

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

JUL / AUG 2016



FROM DIRECT SALE TO DEALER SUPPORT

How Claydon is changing its retailing

- ❖ Conference & Awards 2016
- ❖ AEA conference
- ❖ STIHL developments
- ❖ Kubota expand into Ag

- ❖ ATV roundup
- ❖ SME digest
- ❖ Business Monitor
- ❖ New products



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to
FACE**

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HUSQVARNA UK



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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the July/August 2016 issue of *Service Dealer*. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, the issue that certainly seems to be the dominant theme of this year crops up again in this edition – cordless machinery.

For this issue I've had the opportunity to speak to senior management at both Husqvarna and Stihl (in the case of Stihl the very top!) – both of whom were very keen to extoll the virtues of their latest developments in battery-powered equipment.

I was able to put to them both what we've been hearing from many of our readers lately, that there are very real concerns out there in the network about a proliferation of cordless machinery. And I received very similar answers from both.

You can read for yourselves the responses in the articles in this issue, but essentially both manufacturers were keen to stress that while cordless is a very important part of their, and indeed your, future, it certainly won't be replacing petrol. Both also held similar views that dealers will have to adapt their methods somewhat, to fully grasp the opportunities afforded by the digital age.

These guys' arguments are that if dealers can make this change, they could see brand new customers walking in through their doors. That is a similar argument to the diversification opportunities offered by companies such as our cover star Claydon, which is now looking to establish itself in independent dealerships.



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KUBOTA ANNOUNCES GREAT PLAINS ACQUISITION

Drilling & cultivation equipment manufacturer. By Martin Rickatson

The management of US drilling and cultivation equipment manufacturer Great Plains Manufacturing has entered into an agreement to sell the business to Japanese tractor, turf machinery and construction equipment giant Kubota Corporation.

Great Plains, which purchased British cultivator/drill maker Simba back in April 2010, already has a relationship with Kubota in North America as a supplier through its Land Pride arm of Kubota-branded compact tractor equipment. The purchase will include all five Great Plains divisions with multiple facilities in Kansas and the Sleaford, Lincolnshire, manufacturing plant which was acquired through Great Plains' purchase of Simba. The deal means there will essentially be three independent Kubota-owned businesses in the UK, at Kubota HQ in Thame, at Kverneland's premises at St Helens, Merseyside, and at Great Plains in Sleaford.

"Once final, this acquisition is going to lead to great advancements for both businesses without being a significant change

for our people," said Todd Stucke, Senior Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Product Support for Kubota in North America.

"We intend to respect the distinctiveness of the brands, trademarks and operational strengths. Doing so will allow employees, dealers and customers to do business with the same great companies they have come to know and trust."

Vital part of Kubota family

Roy Applequist, Great Plains' founder and Chairman will remain on the leadership team to help guide the operations and facilitate a seamless transition.

"My plan is to play a significant role in helping Great Plains become a vital part of the Kubota family," said Mr Applequist.

"Great Plains' leadership position in the agricultural implement business has been earned by striving to do our best in satisfying our customers' needs, and we're confident that teaming up with Kubota will allow us to continue to uphold this tradition."

The partnership further builds on Kubota's presence in Kansas where the company recently announced the establishment of its North American distribution centre in Edgerton, Kansas, which serves as the primary distribution hub for Kubota parts and whole goods distribution across the US and Canada.

Great Plains Manufacturing was founded in 1976 by Roy Applequist and employs over 1,400 people at eight Kansas locations and in Sleaford.

The company encompasses five divisions: Great Plains Ag, which manufactures seedbed preparation, nutrient application, and seed placement equipment; Land Pride, which manufactures grounds maintenance tools such as mowers, tillers, rotary cutters, and soil-working equipment; Great Plains International, which sells the company's products worldwide; Great Plains Trucking, which operates a US-wide fleet of flatbed trucks; and Great Plains Acceptance Corporation, which finances the company's products.



