in Harrogate, however, at BIGGA's exhibition (aimed at their greenkeeper members), it seemed to me there was a tangible upbeat feeling exuding from both stand-holders and the

large groups of turf professionals walking the aisles. Of course, how these show atmospheres play out over the coming months, in terms of demos booked and orders placed with local dealerships, remains to be seen. But, as one exhibitor with a foot in both the ag and turf camps said to me, there are still budgets out there, with commercial end-users of all descriptions still needing to acquire the right new machinery for their projects. Therefore, it's a question of dealers keeping in contact and staying in front of customers, being at forefront of their minds when the purchasing time is right.

Elsewhere this issue: continuing to draw on his lifetime of experience working with the UK dealer network, Keith Christian addresses the vital issue of health and safety in the dealership. Offering advice and thoughts that all dealers should find helpful, Keith shows how serious, potentially tragic issues can oftentimes be simply avoidable accidents. However well-versed any of us believe we are in terms of keeping ourselves and our colleagues safe from injury, it's always well worth a refresher in the basics.

### THE TEAM

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INDUSTRY



# Cramer establish new UK base

Birmingham to serve as HQ

**Following the move from Handy, Globe Technologies, manufacturers of the Cramer brand of lithium-ion products, has announced that the location of their new UK headquarters will be in Birmingham.**

The company says the location will include a 30,000 sq ft warehouse, product showroom, training facility and offices for the UK administration, finance, aftersales and marketing teams. Four new area sales managers have been appointed, and recruitment has been underway for a number of additional roles, including a sales director, an aftersales manager, a product manager and two demonstrators.

Simon Del-Nevo, Globe Technologies' European president, said: "Ambitious professionals from our industry have been applying to our advertisements. It is a very exciting time to join the UK team.

"We have a fantastic range of products that we are eager to show to professional users, and we look forward to building our network of dealers in the coming months."

DEALERS

## Spearhead expand in Scotland with Scot Agri

Furthering the brand's reach



**In what the manufacturer has described as "a strategic move to strengthen sales activities", Spearhead Machinery Ltd have appointed Scot Agri as their new dealer partner throughout the north and east of Scotland.**

The sales manager for GB East at Spearhead, Jack Norton, said: "The brand has really only scratched the surface in terms of what it has to offer the Scottish farmer, contractor, parks and grounds professional or airport authority. We are excited by this new partnership, and the opportunity that it presents".

Steven Mitchell, regional manager at Scot Agri, added: "Spearhead is an established brand, and has been marketed successfully here in the past. It is a product range we have sold effectively over the years without promoting it officially. We really believe that there is an opportunity for further growth by engaging the whole Scot Agri business."

Jack Norton concluded: "The appointment of Scot Agri represents an opportunity for Spearhead to further expand and support its customer base in Scotland. We are pleased to have established this new partnership, and look forward to developing and growing our business with the support of the Scot Agri team."

DEALERS



L-R: Kim Schmitt, FSI sales director, and Phil Edmondson, GGM product manager

## GGM branches out into arb sector

Announces partnership with stump cutter manufacturer FSI

**The GGM Group have announced that they are entering the arb sector after securing a partnership with FSI, Europe's largest manufacturer of stump cutters - making the first part of their move into the arb space.**

GGM are now the FSI stump cutter dealer for the north-west and north Wales, and say they are looking to further pursue opportunities within the arb sector over the coming months, as they look to become – as they put it – "the tree surgeon's dealer of choice in the north."

This move follows last year's announcement that Phil Edmondson had joined to head the expansion of the company's Kubota portfolio into higher-horsepower M-series tractors and RO loaders, alongside its grounds care business.

Phil's role will now be expanded, driving both the ag and arb offering of the business forward through the new GGM Ag and Arb department. Phil has been in the arb industry for 30 years, and has worked with FSI

products for the past 11 years, so, when the dealership opportunity arose, he saw this as exploiting his substantial experience.

Phil said: "Following my recent move to the GGM Group Ltd to head up their agricultural tractor sales, I have been contacted by several arb machinery manufacturers with a view to the GGM Group becoming a dealer for their product ranges.

"Having reviewed these offers internally and met with some suppliers, we have decided to add arb-related machinery products to our existing range, and to offer these through the GGM Ag and Arb department.

"Both our Colne and Haydock workshops have highly-skilled in-house and mobile service technicians with vast experience in all kinds of grounds maintenance and agricultural machinery, who, along with our dedicated, well-stocked and knowledgeable parts team, offers customers the high level of aftersales service you expect."

PEOPLE

## Former dealership sales manager joins Price

Tom Bailey is their new ASM



**Tom Bailey (pictured), the former sales manager at RT Machinery, has joined Price Turfcare, the UK distributor of the Ventrac 4520 all-terrain compact tractor.**

Tom joined RT Machinery Ltd in June 2015 as a trainee area sales manager, rising through the ranks before being appointed sales manager in November 2022. In 2019, Tom won Price Turfcare's Dealer Sales Achievement award.

Commenting on his appointment, Rupert Price, managing director of Price Turfcare, said: "We are delighted to have secured Tom's services. He is a very welcome addition to our sales team. His sales record at RT Machinery was second to none, and that can be seen by his 2019 dealer sales award. He fully understands the attributes of the machine and its accessories, and his knowledge of the golf and grounds care industries across the south of England is superb, with the added bonus that he is well-respected across his territory.

"The industry tends to forget that we are still a relatively young business; it was only 2017 when we first introduced this unique compact tractor, with its multiple range of dedicated accessories, to the UK market. Now we are in an excellent position to move the company forward, and Tom will be an integral part of our growth strategy."

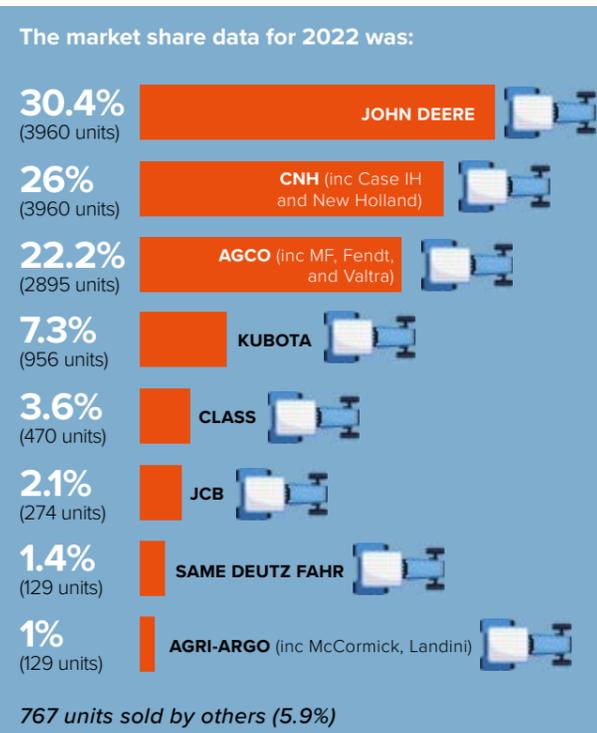
INDUSTRY



John Deere 6120M

# Change at the top of the tractor charts

John Deere return to number one spot in 2022



**The AEA has announced the market share data for 2022 tractor registrations.**

The total number of tractors registered in 2022 was 14,071, including both agricultural tractors (over 50hp) and compact tractors (50hp and below).

Stephen Howarth, agricultural economist at the AEA, said: "It is worth remembering that the market in 2021 and 2022 was affected by widespread disruption to global supply chains and transportation after the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These may have had an impact on market shares."

The information below shows the number of machines and market share recorded during that year by brand. As always, the data is released after a one-year delay due to competition law restrictions. Figures for 2023 are due to be published in early 2025.

2022 saw John Deere return to the top of the charts again, following two years in second place to CNH. Deere's market share increased from 25.3% to 30.4%.

Dropping down into second place meant that CNH's share had slipped from 28.7% in 2021 to 26% in 2022.

All the other companies listed on the leaderboard maintained the same position they held in 2021.

DEALERS



# TVT acquisition finalised

Takeover by Rea Valley Tractors complete

**New Holland has announced that Rea Valley Tractors Ltd have completed the successful acquisition of neighbouring New Holland dealership, Teme Valley Tractors (TVT), who have branches in Knighton and Welshpool.**

Rea Valley Tractors will continue to offer the full range of New Holland products and parts from both Knighton and Welshpool. Full service and aftersales support will continue from each branch, with the retention of the staff and management at both depots confirmed.

Matt Mulligan, managing director of Rea Valley Tractors, said: "Acquiring Teme Valley Tractors aligns seamlessly with our long-term growth plans. The similarities between both businesses make for a great collaboration - both being highly reputable, with a customer-focused mindset - and we look forward to growing the great reputation and contributions that they have made to the local agricultural community over the years."

David Rapkins, New Holland business director for the UK and Republic of Ireland, added: "We are delighted that these two strong dealers have completed this acquisition, and will continue serving and supporting our customers in Powys. We would like to express a heartfelt thank you to Graham Probert and Martyn Hall, and the wider TVT team, for their dedication, support and the results achieved over the years, and are delighted that they and their staff will remain with Rea Valley Tractors. Going forward, we have every confidence that Rea Valley Tractors will build on the success of Teme Valley."

PEOPLE

# Territory sales manager for Southern

James Allen to work closely with network



Southern Machinery James Allen

**Southern Machinery Ltd have announced the recent appointment of James Allen (pictured) as territory sales manager for southeast England.**

Philip Tutty, managing director of Southern Machinery, said: "James is based in Ipswich, and will be responsible for the southeast of England, appointing new dealers, working with them, and assisting with demonstrations and shows."

Philip added: "The Hustler zero-turn lawnmower range continues to grow in popularity, and this year we are looking forward to launching the Surfer Pro 34" stand-on."

**James can be contacted on 07884 374445, or via e-mail at james@hustlermowers.co.uk**

DEALERS

# Rod Gaskin added to Yamaha ATV network

Hampshire-based dealer adds to portfolio

**Yamaha has partnered with Hampshire-based dealer Rod Gaskin Ltd with the introduction of its ATV and Side-by-Side business to the dealership's portfolio.**

This latest dealer expansion allows Rod Gaskin to supply and support customers in Hampshire and West Sussex.

Tom Gaskin, director at the dealership, said: "We're thrilled to welcome Yamaha onboard. This partnership broadens our offerings, enabling us to deliver premium ATVs directly to our agricultural and ground care customers alongside the consumer market."

Yamaha area sales manager Carl Stuart added: "With a strong focus on providing quality products and great customer service, the business aligns closely with the



Yamaha Rod Gaskin yard

values we hold at Yamaha Motor UK. We are looking forward to the future with the team at Rod Gaskin Ltd and providing them with the support they need to progress the Yamaha ATV business in Hampshire and West Sussex."

Yamaha ATVs will be distributed from the dealership's Alton depot, which comprises of two full-time salespeople in addition to Rod and Tom Gaskin.

"We are ready and raring to go, with bikes already in our yard available for demonstrations and to purchase," confirmed Tom. "We have parts and service teams ready to support both existing and new customers. We look forward to this exciting new partnership."

DEALERS

# F G Adamson complete rebrand

Following acquisition by Ripon Farm Services

**In March 2023 the business of F G Adamson & Son was acquired by Ripon Farm Services.**

Ripon say the acquisition represented an important milestone in their evolution, as they entered the professional turf market for the first time whilst supporting and strengthening its presence in the domestic turf sector.

As part of the acquisition, the name

'F G Adamson & Son' will still be used, with the depots at Swanland and Langworth continuing to specialise in the supply and support of commercial and domestic turf equipment. However, following the successful integration of the two depots into the group, these former F G Adamson & Son sites will now trade under the name of 'Ripon Ground Care'.

In an official statement, Ripon Farm

Services said: "Ripon Ground Care will replace the name of F G Adamson & Son on our websites and social media, on stationery, clothing and on signage. Staff email addresses will also change.

"The transition represents a further significant milestone for Ripon Farm Services, and will build on and strengthen our presence in the grounds care sector."



Ripon Farm Services FG Adamson

DEALERS



Avant's award-winning dealers

# Avant award their top dealers

Ceremony also marked 25 years in the UK

**Avant Tecno recently celebrated its 25th anniversary in the UK with an event held at Carrow Road Stadium in Norwich, Norfolk.**

The occasion also served as an opportunity to recognise and honour the achievements of its dedicated dealers through the Avant Dealer Awards.

The company says the awards served as a fitting occasion to express gratitude to their network of dealers, who have played a pivotal role in the brand's growth and success.

One standout winner of the evening was Ferrybridge Ltd, recognised as the Avant Dealer of the Year. The manufacturer said that, with nearly two decades of expertise in the plant and machinery industry, Ferrybridge has

recently emerged as an authorised dealer for all Avant compact loader products in Ireland.

Andrew Shore from Ferrybridge expressed delight at winning the award. He said: "The beauty of the Avant brand is that it has given us a doorway into a lot of industries. You name the industry, and we have probably sold an Avant machine into it. Becoming an Avant dealer was a good opportunity for us to get another world-renowned strong brand.

"Winning the award was an extremely pleasant surprise - we have only been selling the machines for just over a year now. We've put a lot of work into it to really try and push the products, and it has been going really well. It is great to be recognised."

The winners included:

- Eco Award 2023: **Ben Burgess & Co Ltd**
- Aftersales and Customer Care: **Avant South East Ltd**
- Largest Growth: **Essener Equipment Co**
- Recognition Award: **Davies Implements Ltd**
- Most Machines Sold: **Essener Equipment Co**
- Leguan Dealer of the Year: **Ben Burgess & Co Ltd**
- Avant Dealer of the Year: **Ferrybridge Ltd**



# Big changes promised for Equip show

Taking place in Louisville during October

## New for this year, 2024 attendees can expect:

- A Tuesday evening welcome reception at Churchill Downs, which is marking the 150th anniversary of the Kentucky Derby this year
- A special happy hour in Freedom Hall at the Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC), starting just after the show closes on Wednesday.
- A Thursday evening arena concert at the KFC Yum! Center in downtown Louisville, featuring multi-platinum entertainer and musician Trace Adkins.
- The return of the successful and well-attended Women's Reception.
- More opportunities to connect in-person with social media influencers, at events like the Morning Show at Expo.
- Improved logistics, including a shuttlebus drop-off at the West Wing, which will improve parking lot congestion.

**Equip Exposition, the trade show for the international outdoor power equipment industry, will once again take over the city of Louisville, USA, from October 15-18, 2024. "Only this year, we're making some fundamental shifts and improvements that will elevate the show to the next level," says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), which owns and manages the show.**

Kris continued: "We've listened to our attendees, and are adding new experiences to give them more of what they want: being with their peers, talking about business struggles, and getting real answers."

"There's no other place where landscapers, equipment manufacturers and dealers can come together to talk to each other, peer to peer, in such a supportive environment. Whether you need help with people, products or processes, the answers to your

questions are at Expo."

Equip Expo features over a million square feet of exhibits and a 30-acre Outdoor Demo Yard. The 2023 show brought together more than 27,000 participants from all 50 U.S. states and 46 countries. Landscape contractor registrations increased by 20 percent over the previous year, and dealers were up five percent.

"We're always in expansion mode," said Kris. "Due to space demand last year, we opened up the West Wing to exhibitors to great success. And we're going to improve the exhibitor experience there in 2024 by making the West Wing a much larger hub of activity, including putting our pet adoption event, Mutt Madness, and the main food offerings there, as well as the Drone Zone, a golf simulation and an attendee lounge."

**Registration for the 2024 show is now open.**

## INDUSTRY

# BAGMA enter new partnership

With buying group Troy



**BAGMA has announced that Troy, the independent distribution network for tools, industrial tooling and maintenance supplies, will be available for its members at a lower cost following the establishment of a new partnership.**

As a buying group, BAGMA say Troy has access to over 400 suppliers, offering its members a portfolio of over 2,000 brands.

At a reduced annual price, the Association says its members can now benefit from access to hand and power tools, fixings, PPE and

janitorial supplies, with competitive purchasing terms and one consolidated statement to process at the end of the month.

Commenting on the announcement, BAGMA general manager Nick Darking said: "Embarking in this partnership with Troy signals another major milestone in the development and expansion of the BAGMA offering. The ability for our members to benefit from discounts on thousands of products, all available under one roof with simplified purchasing and invoicing, is a very exciting prospect."

## PEOPLE

# FGM Claymore appoints

Jef O'Riley is new head of marketing



Jef O'Riley (left) with Paul Butterly, md of FGM Claymore

**It has been announced that Jef O'Riley has joined FGM Claymore as head of marketing.**

Since acquiring distribution rights to the Echo brand two years ago, the company says they have seen significant growth in the UK market.

Paul Butterly, MD of FGM Claymore, said: "We've had a fantastic couple of years. But we have even bigger ambitions for the future. To get there, we know that we need to invest in building our marketing effort here in the UK."

"Jef is a well-respected figure in the industry, and has a proven track record for developing brands that can go toe-to-toe against the biggest names in the industry."

As head of marketing for both the UK and Ireland, Jef brings with him 27 years of experience in the garden machinery industry. Most of this time was spent marketing Echo alongside other industry stalwarts, including Ariens, Gravely, Countax, and Westwood.

INDUSTRY



# Demand for second-hand machinery continues

Say specialist auctioneers

**Agricultural machinery auctioneers Cheffins have released their 2023 figures, showing total sales of £71m – a £23m increase in machinery and plant sales compared to the previous year.**

In a statement, the company said: “Demand for top-quality, low-hour machinery remained strong, and good examples were sold at a premium, as buyers looked to the second-hand market for sound financial investments and a significant saving on buying new. The Cheffins team conducted 51 sales during the year, which consisted of 34 on-site farm or dealer dispersals, 12 monthly Cambridge Monthly Machinery Auctions, and five Vintage sales. This total remained unchanged from 2022.”

Oliver Godfrey, director and head of the machinery division at Cheffins, explained the increase, saying: “Despite supply chains returning to

normality from the past couple of years, new machinery prices continue to be high, which is adding caution to the market, especially when many arable growers have struggled to get winter crops established. The export market has also returned in full force over the past 12 months, with machines sold and shipped worldwide from both our monthly machinery sales – hosted at Sutton – and at the on-site sales throughout the country.”

The company said that sale highlights last year included the dealer dispersal for Ripon Farm Services in Yorkshire, which saw over £5m of machinery sell in one day. The well-known dealer enlisted Cheffins to sell various stock items from its 11 depots, with machines from foragers and feeder wagons going under the hammer. The Staines Hire UK auction also saw a fleet of late-registered,

low-houred John Deere tractors offered to the market, with high prices being achieved. Auctions took place from Northumberland to Somerset, with strong UK interest as well as buyers from throughout the EU.

Oliver continued: “There is still a huge demand for low-hour, high-spec, well-maintained second-hand equipment that has come directly from farms. Buyers are prepared to pay a premium for these items, as they represent a sound investment and a considerable saving over a new machine.

“2024 has started at the same pace we saw in 2023, with strong prices being paid for good-quality, second-hand machinery, and we have several big sales already in the pipeline that we are excited to bring to market.”

INDUSTRY

# Boss is new distributor for Paxster

In UK and Ireland



L-R: Thor Johansen (sales director, Paxster), Phil Everett (MD, Boss ORV) and Aleksander Safvenbon (CEO, Paxster)

**Nordic electric compact vehicle manufacturer Paxster has awarded Boss ORV sole distribution rights for the UK and Ireland.**

Boss launched the Paxster eCompact and eStretch all-electric utility vehicles at the recent LAMMA, and they are now involved in the appointment of Paxster dealers throughout the country.

“We are more than pleased to have the opportunity to distribute these very strong and incredibly versatile vehicles,” said Boss ORV MD Phil Everett. “They are built in Norway to superior standards for all conditions, and are the perfect fit for all types of local, urban and country businesses and logistics.”

Aleksander Safvenbon, CEO of Paxster AS, said: “We have been looking for a partner with expertise in building a utility vehicle dealer network, and Boss ORV fits the brief perfectly. We are looking forward to working with Phil Everett and the team at Boss ORV during the coming years.”

PEOPLE

# Infinicut appoint sales manager

Alan Jack has 25 years’ industry experience

**Infinicut have announced the appointment of a new sales manager in the form of Alan Jack (pictured).**

With over 25 years of experience within the greenkeeping and professional turf care industry, the company says Alan is well-placed to spearhead sales, service and support for dealers and customers throughout the UK and the wider international network.

After completing his apprenticeship, Alan embarked on a career in greenkeeping, progressing through the ranks from assistant greenkeeper to management at various courses across Scotland. This foundation set Alan up for further positions in operational management within the sports, turf and leisure industry.

Combined with a track record in the sales of both amenity products and turf care machinery, Alan most recently held the role of operations manager at Luxury Carts Group KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) - where he was responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the sales team and distribution of golf equipment, including the Infinicut range.

Alan said: “It’s a really exciting time to be coming on board, with innovation driving exciting refinements and developments across the Infinicut portfolio for both fine turf and sports turf. The products already have an outstanding reputation for quality and efficiency, and I’m excited to build on that with the help of our dealer partners around the world.”



Infinicut Alan Jack

INDUSTRY

# Fundraising target smashed!

By attendees of the *Service Dealer Awards*



Making the draw (L-R): comedian Charlie Baker, *Service Dealer* owners Duncan Murray-Clarke and Emma Cragie, and *Service Dealer's* Nikki Harrison

The final figure raised in support of Macmillan by the generous attendees of the *Service Dealer Awards* was revealed recently.

The proceeds from the raffle on the night, combined with further JustGiving donations and Gift Aid, totaled, £3,302.50 - smashing the initial target.

*Service Dealer* owner Duncan Murray-Clarke said: "We are so pleased to have been able to help in raising such a wonderful sum, and hope it will go some way to assisting with the wonderful work that Macmillan does."

Kaeti Morrison, relationship fundraising manager at Macmillan, said: "Thank you again for supporting Macmillan in this way. It really is appreciated."

INDUSTRY

# Small Robot Company enters liquidation

Fails to find adequate funding



The Small Robot Company, UK developer of the autonomous agricultural solutions known as 'Tom', 'Dick' and 'Harry,' has entered liquidation.

In a statement posted to LinkedIn, the company said: "Unfortunately, we could not come through the valley of death, even with our angels. Sadly, we fell foul through endemic perceived risk around agtech, particularly in the UK. We secured an international investor, but could not close the deal within our runway."

"A heartfelt thanks for all your support in getting this far. Looking back, it really is incredible what we achieved. We were so close to 'escape velocity.'

"Ultimately, we hit our biggest technical goal, our farmers' 'holy grail': grass weed detection at scale."

The statement continued: "It is with great sadness that our journey is ending before we could successfully deliver our mission, and our value, to you, who have backed us every step of the way. In the end, the perceived risk around agtech robotics for cereal crops was too great to close a VC deal."

"We hope that the liquidation process is able to find a future for the technology, which continues to have a benefit to farmers, and the planet."

Last year, the company turned to crowdfunding, after a lead investor pulled out.



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\*When used with with x2 10Ah EGO ARC Lithium™ batteries



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT MORE OR VISIT YOUR NEAREST DEALER.



# Be aware and stay SAFE

Service Dealer's KEITH CHRISTIAN offers thoughts, advice and tips from his years of experience working alongside the dealer network.

**In my years working in the industry – and, more significantly, while I was with BAGMA – the issue of health and safety within a dealership was always getting to the top of my to-do list.**

While I'm not an expert, in many cases, some of the more serious and tragic issues that we used to see were simply avoidable accidents. We did see a few long-term health issues caused by poor working practices, which are also avoidable. We were also involved with deaths in agricultural situations, and, at times, provided a 'professional' witness service to certain bodies.

One could argue that, as you cannot foresee an accident, it is difficult to prevent them - but this is not really the case. Paying attention to what goes on around you, taking the necessary precautions, and adhering to health and safety guidelines can go a long way to keeping staff and customers safe, as well as protecting the business from unnecessary expense or heavy fines.

Many dealerships, large and small, do all they can to ensure a safe working environment for all in their businesses - but some do not, either because they don't agree or they simply do not see the problems that may occur. The ones that do their best can also miss things that later catch them out, not because they are negligent,

but simply because they have been too busy elsewhere.

There is a raft of legislation relating to health and safety in the workplace, and it is difficult for dealers to keep up with the rules and advice.

**In essence:**

**⚠ The Health and Safety at Work Act imposes a 'duty of care' on employers to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees and others by providing a safe work environment, implementing safe systems of work, and complying with relevant regulations.**

**⚠ The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations mandate the need for risk assessments to identify, evaluate and control workplace hazards in order to ensure the health and safety of employees and others affected by work activities.**

**⚠ For a small business, this can be an onerous task, and one that may be better handled by an outside provider with the knowledge and skill to ensure the business complies with the appropriate legislation.**

Larger businesses may be in a position to have a health and safety person on the payroll who can be on top of all the internal activities, and keep up to date with legislation. There still may be a need to engage with an independent company to help ensure that all things are up to date (or, indeed, deal with certain aspects of the required legislation that the in-house member of staff cannot deal with).

As with all legislation, ignorance of the law is not a defence, and the laws and legislation are in place to protect the business, the staff and its customers, and they can apply both on and off your premises. Just because you may not agree with them and what you are being told, does not mean you can ignore the legislation. The cost of doing this can be very high.

Health and safety inspectors can call on your business unannounced and conduct inspections, or deal with a specific issue that has come to their attention or as a result of a previous infringement. This can be expensive if they find something wrong, and charges can be high based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) charges for intervention.

The HSE has introduced a cost recovery scheme known as Fee for Intervention (FFI). Duty holders have to pay the HSE for intervention costs when a material breach of health and

safety legislation is identified. HSE's hourly recovery rate under FFI in 2023/24 has been increased to £166. If remedial work or compliance is not forthcoming, further visits and fines will add to the cost burden.

A company director should also be aware that, in the event of a fatality, corporate manslaughter charges may apply – and even custodial sentences – on top of punishing fines. It is not worth the risk to have to go down this road and, whilst compliance may seem tedious, it is likely to be the least expensive and best route forward to avoid a time-consuming and costly intervention by the HSE.

I have worked with a company called Safety Aide Limited for many years, who specialise in providing health and safety support for garden machinery and agricultural machinery dealerships across the UK. They also partner with BAGMA to support the dealer network. Their knowledge and experience can make a dealer's life much easier, and provide the certainty of knowing that health and safety is covered and correctly documented. They have helped with this article to provide an insight into what a dealer needs to look out for, and provided some pointers in plain language to help the dealer network. Interested dealers can look them up online.



## SAFETY PRINCIPLES Q&A

**Q What are the five principles of cultural safety?**

**A** It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity, and truly listening.

**Q What is a poor safety culture?**

**A** Negative safety culture is characterised by noncompliance with relevant health and safety legislation. Also indicative of a poor health and safety culture is the organisation's failure to follow safety rules and procedures.

**Q How do you create a good safety culture?**

**A** An effective health and safety program should include the following:

- Encouragement and participation in the program.
- Willingness to report safety and health concerns.
- Education and access to safety and health information.
- Freedom from the fear of retaliation.
- Empowerment to shut down a task they feel is unsafe.