NEW HOLLAND AWARD DEALERS

Four presentations made

New Holland has celebrated the success of its network of agricultural dealers across the UK and Ireland with the presentation of four awards in recognition of excellence in performance and service quality.

The four award-winning dealers who have been selected from New Holland's network of 62 dealerships covering 131 locations throughout the UK and Ireland, are:

- Large Volume Tractor and Harvester Dealer of the Year – **Lloyd Ltd**
- Medium Tractor and Harvester Dealer of the Year – **C&O Tractors Ltd**
- Medium Tractor and Minor Harvester Dealer of the Year – **Fife Tractors**
- Tractor Dealer of the Year – **MC&S Agri Sales**

Simon Miller, Dealer Principal at Lloyd Ltd, winner of the Large Volume Tractor and Harvester Dealer category commented: "Winning this award acknowledges the entire team's hard work and commitment to offering the best service possible. It's a real reward for their dedication, expertise, and commitment. These awards are only achieved by delivering consistent, industry-best results and we're delighted that we have done that again."

C&O Tractors' Managing Director Andy Coles said: "We're delighted to have won the Dealer of the Year award. It's a fantastic achievement for us and it was made possible by the team's dedication and hard work. I'm incredibly thankful to our customers for their support over the years, which has helped us grow into a business that each and every employee is proud to be a part of."

Fife Tractors' Sales Manager Davie Ferguson said: "At Fife Tractors we aim to provide a prompt, practical service to all our customers. Having won a special recognition award in previous years, we're proud to have received this prestigious New Holland Dealer of the Year Award. It's a positive recognition of our team's hard work and we look forward to challenging ourselves to achieve even better results and continuing to offer a high-class service."

Cork-based MC&S Agri Sales' Sales Director John McCarthy said: "To be named as New Holland's Tractor Dealer of the Year is a fantastic achievement and recognises our team's commitment. The latest New Holland range has presented an opportunity to supply our clients with the highest quality machinery, which is our main objective. It's another positive step towards the constant self-improvement that allows us to offer the highest quality service to the market."



L-R: Dick Spencer & Andy Coles from C&O Tractors receive the award for Dealer of the Year from New Holland's Graham Gleed

INDUSTRY

ALLTECH ACQUIRES KEENAN

Following Irish manufacturer entering receivership

Alltech has agreed to acquire Keenan, following the Irish agricultural machinery manufacturer entering receivership earlier this year.



Keenan, which is now part of the Alltech family of companies, is the 14th acquisition for Alltech globally since 2011.

“The Keenan group has long been a friend of Alltech. This is a story about two great Irish; globally-minded companies coming together. As an Irishman, I’m delighted to welcome Keenan to our family, because together we can deliver greater value to our global farming customers with a wider variety of technological solutions,” said Dr Pearse Lyons, founder and President of Alltech. “Between Alltech’s primacy in science and Keenan’s manufacturing strength and technological know-how, we have a winning combination for delivering greater farm efficiency and profitability directly to our farming customers.”

Alltech and Keenan have identified possible growth opportunities together, which may include nutritional technologies and feeding programmes focused on feed efficiency and herd health, as well as advanced ration formulation.

DEALERS

ROBOMOW ADDS TO DEALER NETWORK

Godfreys to stock range

UK Robomow distributor, Mower Magic, has signed an agreement that will see robotic lawnmowers stocked in additional outlets in the South of England, following growing interest in the sector.

Sevenoaks-based Godfreys has become the latest to join the 85 dealerships already stocking Robomow, and will offer the machines across Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex, Berkshire and South London via its outlets in Hailsham, Sevenoaks and Wokingham.

Founded in 1933 by Sir William Godfrey, Godfreys’ three retail outlets cover over 40,000sq feet and employ 60 people.

Robomow will be the only robotic lawnmower to be stocked by the dealer.