**Q What are signs of a poor safety culture?**

**A** 10 factors promoting a negative health and safety culture are:

1. Lack of leadership buy-in.
2. Poor communication between departments.
3. Underreporting and misreporting.
4. Lack of employee engagement.
5. Negative feedback from employees.
6. High accident rates.
7. Double standards in place.
8. Traditional and conservative mindsets.
9. Stubborn employees or managers.
10. Cost-cutting and profit maximisation.

**Q** What is the goal of safety culture?

**A** An organisation's safety culture exists when employees at all levels share the goal to protect everyone from health and safety hazards. In other words, it is the business' approach to safety in the workplace. This set of shared standards and practices comes from the top-down.

**Q** What is another name for safety culture?

**A** Safety climate. The terms 'safety culture' and 'safety climate' are often used interchangeably.

**Q** How do you define culture in the workplace?

**A** Culture is the character and personality of your organisation. It's what makes your business unique, and is the sum of its values, traditions, beliefs, interactions, behaviours, and attitudes. Positive workplace culture attracts talent, drives engagement, impacts happiness and satisfaction, and affects performance.

**Q** Why is a strong safety culture important?

**A** There are several reasons why safety culture is important in the workplace. First and foremost, a strong safety culture can help reduce the risk of accidents and injuries. By promoting safe practices and encouraging employees to speak up if they see something unsafe, companies can prevent accidents before they happen.

**Q** What is an example of a positive health and safety culture?

**A** In a workplace with a positive health and safety culture, workers are 'on-board' with safety procedures, and always follow them. Workers are happy to do things correctly, and they are rewarded when they do. Expectations are clearly laid out and, employees are welcome to share their comments, questions and criticisms.

**Q** Improving health and safety culture

**A** Taking action on health and safety items has a positive impact on your health and safety culture. For instance, putting in new risk controls (such as machine safeguarding, guardrails, or anti-slip floor treatments) demonstrates commitment to protecting workers and preventing injuries. This, in turn, builds a workplace culture that values health and safety. Improving your organisation's health and safety culture and performance involves clearly demonstrating that the organisation places a high priority on:

- Preventing injuries.
- Minimising risks.
- Solving occupational health and safety issues.
- Investing in control measures.
- Engaging your entire workforce in health and safety.
- Being transparent and open about health and safety.
- Leading and striving for continual improvement in health and safety performance.



# Lone working

A tragic event involving a staff member of a well-respected dealer in our industry has recently been reported.

All the rules and precautions in the world will never be able to stop accidents happening.

***“An accident is an unintended, normally unwanted event that was not directly caused by humans. The term accident implies that nobody should be blamed, but the event may have been caused by unrecognized or unaddressed risks”*** – Wikipedia

Dealers need to be more aware of what they can do to protect their staff and themselves. In law, the duty of an employer is clear, yet an employer can only ensure that the safety rules are made clear to all staff, and records are kept to this effect.

Below is an extract from the website of a well-known retail trade association, Bira, concerning lone working.

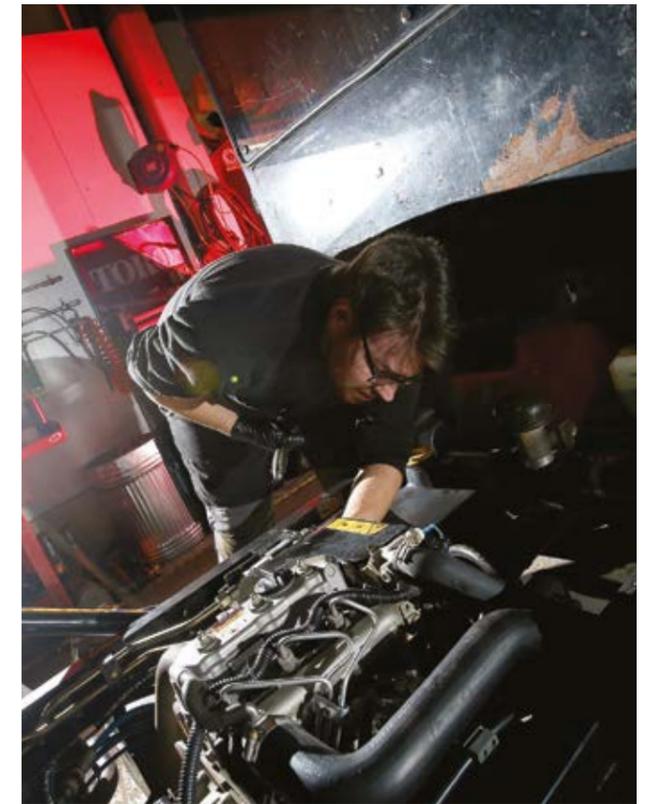
## What does the law say?

This is one example of what the act covers in respect of lone working.

Working alone is not, in itself, against the law, and, in many cases, it will be safe for staff to do so. However, under the **Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 1974**, employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees, as well as any contractors or self-employed people undertaking work for them.

More specifically, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to carefully assess the risks associated with working unsupervised, and to implement sensible precautions to reduce these risks.

*Section 7 of the HSWA* also places a duty on workers to take reasonable care of themselves, cooperate with their employer in meeting their legal obligations, and use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant safety instructions and training they have been given. In this respect, keeping lone workers safe should be a joint effort, and employers should work with lone-working staff to find effective solutions and promote safe working practices.



## What do I need to do?

If staff are expected to work alone, whether on- or off-site, it's vital that you conduct a lone-working risk assessment and a field assessment to better understand the risks involved, and put control measures in place.

Just remember: familiarity breeds contempt, and, when you hear the comment 'I have done this before, I know what I am doing,' that is the time to jump up and down, and clamp down on the need for safe practices. Everyone in the business is responsible for health and safety, not just the employer – make that clear to all staff members.

I am sure dealers all over the country are fed up to the back teeth with legislation both old and new, and, certainly, there can be a tendency to put off dealing, with much of this to a slower day in the office or when someone is free or able to do it.

This is not the solution. It is complicated, it can take some understanding – but everyone in the business has a duty of care to ensure the workplace is a safe and healthy place to work in.

If something goes wrong, resulting in serious injury (or, tragically, a fatality), the HSE have to investigate, and you may face a lengthy period of investigation and heavy fines. If you have an inspection, and are asked to do remedial work, just get it done before they come back. It will save you time and money, and protect your staff. If you do not have the time to, make sure you are up to date. If you are uncertain about what to do, call in an expert and get proper, informed advice.

**Be aware, and STAY SAFE!**



Simon Gibson, owner of Easylife Garden Machinery

# We strive everyday to improve our service

Simon Gibson, owner of Easylife Garden Machinery in Cheshire, tells Service Dealer's LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR, that his small, family-owned garden machinery dealership prides itself on honest, professional advice on all machinery requirements – that keeps their loyal customers returning.

With some notable exceptions, machinery dealerships in our sector can often fall under the banner of small, family-run businesses, that employ between four and ten members of staff. A recent trip to Cheshire enabled me the opportunity to visit a thriving small dealership of this ilk, who employed a team of five staff.

The owner of Easylife Garden Machinery, Simon Gibson, started

the business in 1994 working out of a small workshop in Cuddington. He soon established the business as a proven and reliable supplier, as well as a repair centre, for a wide and varied range of garden machinery. After fourteen years of successful trading, the company outgrew the Cuddington site and relocated to new bigger premises on a farm in Oakmere in March 2008. Simon says he bought the farm with the aim of growing the business, whilst at the same time providing a home for the family. However, due to the success of

the dealership – coupled with the fact that Simon had other plans for the farm – the company relocated again to a bigger industrial park site in Northwich.

I caught up with Simon and his team at the current site, which offers a large workshop area, showroom and plenty of indoor and outdoor storage space.

Having once had eight or so staff, he has now scaled it down to four permanent team members. Sales and spares manager Martin Speed has been with the company some 24 years, delivery driver Mike Ashworth has been with the firm for some time, and chief mechanic Glen Done has worked with Simon for 25 years.

The company has had additional staff in the past, mostly apprentices or seasonal help. Simon found that the apprentices, as in any apprenticeship scheme, needed constant attention, and, sadly – as many dealers have found – they often move on to larger companies or leave the industry altogether.

Simon told me: "I believe that my current team that I have around me now have enough skills and experience to cover all parts of the business. The fact that we all work really well together means that, right now, I don't feel the need to look to



A customer leaving with purchases after receiving the red carpet treatment

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employ any more staff.”

Post-Covid, Simon tells me, he has rethought his priorities and does not want to see himself and his colleagues working all the hours God sends. “I am keen,” he says, “that we all have a good work-life balance.”

Simon himself is a trained mechanic, and helps out with these tasks during busy times. “I like working on the machines, in fact,” he explains. “I find satisfaction in being hands-on with the products. It also keeps me in touch with the brands that we deal with.”

### Customer service is a priority

Simon was keen to point out they go out of their way to provide a reliable, consistent, and reputable service for their customers. Their customer base is centred around Cheshire, and predominantly serves domestic customers, along with some professional end-user clients, within a radius of around 50 miles.

The business is still family-owned, and prides itself on its ability to offer good, honest, professional advice on all machinery requirements – be it new machinery, pre-owned, repairs or servicing.

As for products, Simon has a portfolio of essential machines that meets the needs of his customers – these mostly being pedestrian and ride-on mowers, strimmers and chainsaws.

Like any business, Easylife would not be anything without their customers. Simon told me: “We strive every day to improve our service in order to continue earning the business of our valued customers.”

This was in clear evidence during my visit to the showroom when a customer came in and was soon given the red-carpet treatment. When they left after experiencing some first-class, attentive customer service, they headed back to their car with a handful of goods!

“It is the after-care services that brings in the most revenue,” Simon explains. “With an average of over 1,500 mower repairs and services per year, our team is kept extremely busy.”

As for products, Simon has kept loyal with a number of brands including STIHL, Mountfield, ECHO, STIGA, Hayter, Toro, MTD and Honda – all established marques that offer a wide range of products.

Over the years, Simon has learnt that it is often best to keep it simple, and to not overcomplicate the business by having too many products to sell. “Displaying and stocking large quantities of products is not always sustainable,” he believes. “It is all about knowing your customers, and gearing up for their needs.”

To this end Simon says he often must explain to his suppliers that he does not want to take on extra models and ranges into his dealership. “I am prepared to say no to them if I don’t feel it’s right for my business,” he says.

Easylife offer a fixed service rate for customers for their basic service requirements and for parts. “The offer we have works well with our customer base,” says Simon. Like all businesses, they have a software programme for managing all transactions, but have, over the years, perfected an old-style paper system for repairs and servicing – known fondly as the ‘Job Ticket.’ This keeps a record, on one yellow card, that is kept attached to a mower throughout its repair and service process.

The dealership offers a full service and spares facility for all machines

that they sell, and for most popular makes of garden machinery products. “Gone are the days when you only serviced mowers in the winter,” Simon stressed. “It has now become an all-year-round activity.”

### Moves to battery

Like most dealers, Simon has started to sell a range of battery-powered products and robotic mowers, saying he has seen a substantial growth in interest in this technology across the board.

“Whether they are battery-powered or traditional fuel, though, they all need to be serviced and repaired,” says Simon. “If someone buys a mower from us, we like to think we can keep it running for many years – which, in turn, will keep us busy.”

I asked Simon about their protocols on storing and recycling spent batteries. “It’s early days, really,” he said. “We work closely with the manufacturers, and go by their recommendations. Generally, most have a collection service for spent batteries. However, a lot of the battery products we’ve sold to date, we have yet to receive back any units for recycling. It will be interesting to see how we cope as an industry, once we start seeing large numbers of batteries being returned by our customers over the coming years.” In recent years, Simon tells me he has seen a huge growth in the sale of Aspen fuels for products powered by traditional engines. “People have caught

on to the benefits of this type of fuel product,” he says. “Aspen alkylate petrol is virtually free from sulphur, benzene and solvents, making it less harmful than regular petrol. You are breathing much cleaner air when working with your power tools, and, with these ingredients removed, the odour produced is minimal, freeing customers from the headaches this can cause.”

Letting his customers know about all the benefits that come with its use means Simon sells a lot of Aspen fuel. He also tells me that extra sales are also made through the wide range of garden tools and accessories that he stocks, complimenting his machinery offering.

From what I saw on my visit, Simon and his team have developed over the years a superb working practice to ensure their customers receive value for money and an exceptional aftersales service. Simon knows the sorts of machines that appeal to his customers, so there were no large, fancy, bells-and-whistles mowers on sale here. They were all good, robust, tried-and-tested products that do an effective and efficient job for which they are chosen.

As I have said for many years, the service industry is all about people and their ability to communicate and care about other people. It seems that Simon and his team do this in abundance, and have served the people of Cheshire well for over 25 years.

Long may they continue to.



Mowers on display in the showroom



The Easylife team: L-R: Martin Speed, Mike Ashworth and owner Simon Gibson



Mowers in for servicing



Oliver Landpower's management looked at rentals, ranging from industrial estate premises to farm business units, to find an Essex depot

# The challenges of territory expansion

Being offered a wider trading area by a major franchise can provide a significant boost to a dealership's business – but usually requires an acquisition, or finding additional premises and staff. MARTIN RICKATSON visited Oliver Landpower's new Essex and Warwickshire branches to learn about the hurdles it experienced recently when opening and purchasing new depots.

**F**ew in the farm machinery trade need reminding of the franchise changes being driven of late by manufacturers' desire to work with fewer, larger businesses, largely in response to the fact farms themselves are becoming fewer in number and larger in size. For dealers with strong supplier relationships, a sound financial footing and a successful business record, the upside can be significant opportunities to

grow. But expansion comes with some equally significant challenges.

For mid-England JCB dealer Oliver Landpower, 2023 brought two quite different opportunities for growth. Firstly, in Essex the existing JCB dealer moved to a new materials handler supplier at the request of its mainline tractor franchise, meaning the Staffordshire manufacturer sought a new dealer partner. With Olivers covering the area to the west, from

Oxon to Herts, it made sense for JCB to extend that to the east coast, expanding the territory of a dealer with which it has worked for 40 years.

"From that point of view, it made sense to us, too, especially as we already had Essex-based customers for some of our other franchises, supported from our Luton and Kings Langley depots," says Charlie Glenister, Oliver Landpower's managing director.



Oliver Landpower MD Charlie Glenister (R) and sales director Adrian Hewis (L) say the Colchester site provides good access, a well laid out building and plenty of yard space

"We'd been talking for almost three years with JCB and its dealer at the time in this area about a transition of future sales and support plans, given that it was expected the existing dealer would be moving away to another materials handler franchise at the request of its tractor supplier.

"The process took some time, while it was decided out of our hands at what point the previous arrangement would end, but, over this period, we looked at possible premises to prepare for when we would take over the area. We also used the services of an agent, giving them an area in which we thought we needed to be, in the triangle between Braintree, Chelmsford and Witham.

## Search for new premises

"Finding somewhere suitable was a challenge, though. We spent some time pinpointing exactly where we wanted to be, and decided that, although Chelmsford was central to our territory, the cost of renting a suitable site would be around twice as much as in Colchester, and, with a presence in the Hertfordshire area, we were already coming to Harlow and beyond.

"So we widened the search area and looked at rentals, ranging from industrial estate premises to farm business units.

We decided, though, that we didn't want to be on the latter, with a proper industrial premises providing a more professional image both to customers and suppliers. We spoke to a few local JCB customers, who used various local dealers in addition to operating JCB equipment, and the consensus was that, as long as we provided good service, they weren't too concerned about depot location.

"Early on, I found what looked like a site with good potential, an industrial estate unit in Colchester that had been a Mercedes-Benz truck centre, so was well-suited and laid out for

farm machinery servicing. However, at the time, JCB weren't quite ready for the franchise exchange from the previous dealer. When the timing was deemed right a few months later, the truck premises was off the market.

"I spent some time looking at other sites, but, 18 months later, the Colchester truck premises came back on the market. After assessing a farm site east of Colchester that we wrote off as too far out, I looked again at the Colchester site with Adrian Hewis, our sales director, and, although it was a cold November day – and some work was clearly needed – we liked what we saw. Access was good, with the A12 nearby, the building was well laid out and equipped, and there was plenty of yard space. Those qualities are all crucial in a dealership site.

"We agreed with the agent and landlord we would take on the premises if some internal refurbishment was carried out, which was done to our specification at relatively little additional cost, and we agreed a 15-year lease on the site, which covers just under an acre."

The process was relatively seamless, says Charlie, and with, for example, no purchase of stock to negotiate, far simpler than a dealership acquisition.

"It was good to work with professional agents, and the owners were very accommodating, being happy for us to alter the building – we



Telehandlers are a key product, but the firm feels there is considerable scope for tractor sales, given that it focuses solely on JCB's tractor offering



Oliver Landpower has assembled an Essex sales team, with well-established roots in the territory and familiarity with its farmers



First tasks included installing a new parts counter and storage, fitting out office space, and installing an integral bulk oil system

wanted to make one office bigger and one a bit smaller, for example.”

**Sourcing staff**

When Oliver Landpower took over the premises in January 2023, there were a few teething problems, Charlie acknowledges.

“We had issues with the floor paint in the main workshop and stores area, which had to be redone. At the same time, we were in the middle of trying to build a good team of staff, and learning a new territory.

“The beauty of starting from scratch with a new premises in a new area, though, is that you don’t inherit anything in terms of old ways and habits, and you can build from within.

Our early success here is off the back of that. We quickly managed to recruit a good team of staff, who have all been very enthusiastic about this new venture, and have quickly gelled together. That’s worth a lot.”

Charlie says that, upon taking over the premises, the next stage was to kit out the building with the required service and parts infrastructure, and, while the basics were there thanks to its truck outlet history, there was a good deal of work to do.

“We put in a new parts counter and storage, fitted out some additional parts storage and office space upstairs, and – among the service area improvements – we installed an integral oil system so oil can be

delivered in bulk and metered out, with the ability to link to our operating system, meaning we can accurately apportion oil to each job.”

Whilst Oliver Landpower was in the process of finding new premises in Essex, the firm had also been offered the opportunity to acquire LQG Agri, the JCB dealer in Warwickshire, to the west of its existing area. Expanding eastwards and westwards simultaneously created a double challenge, but was helped by good staff, says Charlie.

“This was obviously a very different challenge to that acquisition, and the formation from it of our Oliver Landpower Stratford branch. The integration of systems and processes



A November open day gave potential customers a chance to get to know Essex’s new JCB dealer and its staff

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## DEALER EXPANSION

– and things like the sharing of used machinery stocks across these depots and our existing network in Bucks, Beds and Herts – took time, but it was probably a little easier to integrate the new depot at Colchester than the existing one at Stratford. Everyone was on a bit of a learning curve, but things have settled well now.”

### Complementary lines

That is evident in the first year’s sales at both depots, says Charlie, not just in JCB tractors and handlers, but with Kuhn equipment too, a range offered at both the new branches.

“We offer other competitive makes across our business, such as Amazone and McHale in the centre of the Landpower area, but tightly maintain our selling policies and boundaries. At Colchester, we wanted to complement the JCB tractors and handlers with a full arable and grassland implement line, so Kuhn fits well, and was already established at Stratford. Finding complementary implement lines is getting complicated, as dealer areas overlap, but we feel it’s best to do more with less. We also have a good relationship with neighbouring dealers, which we want to maintain.

“The type of implements we sell, though, is quite different across the territory. When we took on Stratford, Kuhn income was a big element in its turnover, with a sizeable parts business – Warwickshire

is predominantly traditional-type farming, and prime plough and power harrow country. In Essex, though, the farms are larger and min-till systems predominate, so there’s more demand for one-pass cultivators and min-till drills.”

While JCB is perhaps best-known for its handlers, Charlie believes there is strong scope for JCB Fastrac sales in the new Essex territory, particularly as Oliver Landpower focuses on this range in terms of tractors, while the previous dealer also had a mainline conventional tractor product offering.

“To an extent, I think this limited Fastrac sales in the area a little, particularly of the larger 280-350hp models, so while there is a good service and parts park of existing 4000 series models up to 220hp, the 8000 series sector represents almost a blank sales canvas for us. We’ve enjoyed good success so far with tractor sales, but there’s a lot to go at from a tractor perspective, particularly with farmers and contractors seeking tractors for high-speed road haulage on busy A-roads, and working across spread-out farms.

“I’m keen to see what we can achieve here retailing JCB tractors without the restrictions of a mainline brand alongside. Prior to adding Stratford and Colchester to our network, we already had one of the highest dealer market shares in the country for JCB tractor sales, so I’m keen to build on that.”

### Alternative markets

Beyond tractors and handlers, the JCB franchise also gives the sales team opportunities to retail such products as compact construction equipment, including tracked dumpers, power packs and mini excavators. Along with new compact Loadall handlers, this opens up a broader market, says Charlie. Such additional opportunities are invaluable against an ag machinery trade outlook that is potentially set for a tougher ride than in the previous low interest rate period, he acknowledges.

“The dramatic increase of interest rates over the last 18 months adds a different challenge in managing stock levels, especially as many younger sales staff have never experienced such levels. Where previously the stocking charges were somewhat insignificant, the figures today mean we need to adapt to a higher base cost, and ensure stock is turned in a timely fashion. Strategic ordering is key to maintain stocks of fast-moving items. These extra costs have an impact on buying decisions, and it’s essential we work with customers to address this.

“But we are in an industry that likes to talk things down! Across our established area of Bucks, Beds and Herts, we have about 60% telehandler market share. In Essex and Warks, I reckon that may be a little less, but still in the high 40s. With good staff teams and facilities, I’m confident we can build on that, and grow tractor and implement sales, too.”



Key franchise alongside JCB is Kuhn, giving the Essex depot and its Warks counterpart a full arable and grassland product line



Parts manager Jonathan Wheatley, parts advisor Adrian Taylor and group parts manager Nathan Bond

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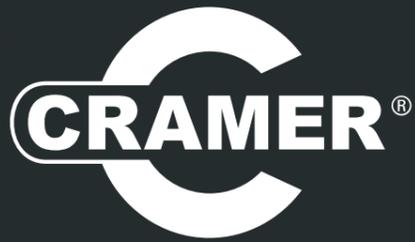
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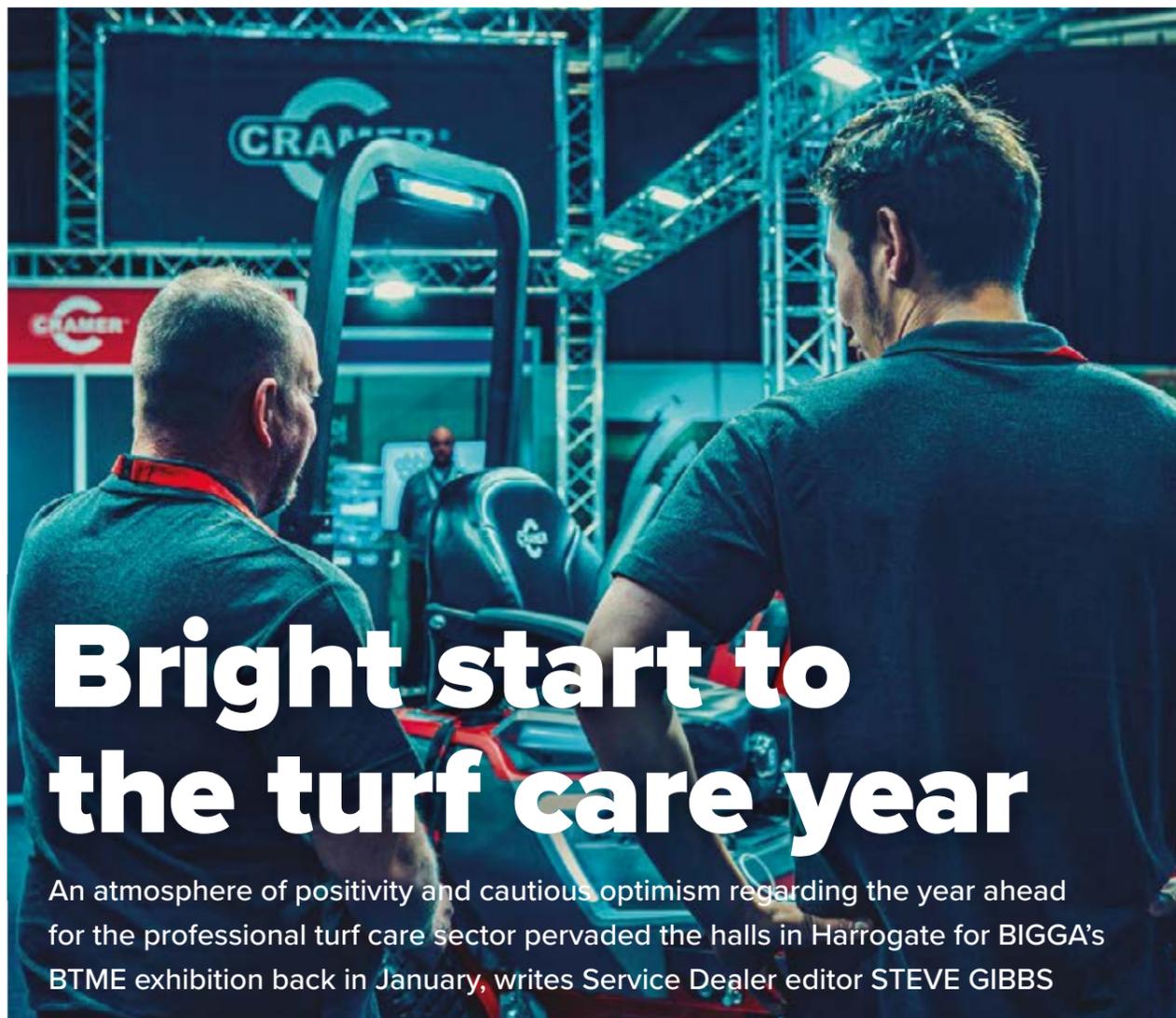
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# Bright start to the turf care year

An atmosphere of positivity and cautious optimism regarding the year ahead for the professional turf care sector pervaded the halls in Harrogate for BIGGA's BTME exhibition back in January, writes Service Dealer editor STEVE GIBBS

**A** week on from the agricultural machinery side of the industry having their major national show (more about this on page 40), the end of January, saw the turf care machinery sector kick off their exhibition season for 2024, with BIGGA's BTME taking place at the Harrogate Convention Centre.

Before I travelled to Harrogate, I had heard that, despite LAMMA enjoying bumper crowds and returning exhibitors, there was perhaps a certain vibe at the NEC of caution and uncertainty about the year ahead. Our agricultural machinery editor Martin Rickatson mentioned to me that he had picked up on this, and his thoughts were echoed by a representative of a manufacturer who exhibited at both LAMMA and BTME, who I bumped into

soon after arriving in Harrogate.

They felt that, at the ag show, some parties had been talking the prospects for this year down, and were fairly glum in their outlook, despondent at prospective spend from farmers during '24. They, on the other hand, felt that, whilst circumstances for all are, of course, tough, there is a lot to be upbeat about - and it's the manufacturers' duty to be positive and try to gee up the industry. Budgets for buyers, whilst tight, are still out there, with professional customers always needing to buy the right products for their projects.

And, I must say, this attitude of exuding positivity I did indeed feel throughout the week at BTME - both from exhibitors and visitors. Of course, no-one was congaing around the halls, wearing party hats and high-fiving

everyone they met - but I did genuinely feel from the many conversations I had with both stand-holders and dealers I bumped into walking the aisles that they were quietly confident - optimistic even - about the year ahead.

This positivity was certainly articulated by Jim Croxton, CEO of show organiser BIGGA, when he spoke to the trade press on day two. He said he was in good spirits following feedback he'd received from exhibitors and visitors, with unaudited numbers up on the previous year - combined with the highest-ever pre-registrations.

Asked whether he was concerned for the health of his show in the face of increased competition in the turf care exhibition sector, he said he hadn't noticed any impact on BTME.

He observed that, whilst some manufacturers may voice concern that

there's too many shows, many are still choosing to exhibit at multiple events throughout the year - and crucially, certainly where his association's show is concerned, people are still walking through the doors. The predicted post-Covid slump for exhibitions had yet to materialise.

"People in this industry seem to enjoy getting together," said Jim. "But are we concerned? We'll just have to keep our eye on it."

## On show

Around the halls, there was plenty for dealers of professional turf care machinery to find of interest. Some of the highlights were:

**Kress** told me on the afternoon of day one that they'd had a great start to the show, with national sales manager Tony Macer saying the barometer for any show is how many post-show trials they arrange - and, with this being their first BTME, they were already pleased with how many new golf club contacts they'd made.

Tony spoke about what growth the company had seen over the last year, and how they fully expect it to continue at pace throughout 2024. He said they were excited about a programme of dealer training they had coming up, with the plan being to perfect what they have been doing together and make it even better.

He said they had been innovating and refining their products based on

dealer feedback, for example, making some batteries lighter - and were promoting their RTK robots to the golfing sector, which, the company believed, would change the industry. Also of interest for dealers, Tony told me about a new battery recycling scheme they would be rolling out, at no cost to dealers, where the company would collect and dispose of end-of-life batteries from dealerships.



Jim Kirkwood, director of product management and Tony Macer, national sales manager of Kress being interviewed for Service Dealer's YouTube channel at BTME '24

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Simon Del-Nevo – Cramer

**Cramer** made a big splash with their impressive debut display at the show. European president Simon Del-Nevo told me to expect to see the company making an impact at trade shows throughout the year, showing off their range of battery products targeting the professional end-user.

Simon said their whole range of 82V machines are 1,000-hour runtime-tested, and Cramer are proud of their 'trust badge' system, offering two years' commercial warranty, 10 years' battery warranty and a 30-day full money-back guarantee if a user decides the kit isn't for them. Taking pride of place of the stand was the heavy-duty ZTR which, Simon said, would run cutting for eight hours at 15mph.

In terms of a dealer network, Cramer is in the process of setting one up - as well as recruiting for their own internal team and on-the-road demonstrators. Simon said they want the right dealers in the right places, with perhaps around 200 points of sale around the country. He was buoyant about the prospects for the year ahead, saying the industry is changing – and he believed the time is right for a new player with new technology.

**Husqvarna** were also optimistic about the upcoming 12 months, with Jonny Snowball, head of business unit Professional UK, telling me the company had a two-fold reason for feeling this way. Firstly, he said that, with their domestic offerings, they are very much a premium brand, with



Jonathan Snowball – Husqvarna

their purchasing demographic not too affected by swings in the economy.

Secondly, with their professional offerings, the company's robotic solutions for commercial spaces are going from strength-to-strength, Jonny said. With the Ceora large-area robot at work on various golf courses now, other neighbouring courses are seeing practical examples of what benefits these autonomous machines can offer their own surfaces. Benefits are both in terms of quality of cut, and, indeed, with the current recruitment difficulties in the turf professional sector, how using these robots can free up the staff they do have, to concentrate on other work requiring skilled attention.

**Kubota** had an impressive stand once



Kubota stand

again, co-exhibiting with Baroness. From Kubota, their LXe-261 electric compact tractor and Ze series of electric zero-turn mowers were making their BTME debut - whilst standing out from Baroness was the all-hydraulic LM311 greens and tees mower.

Rob Edwards, Kubota's marketing manager, said the company has much positivity regarding the prospects of the year ahead. He said they were advising their dealers to be proactive, but not pushy, believing that persevering in demos for customers would pay off in 2024. "The longer end-users put off that purchase, the greater the risk to them that the price will increase," he said. "So it's important we stay in front of customers."



Peter Chaloner and Steven Copnall – Cobra

**Cobra** were also co-exhibiting, with Ego in their case - and illustrating this team-up perfectly on the stand was an example of a Fortis cylinder mower, powered by Ego batteries. These machines have the ability to transform into seven other machines via the six-bladed cassette system that can be removed and replaced with another accessory cassette in the range to switch its use.

MD Peter Chaloner told me they enjoy exhibiting at BTME, so they can reach the golf greenkeepers who they are targeting with these quiet machines directly.

**Makita** were also pleased to be meeting greenkeepers with their array of battery-powered machinery. Amongst other new products on their stand, Mark Earles, UK outdoor power

equipment and contracts manager, was keen to highlight their latest power barrow, and a new pressure washer.

He said their machinery is increasingly used on golf courses in noise-sensitive areas, and so exhibiting at Harrogate is great for them to make contact with courses perhaps not previously known to themselves.

**Campey** were saying they were getting ready to go out on tour, with a series of pitch renovation machinery demonstration days around the country during April - in conjunction with local dealers, including Vincents, Hunts, Sherriff and Double A.

Director Lee Morgado said that commercial customers are now aware that they must plan ahead for their

purchases, but that demo days – like the ones they have planned – most certainly transfer into sales. "The bubble hasn't burst yet," he told me. "And it doesn't look like doing so any time soon."

**Foley** demonstrated an interesting innovation in grinding with their 642 Quick-Spin Reel Grinder, which allowed users to roll a range of walk-behind mowers and reel mower cartridges up onto the unit without taking the mower apart or heavy-lifting.

Paul Rauker, the company's CEO and president, described the system as the first of its kind, and a "game-changer," saying it would allow a unit to be brought into the workshop, rolled up for a quick spin grind, and then be out cutting again in minutes.



Lee Morgado speaking to Service Dealer editor Steve Gibbs



Mark Earles – Makita



Paul Rauker – Foley

Well worth the visit

The halls saw not only end-users checking out what's new on the stands, but seemingly decent numbers of dealers, too. I spotted several large groups from multi-branched dealerships, all decked out in their matching jackets, stalking the stands.

I spoke with Phil Gregg from Ripon Farm Services, who, as well as getting ready for his own show up the road at the Great Yorkshire Showground (more on this in a subsequent issue of Service Dealer), was seeing what was on offer on the turf care side at BTME. He said that, since taking over Adamsons, business has been going great in the commercial sector - and he said he expected that to continue throughout the year.

I also bumped into Pete McArthur and his son, Cammy, from Strathbogie Forest & Garden, who had come down to North Yorkshire to check out anything intriguing that was new and of interest for the dealership. Pete said how impressed he was with how busy the show felt, and how it was clearly full of teams of greenkeepers.

And these golf sector professionals were, indeed, roaming aisles in packs - from courses not just in the north of the country, either, but from all over, which struck me as another positive for the show. It reminded me of something that James Mead, retired head groundsman of Rugby School, had said at our recent Service Dealer Conference. He reminded dealers in attendance there that it



The Service Dealer and TurfPro team with Kubota UK MD David Hart at the manufacturer's opening night party, held in conjunction with Baroness and Tillers Turf

shouldn't just be the head professional they concentrate on speaking to at a facility. Yes, they may be in charge of the chequebook, but they will also keenly listen to feedback and suggestions from all members of their teams regarding what equipment is required to carry out their work. So to see so many greenkeepers from each course at BTME must be good news for the organisers, exhibiting manufacturers, and the dealers around the country who should ultimately pick up these leads.

I feel BIGGA should be congratulated for putting on a show that once again attracted an engaged and enthusiastic audience. One criticism I did hear (and this is more directed at manufacturers in general, rather than the organisers) was that, whilst there was clearly plenty of equipment on display, perhaps there was not anything particularly new or innovative on show? The accusation being that

manufacturers are not really pushing the boundaries, nor sowing the seeds of the future. Pete McArthur summed up this critique, saying: "I feel we are underutilising the potential of technology in our industry."

The only other slight grumbles I heard were that the layout this year meant that the upstairs hall where Kress, Cramer and Makita were located was slightly out on a limb somewhat, and, as a consequence, a tad quieter than the rest of the show. The Electric Avenue display was a bit underwhelming - oh, and the weird smell of sick had made an unwelcome return to the exhibition centre in a couple of walk-through areas!

But those quibbles aside, the overriding sense I picked up from conversations with a wide range of exhibitors and visitors was that this was a quality show, and that, with hard work, the turf care sector has plenty to feel optimistic about this year.



Phil Gregg from Ripon Farm Services speaking to Service Dealer's Keith Christian



Cammy and Pete McArthur, from Strathbogie Forest & Garden



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# Counts give cause for optimism

Organiser Agriconnect reckoned numbers of both exhibitors and visitors were up significantly on recent years at January's LAMMA farm machinery show, and there was clear evidence of both. The big question is whether this will translate to enquiries and sales at dealer level, but new products mean plenty of opportunity. MARTIN RICKATSON reports from Birmingham's NEC.

**W**ith the aisles packed from early until late on the first day, and decent numbers of visitors on the always-quieter second day, LAMMA 2024 looked to be a successful event at first sight, boosted by a number of exhibitors having returned to the show. Organiser figures suggested over 40,000 visitors passed through the doors on the two days, and, with 95 new exhibitors said to have been signed up for this year's show, there appeared to be much less of the dead space in certain areas and spread-out stands that have been a feature in some hall areas during recent editions of the event.

Among those new exhibitors were some big names such as **Case IH**, which returned with a full stand in its own right rather than a shared space where it supplied tractors for the main holder's implements. Newer attendees included Chinese tractor firm **Loval**, while companies such as **AGCO** and **Krone** underlined their market commitment with particularly large stands.

There remained some notable absences, including John Deere, Claas and Kuhn, but the event does seem to have started to build some atmosphere at its new home – not an easy thing, given the linear layout. It remains to be seen how many serious enquiries were being made, and how many will translate into dealer orders over the coming weeks – there was certainly some caution about the effects of inflation on new equipment prices, interest rates on farmer spending power, and excess machine stocks loaded onto dealers by

manufacturers. But, on the basis of the number of smiling faces seen enjoying a day browsing new kit in the warm and dry, LAMMA 2024 was undoubtedly successful.

## UK debuts for international products

Among the multinational makers, many gave UK farmers first sight of machines launched globally back at November's Agritechnica, including **Krone** with its new ten-rotor, 11.2m trailed Vendro tedder, **AGCO's Massey Ferguson** with its six-model 315-425hp 9S flagship tractor range, **Case IH** with its Quadtrac 715, and **New Holland** with the CR11 combine. Also from AGCO was the new **Valtra** S series and latest generation **Fendt** 700 range, while **Kubota** chose LAMMA to launch its first telehandler. Available in cab or canopy formats, the 50hp KTH 4815-2 is a compact machine (1.6m wide/<2.0m high) with 4.8m maximum lift height and 1.5t maximum lift capacity. Elsewhere in tractors, Shropshire firm **Severn Farm Machinery** is seeking dealers for the 25-50hp line-up of **Loval** tractors and light construction equipment it is now importing following its recently-announced deal with the Chinese maker.

Meanwhile, Turkey's **Basak** – now connected to Versatile following parent firm Asko's purchase of the Canadian tractor maker from former Russian parent Rostselmash – was looking for interest from potential importers for its tractors of up to 120hp, while **Indian Imports** displayed models from the compact **Avenger** and **VST Fieldtrac** tractors it began bringing in last year. **Kioti** was also present with an upgraded K9 2410 UTV, with electric proportional power steering and



*Knight Farm Machinery launched upgraded 2400 series SP sprayers*

50km/hr maximum speed, plus a new HX1401 140hp flagship tractor, with 32-speed 40km/hr power shift/power shuttle transmission. The tractor stands were also well-supported by aftermarket parts exhibitors, including the likes of **UTV Products**, which reported significant interest from tractor and equipment users looking to make operation safer and less tiring through LED lighting upgrades.

## Trailer and spreader developments

There was plenty more new, though, from British manufacturers and importers. One surprise of the show was the return – more than a decade since departing the sector to focus on its muck spreader business – of Norfolk-based **Bunning** to the trailer market, enabled by a 6,840 sq m factory expansion completed over the past two years. The company says its new 14-20t tipping range combines new design ideas with proven principles from its former trailers, such as the 300x150mm section chassis, plus components from its spreaders (including the 200x200mm sprung drawbar). Tandem ADR axles feature larger bearings, while multi-leaf suspension replaces the single parabolic spring system of former Bunning trailers. Bodies feature 4mm-thick sides, with only one welded joint along their length. The new design has a deeper top rail and wider rear-corner posts, using 80x120mm section in place of the 80x80mm used previously. A new pressed steel tailgate is secured by locking pins hydraulically activated as the ram completes its final travel, hooking onto the tailgate and pulling it into the trailer for a tighter seal than the previous design.

Fellow trailer and spreader maker **Richard Western** revealed a number of new products and upgrades. Among them was a tandem axle option for its DS150/175 HD Delilah horizontal beater/spinning-disc manure spreaders for users doing a lot of road travel, and Suffolk tipping trailer updates, including new running lights, plus updated suspension for 15t-plus models, with new 100mm wide double-leaf parabolic springs and a suspension equalizer featuring outboard bushes. There was also a new short-chassis version of the flagship 24t-capacity SF24HS Plus Suffolk trailer, reducing



*Severn Farm Machinery is now importing Lovol tractors from China*



*Turkish maker Basak's parent recently purchased Canada's Versatile*



*Indian Imports is seeking dealers for its Avenger and VST Fieldtrac tractors*

height when tipped from 9.5m to 8.5m, and a new MP18 Multi-Purpose trailer, blending design principles from the firm's Hardox-bodied SRT20 stone/rubble trailer and those of the Suffolk models. The 18t-capacity MP18 has the same 29.58m<sup>3</sup>/17.71m<sup>3</sup> silage/grain capacities as Richard Western's SF14HS Suffolk standard trailer. The sprung drawbar's hitch ring is secured by an eight-bolt flange, axles are ten-stud commercial units, and suspension is provided by 100mm-wide twin-leaf parabolic springs.



New HX1401 140hp flagship tractor from Kioti



UTV Products reported significant interest in LED lighting upgrades



Shelbourne Reynolds now offers muck spreader weigh cell and hedge trimmer head memory options



The latest McConnell Agribuggy features a hydro-mechanical transmission



Bunning chose LAMMA to announce its return to the trailer market

British muck spreader makers were also represented by **Shelbourne Reynolds**, which launched a new weigh scale option for its Powerspread side-discharge machines. The firm says that, by ensuring operators know exactly what weight of material they have loaded, the option means application rates can be gauged far more accurately than would otherwise be possible. Developed from the system established on the company's Powermix diet feeders, the installation on the Powerspread machines consists of three 90mm load cells, with two on the axle and one on the drawbar, each with a maximum 10t load capacity. These feed data to a scale head which can be mounted either on the spreader or in the tractor cab, while a wireless remote scale is also available for the machine loading the spreader. The company says it is working on a data transfer system to help users maintain accurate application records for farm record-keeping, and a GPS mapping system to allow variable-rate application.

Shelbourne Reynolds also showed a new head memory system option for its top-end 8000 series hedge trimmers, specified with S-Touch touchscreen control. The new system allows the operator to set, store and instantly return to a pre-set head angle, eliminating the need for corrective inputs with the control joystick, and thereby minimising repetitive movement and reducing fatigue.

plumbing to be primed before spraying begins, for full circulation, automatic agitation, enhanced fluid suspension, reduced circulation dead spots and minimal risk of product coagulation, plus instant nozzle response and switching. Clean water line purging is similarly instant, claims Knight.

Electronic updates include improved boom height control software for faster response and greater accuracy, steering system updates for faster, smoother transition between steering modes, and enhanced reactivity for the Active Hillside Stability system. Comfort is also boosted by hardware improvements to the cab and chassis air suspension systems, while service is simplified courtesy of enhanced diagnostic capability within the integrated vehicle controller.

Other British sprayer developments included a redesigned Agribuggy self-propelled sprayer from **McConnel**. The V300 features a hydro-mechanical fully-variable drivetrain with 50km/hr capability, plus a new cab. The machine, powered by a new Stage V 148hp Cummins engine sitting in an engine bay designed for improved access, weighs 6.4t unladen, and is fitted with Omsi axles with locking differential. Maximum ground clearance on rowcrop wheels is 750mm, and the machine carries a 24m, 3,000-litre spraypack with new electronic contents gauge.



Horizon's 3-6m M:DSX no-till 3-6m disc drill is a mounted version of the trailed DSX with front hopper

### Sprayer news

Elsewhere in British manufacturer developments, **Knight Farm Machinery** released updated self-propelled sprayers. The 2435, 2440, 2450 and 2460 have respective tank capacities of 3,500, 4,000, 5,000 and 6,000 litres, with power provided by Perkins six-cylinder engines offering 175-300hp. Key among the technology improvements is the Maximizer Pro development of Knight's established Maximizer liquid circulation system, with its live induction hopper, booms fed at multiple points to ensure even spray-line pressure, and continuous circulation of fluid through the sprayer plumbing. Maximizer Pro sees boom pipework reduced by 21% for further enhancements to spray-line circulation efficiency, with fluid control that enables the sprayer's low volume

### New drills and grassland kit

On the drill front, UK farmers got their first look at Lincs firm **Horizon Agriculture's** M:DSX no-till disc coulters machine, a 3-6m mounted version of the established trailed DSX, using the same undercut disc coulters and reckoned to require around 25hp/m depending on topography and soil type. The front hopper can be split 60/40, and features twin metering systems for simultaneous application of two products. There are 220mm or 250mm row spacing options, and a 400-litre small seed/pellet applicator can also be specified, as can weights for hard going.

**Opico** displayed HE-VA's new 6m Grass-Combi, a rejuvenating tool that can also be used as a stubble harrow and cover crop establishment tool. Up front, buyers can specify



Opico showed HE-VA's new 6m Grass-Combi rejuvenator, also suited to stubble harrowing and cover crop establishment

either rigid levelling bars or sprung Shattaboard paddles, behind which are three rows of hydraulically-adjustable circular-profile 12mm-diameter spring tines. Following up are four height-adjustable wheels. Cat II linkage hooks and a clevis hitch, enable the unit to tow a roller. A Stocks TurboJet applicator is a further option. Opico also showed updated Zelon entry-level Strautmann forage wagons. Available in 24-35m<sup>3</sup> capacities, they feature wider 1.8m camless pick-ups, and a new Exact-Cut 37-knife chopping unit capable of chopping to 39mm.



# BUSINESS MONITOR

Taking the temperature of the dealer network, sponsored by STIHL

## Service workshops increasingly busy

But staffing still a serious issue

**H**earing from our dealer readers who responded to this year's winter servicing survey, which we published on the *Weekly Update* at the end of January, it was encouraging to discover that workshops have been increasingly busy this season – but concerns remain high regarding the sourcing of technician staff.

This year, a clear majority of respondents described their servicing levels as up on last year's (62%) – with a reassuringly low amount saying their levels were down (3%).

The biggest single factor that was impairing those who responded from reaching their maximum potential in

their workshops were staffing issues, we were told (38%) – but capacity (23%) and supply of parts (19%) were also still causing headaches.

65% of dealers who took part in the survey said they had increased their service charge rates in the past 12 months – and, of those that had, it was quite close between raising them 5-10% (50%) and up to 5% (39%).

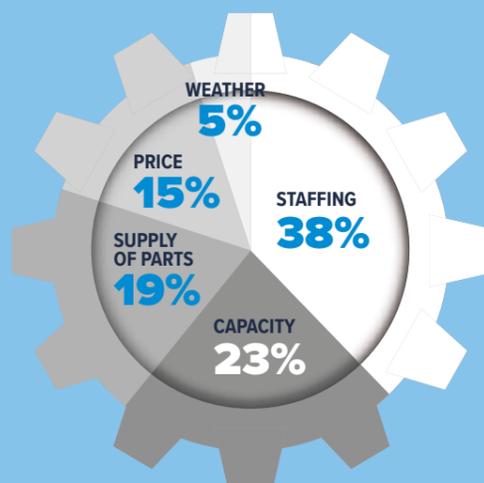
**And, similar to last year, finding more staff for the workshop was proving difficult for most, with 84% saying they had not increased technician staff in the past year – and that it's just as hard as ever to attempt to do so.**

## Your say...

We asked you how is the service side of your business faring currently? Any issues impacting your service business?

- “Staffing, as ever, remains a challenge, with the industry needing to encourage more youngsters to enter the industry. My business employs five mechanics, of whom two have come through the apprenticeship route in the last six years. If business holds up, and we have a good year, another apprentice is planned for next autumn.”
- “We currently have an eight-week lead time for ride-on tractor repairs, four weeks for walk-behind mowers, and three-to-four weeks for handheld tools. The late end to last season, with continued grass growth into mid-November, along with late leaf fall into mid-December, has resulted in many machines coming in for winter servicing later than normal. We are already hearing from customers that grass cutting has started, so this has put the pressure on already to get machines finished and back ready for use. Parts supply for certain brands is proving a challenge still, which is causing delayed turnaround times for machines. Being tight on storage space, which is a common issue for most dealers in this industry, again causes a slight headache when you have to juggle machines and time scales every day to keep customers happy.”
- “Staffing is dire. Finding anyone, not just experienced staff, is proving to be our main drawback. Mild weather means folks want things back sooner than ever before. Customer expectations at times are unrealistic.”
- “Shortage of staff is having serious impact, and may cause the company to downsize to be able to retain customer satisfaction.”
- “Servicing has changed, customers are a lot more proactive now and make sure machines are in early so that they are ready for the season. However, sometimes, with the weather, the servicing window is getting much smaller, with customers using mowers until November and then wanting them back for February. Our quietest month now tends to be October.”
- “Finding the right sort of people and places to find them. Admittedly, I don't do social media, which probably restricts us. But, if the right person walked in with their CV, I would probably employ them. That's how our best guy found us 14 years ago. I've had employment agencies send details of someone who may be suitable, but the agency want 10% of salary, which is a lot to a small company.”
- “We are extremely busy, with 12-week lead times, ongoing delays in obtaining some parts, and ongoing issues recruiting more staff.”
- “As a main Countax dealer, we are worried as to what is going to replace them. Also, the doubling of the Countax parts overnight means we are trying to source the parts from elsewhere.”

### What factors have most influenced your winter servicing levels this year?



### How are servicing levels this winter compared with last?



### Have you increased your labour rates in the past year?



### If you have increased your labour rates this past year, by how much?



### Have you increased your service staffing levels this past year?



### Has the recruitment process for your workshop improved?



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# The Qualifying Process

**Sara Hey**, vice president of operations and development at Bob Clements International, the dealership development company based in Missouri, shares the insights she offers U.S. dealers with *Service Dealer's* UK readership every issue.



## THIS ISSUE: HELPING DETERMINE IF A PROSPECT IS SOMEONE THAT CAN BE TURNED INTO A CUSTOMER

When selling, I've always found it useful to have a process in place to help determine if a prospect is someone I can truly turn into a customer. This is why qualifying is important – it allows you to determine how much time you should invest, up front, with a prospect.

While you will find situations where a prospect doesn't meet all your qualifying criteria, that doesn't mean you simply blow off the person as being unimportant. In those situations, continue to spend a little time building a relationship, and then, at some point in the future, when your prospect is still in a position to buy – or knows someone who might be – you are ready to make a sale happen.

### Their current situation

In the equipment business, selling is a relational process, and, as I take a prospect through my qualification process, I want to be sure that I am making the prospect as comfortable as possible. The first question I like to ask is a simple 'what do you have now?'-type question. If you have a person looking at a zero-turn mower, a UTV, or a tractor, then I would ask: "Do you currently have a zero-turn mower, UTV, or a tractor? If the answer is yes, then I follow up with "What do you have, and what about it do you like the most?"

If the prospect has a competitor's



product, but is in my dealership, I know that my competitor has dropped the ball somewhere along the way, and I can use that to my advantage later in the selling process. When the prospect tells me what it is he likes most about what he currently has, I can make sure, when presenting my product, that I spend time highlighting how my piece of equipment provides the same features he likes. My goal is to understand why that prospect came to me, so I can use that later in the sales presentation process.

### Likes and Dislikes

My next question is: "So, if you could change or improve anything about the

piece of equipment you have now, what would it be?" Asking this question allows me to target my sales presentation on key selling points, rather than dumping information about every feature my equipment has.

### Money matters

I then transition to the money question, and ask: "So, if you find what you're looking for, what general price range are you hoping to stay within?" It's important that I make sure that what I am going to lead them to is within range (between 15% and 20%) of what they want to spend.

### Time frame and decisionmaker

My next question involves the time frame – when does the prospect plan to make a purchase? This will help me determine what level I want to take him into my presentation. Then, my final qualification question involves asking who will be involved in making the final decision to move forward. It's a delicate question, so I normally ask: "Who, other than yourself, would be involved in making the final decision?" I learned long ago in sales not to assume that you are speaking with the decisionmaker. I always ask that question to make sure a wife, husband, brother, business partner, or someone else doesn't need to be involved before I start the presentation.

# Weather is changing customer habits

**Joanne Balmer**, of Balmers GM, tells us about the busy start to the year, and how the prolonged periods of wet weather are influencing the buying trends of both domestic and professional consumers.



**A**s expected, 2024 has started like every other year - with an extremely busy service department.

Of course, we're grateful to be so busy, and we're seeing a really good mix of both domestic and commercial machinery being brought in, which is great - because, when David Balmer (my dad) first started the business back in 1979, we were very much a garden machinery business. As the years went on, and we became a John Deere turf dealer in 1992, our business has grown to become predominantly groundcare, so it's really nice to see a resurgence in the domestic side of the business.

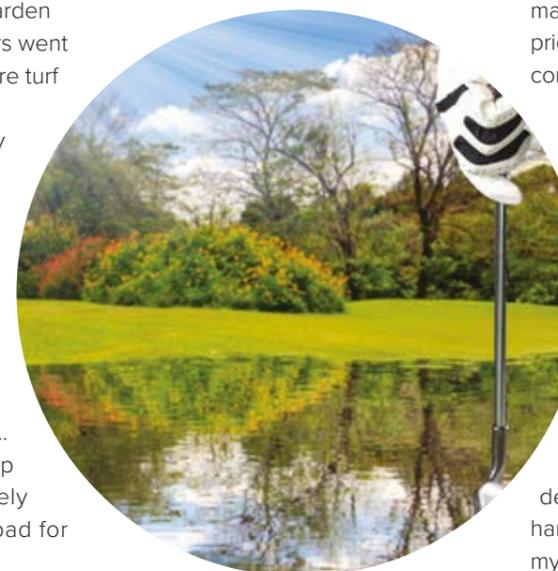
Being so busy naturally brings its fair share of the 'usual' issues - not enough techs, not enough storage space, and last-minute customers with unrealistic expectations of turnaround times...

At the moment, our workshop turnaround time is approximately three weeks - which isn't too bad for us at this time of year, and the scheduling software that we use really helps our service team plan and prepare their workload. We just wish we could get the completed machines back out of the door and returned to our customers just as quickly, rather than whenever they're ready to use them. This time of year sees our warehouse morphing into 'Hotel Balmers' - sometimes we feel like asking for Tripadvisor reviews rather than Trustpilot reviews!

To compound our 'storage woes', the commercial hire fleet is ready to get

back to work at their new or existing contracts, and these past few weeks' winter stock deliveries have been coming in thick and fast - it's the perfect storm for a very stressed-out warehouse manager!

Talking of storms, I wouldn't be Northern unless I talked about the weather in at least one of my diary entries!



Up here in the North-West, it's pretty much rained since last summer, with the exception of the odd few days of sunshine or snow thrown into the mix. It's like the seasons have been replaced with just one long year of mild and wet weather. A quick Google search shows that the UK's (average) annual rainfall in 2023 was around 1,000mm. I was speaking to one of our sales reps the other day, who had been to see one of their golf customers very local to our Burnley depot, and they

had recorded nearly double that amount – that's two metres of rainfall!

For us, the impact that we're starting to see is a change in customer buying trends – both commercially and domestically. For example, golf course managers are now looking at different types of mowers and different methods of maintaining their courses – favouring lighter machinery and rough maintenance becoming more of a priority, to better deal with the wetter conditions that they're faced with.

Domestically, the trend continues to swing in the direction of robotics and battery-powered garden machinery – and, of course, that's just the way the industry is organically heading, but the weather has certainly played its part. After many conversations with both customers and friends alike, I've found it's been simply too wet to get out mowing with their ride-on mowers without fear of destroying their lawns. On the other hand, robotic mower owners (like myself) have been able to keep on top of the grass despite the awful weather that we have been experiencing.

Like many of our fellow dealers, we have seen a year-on-year increase in robotic mower sales, so towards the end of last year I did a quick count-up of the numbers, which showed that, for the first time, we had sold a fairly even number of auto-mowers versus ride-on mowers. I'm not suggesting ride-on mowers don't have a place in our gardens, they'll be around for quite some time to come – but it will be interesting to see the numbers at the end of the year...



# SME DIGEST

Advice for small and medium-sized enterprises

Edited by Adam Bernstein



## Cost-of-living crisis and second jobs

As the cost of living increases, putting a real strain on household finances, employers are having to decide how to deal with employees who have taken a second job, writes SME Digest editor, ADAM BERNSTEIN.

### EMPLOYEES

**There is no legal prohibition on anyone having more than one job, and most employers will take a pragmatic, reasonable view towards those who need (or want) to earn additional income. However, there are boundaries beyond which employees are expected not to step.**

### Expectations of employees

For Tina Chander, a partner and head of employment law at Wright Hassall, the starting point is that, no matter what transpires, employees are expected to be available to fulfil their contractual hours for their employer as per their contracts of employment. She says: "As well as adhering to their contractual hours, employees are expected to dedicate their full attention to their role during these hours, and a failure to do so may result in their employer considering taking disciplinary action against them."

Notably, she comments: "Many contracts of employment state that employees are expected to work additional hours, as and when, to fulfil the demands of their job. If it becomes apparent that an employee is unable to work the additional hours necessary to complete their primary duties, it may indicate that they have taken a second job." She says that, if this is the case, an employer has the right to investigate, and may, as a result, start a capability or disciplinary process with any employee who has failed to complete their work as required.

Another consideration that Chander highlights is that employers need to be mindful of the limitations imposed by the Working Time Regulations, which limit employees'

working hours to 48. On this, she says: "If an employee's working hours are likely to exceed this limit, employers can ask them to sign an opt-out to protect against any claims arising from breach of this limit." And where the employer knows that the employee has another role, it is strongly recommended that the latter is asked to sign the opt-out, even if their role with the company does not exceed 48 hours per week.

### Most contracts will require permission

Chander knows from experience that contracts of employment for more senior members of staff are likely to contain provisions which prevent them from taking secondary employment. That said, more junior staff are likely to need permission from their employer before accepting another role alongside their current employment. This provision enables employers to monitor how many employees have other jobs.

In her view: "Such permission should not be unreasonably withheld, for example, where it is clear that the role is not with a competitor, or will impact negatively upon the employee's ability to undertake their current role." She also thinks that an employee requesting such permission "provides a good opportunity to establish an informal, open dialogue with their employer regarding their current contractual obligations, as well as the impact that any additional role(s) may or may not have on those obligations."

### Casual workers

Unlike employees, casual workers will not usually be

LMX40P	LMX46PL	LMX46SPL	LMX51SPL	LMX51SPE	LMX56SPL	LMX53SPX
Collection	Collection, mulch, side discharge					
Hand propelled	Hand propelled	Self propelled				
40 cm (16") cut width	46 cm (18") cut width	46 cm (18") cut width	51 cm (20") cut width	51 cm (20") cut width	56 cm (22") cut width	53 cm (21") cut width
25 - 75 mm cut height	25 - 75 mm cut height	6 stage cut height	25 - 75 mm cut height	25 - 75 mm cut height	25 - 70 mm cut height	20 - 80 mm cut height
123cc engine	139cc engine	139cc engine	196cc engine	196cc Easy Start engine	196cc engine	196cc engine
45 ltr grass bag	60 ltr grass bag	60 ltr grass bag	70 ltr grass bag	70 ltr grass bag	75 ltr grass bag	75 ltr grass bag
Steel deck	Steel deck	Steel deck	Steel deck	Steel deck	Steel deck	Steel deck

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restricted from seeking work from other businesses outside their contracted hours. Casual workers normally have a contract or agreement with a business that only requires their services on an irregular basis.

Businesses often use casual workers because they need the inherent flexibility of employing people as and when required, and are not obliged to provide them with work. By the same token, Chander says that casual workers are not obliged to accept any work offered, and, when they do, they should not be expected to do so on an exclusive basis. In fact, she warns: “Businesses must be careful to avoid exercising a degree of control over a casual worker that could be interpreted as something more akin to an employment relationship, which brings additional rights and/or payments not available to casual workers.”

### Physical and mental impact of working two jobs

Of course, working two or more jobs can have a detrimental impact upon employees’ health and wellbeing, leading to increased fatigue and potentially health concerns. This, reckons Chander, “may become an issue in the workplace and may be manifested by lower productivity or health and safety concerns. Given that employers are responsible for protecting the health and safety of their employees, they should raise their concerns with the employee in order to establish if they can provide any additional support.” She recommends that, where appropriate,

“an initial, informal conversation to discuss the issues should be held with the employee first, rather than plunging straight into a formal capability or conduct procedure.”

### Summary

The disruption to ‘normal’ working patterns caused by the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis has meant that second jobs have become much more common. Understandably, most employers would prefer their employees to devote all their energies to their primary job, and, indeed, could ensure this is the case by careful wording of their employees’ contracts of employment. However, where someone’s role is unlikely to be adversely affected by taking a second job, and where there is no conflict of interest, an employer should consider giving consent.



### What counts as a trivial benefit?

The main conditions for a benefit to qualify as trivial are that:

- The cost to the employer of providing the benefit has to be £50 or less per recipient;
- It can't be a reward for work done by the employee, or an incentive for future work;
- It can't be in the form of cash or cash vouchers; and
- It can't be provided as part of contractual arrangements, including salary sacrifice.

Common examples might include flowers for a birthday, team meals out to celebrate new staff joining, or chocolate treats at Easter.

### Pitfalls to watch out for

Used correctly, trivial benefits can help employers take care of their employees, and build a happier, more productive working environment.

But while the rules might appear straightforward at first, it's important to look at some of the hidden quirks, which can catch out a well-meaning employer.

### Cost

The £50 limit applies to the cost, including the VAT of providing the benefit. If the cost exceeds £50 per employee, the entire value is subject to income tax for the employee and NIC for the employer, like a normal benefit. So a £60 bottle of champagne given to an employee on their birthday would result in tax and NIC being charged on the full £60, not just the £10 excess over the trivial benefits exemption.

The value of benefits can be linked. For example, in May an employer gives an employee a £30 gift voucher for their favourite retailer, which is not exchangeable for cash. This qualifies as a trivial benefit. A month later, the employer tops up the voucher by £20, and then, in September, tops it up again by a further £15. The £20 top-up qualifies as a trivial benefit, as the cost of the voucher is still within the £50 limit. But the top-up in September will not qualify as a trivial benefit, because the total cost to the employer of providing the voucher now exceeds £50.

If a benefit is provided to a number of employees, and it isn't practical to work out the cost per employee, then the £50 cap applies to the average cost per employee instead.

Only non-cash vouchers qualify for the exemption. This can include vouchers for online or high street shops, but only if they can't be exchanged for cash in whole or in part.

“In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes”

Benjamin Franklin

### Frequency

Providing a gift to employees annually should not make it a contractual entitlement. For instance, a Christmas hamper which costs the employer £50 or less can be provided to employees every year and still qualify as a trivial benefit.

Providing gifts on a very frequent basis (e.g. a different £50 gift voucher every month) is not specifically excluded from the trivial benefits exemption. However, the exemption is intended to cover occasional gifts and gestures of goodwill. It is likely that very frequent gifts to employees could be subject to challenge by HMRC, who may argue they were a reward

for work done by the employee, or that the frequency created an expectation by the employee such that they could demand the employer kept providing the benefit.

### Reward for services

The trivial benefits exemption is not available where gifts or perks are provided as a reward for services, or to incentivise employees to work harder. A lunch for sales representatives who have reached their target will not qualify as a trivial benefit, but a lunch to celebrate the end of a busy year would.

### Employee buys a gift for a colleague

An employee asked by the employer to buy a trivial gift for a colleague – and who is reimbursed – will be liable to be taxed on the reimbursement for that gift as normal pay, even though the company or recipient won't be. This can be avoided if the employer buys the gift directly.

### Directors

A specific rule applies to directors of close companies – that is, where 50% of a company is owned either by its directors or by five or fewer shareholders.

The cost of trivial benefits that close company directors can receive from ‘their’ company is capped at £300 per tax year. This includes the value of any trivial benefits received by members of the director's household (say, partner, children, parents), unless they themselves are a director or employee of the company.

### Take-away message

Used properly, the trivial benefits exemption can help boost staff morale and build loyalty between employers and employees. However, the pitfalls require careful consideration, and employers would be well-advised to keep records of the costs of all trivial benefits provided in case HMRC raise any questions later.

## TAXATION



# Trivial benefits – no trivial matter

Benjamin Franklin famously stated: “In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” Focusing on the second of these, as a rule of thumb, tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) are payable on most types of income and benefits an employer provides to their employees. Trivial benefits – a handy tax exemption – partly disproves Franklin's statement, and may be of benefit in a workplace, writes DAVID WRIGHT, a technical officer at the Association of Taxation Technicians.

**In essence, if employers keep within the rules, the trivial benefits exemption allows them to provide small gifts and other perks to their employees without either party suffering tax or NICs.**

### What are employment benefits?

Benefits in kind are non-cash items provided to employees by their employer, and are often just referred to as benefits. Common benefits include the provision of a company car or van, private medical insurance, or living accommodation.

Employees who receive these from their employer will

generally pay income tax on the value of whatever they have received. While there is no NIC charge on the benefit for the employee, their employer will pay a special type of NIC every year on the value of taxable benefits provided to its employees.

### How are trivial benefits different?

Trivial benefits are not subject to tax or NICs for either the employee or the employer. They allow employers to provide employees with small gifts, treats and general perks without creating a tax or NIC cost for either party.



# Products

UTILITY VEHICLES

## World debut for hydrogen-powered golf car

Yamaha show off concept model



Yamaha Motor Europe N.V., Branch UK has announced that the Yamaha Golf Car Company (YGCC) has developed a hydrogen-powered engine golf car concept model, the Drive H2.

The concept model, a world first, was exhibited at the PGA Show in Florida at the end of January.

The concept model is based on Yamaha's Drive2 Concierge 4 four-seater golf

car, which is sold predominantly in the United States, but also around the world. It is equipped with two high-pressure hydrogen tanks (25L each) positioned under the driver's seat and on the back of the rear seat.

Hydrogen engines are internal combustion engines that can make use of existing technologies, and, at the same time, do not emit CO2 during the combustion process. For this reason, Yamaha say they are also conducting research and development of this technology, as it has the potential to achieve both the continued use of internal combustion engines and decarbonisation.

The Drive H2 joins other Yamaha concept models evolving with hydrogen technology, including generators, ROVs and motorcycles and marine onboard engines.

Commenting on the new concept model, Matt Taylerson, divisional manager for marketing at Yamaha, said: "Back in February 2022, Yamaha Motor president, Yoshihiro Hidaka, announced that we are working toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. We have 'Motor' in our company name, and have a strong passion for, and level of commitment to, the internal combustion engine. This is the manifestation of Yamaha's commitment to continue to develop clean internal combustion engines utilising our existing engine technology, and it also dovetails with our commitment to decarbonisation and sustainability."

DOMESTIC



## Webb release new Eco range

Cordless garden machinery

Webb has launched their new Webb Eco range of cordless garden machinery with interchangeable 20V lithium-ion technology.

The company says the range is designed for optimal performance with a "super-fast battery recharge." All tools within the range have been designed to be used with the same interchangeable 20V battery.

Featuring a range of lawnmowers, line trimmers, hedge trimmers, pruners, tillers and garden blowers, the range incorporates lithium-ion batteries, which, Webb say, hold their charge and don't degrade in storage.

COMMERCIAL



## Battery units in pole position

STIHL's most powerful cordless pruners

STIHL has launched two new professional battery pole pruners.

Part of the AP System for professional landscapers and arborists, both the HTA 150 and HTA 160 offer an output of 1.4 kW, the same as the petrol HT 135 pole pruner – and 0.3kW higher than the HTA 135. Driven by an EC motor, the manufacturer says both units are capable of cutting through large branches for efficiency in professional arboriculture and forestry applications.

While the HTA 160 boasts a rigid telescopic shaft with a maximum length of 405cm – the same reach as professional petrol models – the HTA 150 offers a shorter, fixed-length shaft best suited to thinning work in young stands.

Due to the lightweight magnesium gearbox, STIHL say both models are easy to manoeuvre into the desired position for precise cutting. The design of the sprocket cover is also optimised to promote efficient

ejection of the wood shavings for faster working, too.

Like many tools in the AP System, the HTA 150 and HTA 160 feature a metal mesh air filter, helping to cool the battery and motor during operation and enhancing the lifetime of the product.

Compatible with the Smart Connector 2 A, both models allow users to gather insights from the tool, such as working time and working speed history.

AGRICULTURAL



# Tine for a change

Krone launches a new variant of its Vendro tedder

**Krone has launched a new variant of its Vendro tedder, a 11.2m trailed addition to its grassland equipment range.**

The ten-rotor Vendro C, equipped with six tine arms per rotor, integrates the Vendro features into a trailed unit, along with several enhancements.

Craig Bryson, sales manager at Krone UK, said: "This upgrade aims to improve efficiency for working in varying field conditions."

The manufacturer says that, compared to a mounted tedder, this trailed option not only delivers high outputs, but has the added flexibility to use a lower horsepower tractor.

In line with the larger Krone KWT trailed tedders, the Vendro C is designed to lift the chassis while in work, to transfer its weight across the full 11.2m width of the machine.

"Redistributing the weight away from the transport wheels minimises soil contamination in the crop and helps maintain optimum silage quality," said Craig.

"The Vendro C also has a defined headland position, which lifts the outer rotors up and away from the ground to

avoid contact and damage when turning. The tedder runs at a high gear ratio, drawing less power from the engine to make it more fuel efficient."

The rotors are driven by the company's maintenance-free Octalink drive system, which can work through a wider angle and are always in sync, replacing the use of universal joints.

This means the machine can run while folded up, as the Octalink couplings are always engaged and have no grease nipples.

Fitted with Krone's OptiTurn tines, this new design combines the different-length inner and outer tines with a new curved profile to carry the crop more efficiently and optimise ground combing.

Craig explained: "The curved tine is a proven feature across our range of rakes, and ensures forage is turned and spread evenly, without being launched too high into the air, placing the wetter crop on top to maximise wilting."

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# Warranty woes



Our anonymous columnist, THE SPROCKET, considers that age-old problem of warranty payments to dealers from suppliers.

**I have been doing the rounds of some of the early 2024 shows. LAMMA and BTME, plus a first visit to Ripon Farm Machinery's open day and 20th anniversary at the Great Yorkshire Showground. All good stuff, and very interesting. LAMMA and BTME are well-reported in this magazine, and RFM will be covered in a subsequent edition, so I will bash on with my moans and groans for 2024.**

No biking, I'm afraid, at least not up to writing this piece. It's been very wet and very cold, and a few of our adventurous winter rides were called off. Some bikers don't like to take a bike out in the winter because of road salt. Guys, just wash it when you get home, but don't put it away dirty – and remember to put oil on the chain!

## Warranty payments

A subject that I have always had an issue with is the age-old problem of warranty payments to dealers from manufacturers and suppliers. To be clear, not all these companies are bad at being fair about warranty claims, but some are, and those that are cause an increasing problem for dealers who are struggling to recover warranty costs, which affects their overall profitability. This will affect both garden machinery and agricultural machinery dealers, but can be more of a problem for the multi-franchised dealers who have to deal with a number of warranty policies.

In my day, manufacturers and suppliers tended to work out a percentage to cover warranty and factor that into the equation when it came to compensating dealers. The old rule of thumb was 2%, but, if there was a particular product problem, this was never going to go the distance. Some manufacturers and suppliers may offer a dealer a percentage off their purchases to cover warranty, but then the onus is firmly on the dealer to sort themselves out, and not go back cap in hand for more unless the circumstances

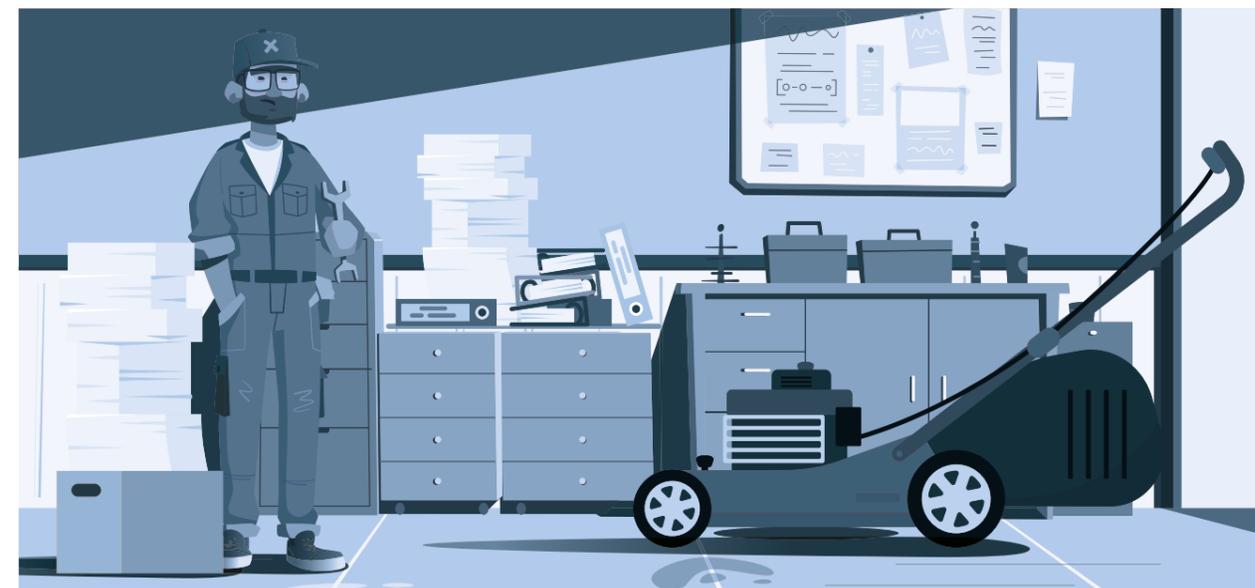
are exceptional, and the supplier or manufacturer recognises the issues.

Right, let's get down to it. Talking to dealers, and reading comments from them and the survey information in the last *Service Dealer* mag, you do not need to be a business analyst or a forensic accountant to know that anything to do with warranty within a dealership is going to cost you money. That being the case, it begs the question: do manufacturers and suppliers also have a cost to bear? Of course they do – but, then, it could be argued it is their own fault as they make the product, so they should bear any and all warranty costs and not expect a dealer to subsidise it out of their profit margins.

I have heard in the past that it is acceptable for a dealer to share the burden of the cost of warranty - but why should it be when the manufacturer or supplier controls the cost to the dealer anyway? It is also the case that many dealers will not process the minor warranty claims because of the administration time and hassle involved in submitting it, so they incur a cost that is not passed onto their suppliers. Although the general lack of fairness in the warranty system goes back to the invention of the wheel, it is far more acute today because of the issues faced by industry in recruiting and retaining technicians, and the higher costs to the dealer network in salaries and employment benefits.

In a busy dealership, it is madness to work on a warranty repair for a labour rate that could be well below a dealer's charge out rate when there is a queue of work waiting at full rates. It should not be a condition of any contract that a dealer loses money on a warranty repair from the franchises it holds. The service the dealer provides, and the skill and aftersales support that benefits the supplier or manufacturer, should be properly compensated.

There are also issues with extended warranties offered by manufacturers and suppliers that can be from two to five years, where the dealer will be offering a warranty service for



this extended period of time. If the supplier or manufacturer is not paying a fair labour rate to the dealer, the dealer's cost for the warranty support may increase over a period of time, with little chance of full compensation. This situation is exacerbated when the dealer has to provide warranty cover for machinery not sold by themselves, but where their contract requires them to provide this cover regardless of who sold it. Not only has the dealer not made any profit from the sale, but they could be losing out on fair compensation from their own supplier or manufacturer. This does not make practical or business sense for a dealer.

## What can be done?

Apart from continually moaning at suppliers and manufacturers, what can be done?

Anything that can be done will involve administration. But, with software programmes controlling workshop activity, maybe it would not be so difficult for a dealer to monitor any warranty work and correctly record the time and costs involved in that work, so that the accumulation of it can be periodically presented to the supplier when they come knocking on the door for their next order, showing them where the shortfall is? Job times are another issue and a can of worms, as they rarely reflect a fair time for an onsite repair or even, sometimes, a workshop repair.

As long as dealers are fair with their suppliers or manufacturers, there should be no reason for them to have to suffer labour rates that are significantly below their charge out rates. A word of warning, though: dealers need to be honest and fair about claims, and not ramp them up to cover warranty losses. This is a two-way street, after all, and any level of cooperation relies on trust.

What we are hearing as well is that some manufacturers and suppliers have effectively reduced their own level of dealer support by reducing staff or not having experienced people -

and this is adding to the frustration of the dealers and increasing their time in dealing with problems. Dealers tend to be self-sufficient, and are mostly capable of sorting out a problem, but they are an extension of a brand and do need support when required to protect that brand. Is this a cost-saving issue by suppliers and manufacturers, or a reflection of the difficulties in recruiting experienced staff generally?

The call needs to go out to the manufacturers and suppliers to look at a way of standardising warranty payments, a more universal guide to the administration of warranty – and a fairer, more realistic approach to what the real cost is to a dealer would be a start. Perhaps our industry associations could pick up the baton on this, and provide a platform for discussion and ideas? Suggestions to SD's editor please (*email steve@servicedealer.co.uk*).

## Question for suppliers

My question to the suppliers or manufacturers who are paying well below a dealer's retail charge out rate is: are you really saving money, or are you compromising your brand and alienating your own dealer network?

With the increase in online selling, and the unstoppable march toward battery-powered products that require less dealer involvement, dealers need to be able to maximize their unique ability to provide aftersales support where required, and should not be compromised by poor service and archaic warranty policies by their suppliers and manufacturers.

Anyway, it is late January as I write this piece, and still cold and wet, but I am off for a bit of R&R. I am going to get out on the trials bike and practice falling off in the mud, and probably hitting a few trees. My local bike dealership, Gas Gas, don't need to worry about any warranty claims for me, as the bike is way out of warranty – anything that breaks will be my fault!

# What's on?

Status of the events correct at the time of going to press, but we advise confirming with organisers' websites and social media channels.

## MARCH 2024

<b>The Scots Turf Show, Hamilton Park Racecourse</b> www.twitter.com/ScotsturfShow	<b>6</b>
<b>Low Carbon Agriculture 2024, NAEC, Stoneleigh</b> www.lowcarbonagricultureshow.co.uk	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, London</b> www.idealhomeshow.co.uk	<b>22-7/03</b>

## APRIL 2024

<b>AEA Conference 2024, One Great George Street, London</b> www.aea.uk.com	<b>9</b>
<b>Newark Garden Show, Newark Showground</b> www.newarkgardenshow.co.uk	<b>19/21</b>
<b>Harrogate Spring Flower Show</b> www.flowershow.org.uk	<b>25/28</b>
<b>East Anglian Game &amp; Country Fair, Euston Estate, Thetford</b> www.ukgamefair.co.uk	<b>27/28</b>

## MAY 2024

<b>North Somerset Show</b> www.nsas.org.uk	<b>6</b>
<b>Nottinghamshire County Show</b> www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com	<b>11</b>
<b>Balmoral Show, Belfast</b> www.balmoralshow.co.uk	<b>15/18</b>
<b>Hadleigh Show</b> www.hadleighshow.co.uk	<b>18</b>
<b>Smallholding &amp; Countryside Festival, Royal Welsh Showground</b> www.rwas.wales/smallholding-and-countryside-festival	<b>18/19</b>
<b>Chelsea Flower Show</b> www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show	<b>21/25</b>
<b>The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC</b> www.cvshow.com	<b>23/25</b>

<b>Shropshire County Agricultural Show, West Midlands Showground</b> www.shropshirecountyshow.com	<b>25</b>
<b>Northumberland County Show</b> www.northcountyshow.co.uk	<b>25</b>
<b>Suffolk County Show</b> www.suffolkshow.co.uk	<b>29/30</b>
<b>Staffordshire County Show</b> www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show	<b>29/30</b>
<b>Royal Bath &amp; West Show</b> www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show	<b>30-1/06</b>

## JUNE 2024

<b>Royal Cornwall Show</b> www.royalcornwallshow.org	<b>6-8</b>
<b>South of England Show</b> www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show	<b>7-9</b>
<b>Cereals 2024, Bygrave Woods at Newnham Farm</b> www.cerealsevent.co.uk	<b>11/12</b>
<b>BBC Gardeners' World Live - Birmingham NEC</b> www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com	<b>13/16</b>
<b>Three Counties Show, Malvern</b> www.royalthreecounties.co.uk	<b>14/16</b>
<b>spoga+gafa 2024, Cologne</b> www.spogagafa.com	<b>16/18</b>
<b>Royal Cheshire County Show</b> www.royalcheshireshow.org	<b>18/19</b>
<b>Lincolnshire Show</b> www.lincolnshireshow.co.uk	<b>19/20</b>
<b>Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh</b> www.royalhighlandshow.org	<b>20/23</b>
<b>Groundswell 2024, Lannock Manor Farm, Hertfordshire</b> www.groundswellag.com	<b>26/27</b>



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