Peter Bateman of Godfreys said, “We see robotics as a growing market in the gardening sector and our move to stock Robomow reflects this confidence in consumer interest and sales potential. You only have to look around to see how technology is

starting to move out of the home and into the garden, and in a relatively short space of time this will no longer be a novelty but an expected part of everyday life. We want to be ahead of that trend.”

John Hall, Managing Director at Mower Magic, added, “Godfreys has a reputation as one of the best dealers in the area, and we’re delighted that it will be stocking Robomow for the coming season. Awareness among consumers is growing and this will only continue as the season progresses.”



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DEALERS

LELY TURFCARE OPENS FIRST SCOTTISH SERVICE CENTRE

Part of direct route to market strategy

Toro distributor Lely Turfcare has opened its first service centre in Scotland.

This follows the agreement reached with three dealers to relinquish their contracts at the end May. The previous dealers for the location were Henderson Grass Machinery, Hamilton Bros and Thistle Groundcare Equipment.

The new centre is based in Livingston, West Lothian which the company says was chosen for its strong transport links and central location. Lely Turfcare says the new facility 'represents its commitment to local customers and provides them with the benefit of all customer support and after-sales service in one easily accessible place'.

"This is a hugely positive development for our customers, the region, and the company," said managing director David Cole. "We have spent time recruiting an experienced, nine-strong specialist team with good local knowledge of the market to oversee and manage the centre and meet the needs of our customers, existing and new."



INDUSTRY

HONDA POWER EXPANDS TEAM

New L&G ASM in the North

Honda Power Products has announced the appointment of Hannah Elliott, Areas Sales Manager, Lawn & Garden, North.

Hannah will be instrumental in developing and growing the dealer network in the North and selling-in Honda Power Products with an emphasis on Lawn & Garden.

Hannah boasts an impressive career history, with a strong background in business development. During her 14-year journey at Fiat Chrysler Group, Hannah held varying roles ranging

from Customer Relations Executive through to Technical Services After Sales Manager. Hannah then went on to join Stanley Black and Decker for a further two years where she managed business development on both a Regional and National basis.

National Sales Manager, Andrew Parr commented: "We're delighted to welcome Hannah Elliott to the Power Products team and look forward to seeing the added-value she will offer to our network of Lawn & Garden dealers."

Hannah Elliot



INDUSTRY

ROCHFORD'S ROADSHOW DATES Announced for September

Rochford Garden Machinery have finalised a tour of the UK bringing their product range to dealers across the country.

With locations in Scotland, Nottingham and Somerset Rochford Garden Machinery say they have ensured all dealers have easy access to see 2017 products from AL-KO, Mitox, Weibang and more. Dealers will also get the chance to order stock at low pre-season prices.

Stewart Anderson, Rochford Garden Machinery Managing Director, said, "2017 promises to be an exciting year with many new product launches, some new marketing initiatives planned and of course plenty of hands on time with our new products.

"The number of products in the pipeline for 2017 is very exciting, with continued developments in the works for all our exclusive brands and I am looking forward to sharing them with you in September."

The new dates for Rochford's dealer roadshow are:

- Monday 12th September – Perthshire
- Wednesday 14th September – Nottinghamshire
- Friday 16th September – Somerset

Email marketing@rochfordgm.co.uk for more information.



INDUSTRY

STIHL TREEWALK OPENS

New 300m structure at Westonbirt Arboretum

By Chris Biddle

The STIHL Treetop Walkway at the Westonbirt Arboretum has been officially opened by BBC TV *Countryfile* presenter, Ellie Harrison.

The main walkway is step-free, making it accessible to all visitors on foot, and those using mobility scooters, wheelchairs or pushchairs. It is 300 metres long and gradually rises on gentle inclines to a height of 13 metres.

Now visitors can experience stunning new views and discover more about Westonbirt's world-renowned collection of 15,000 trees from high above the ground.

There are seven interactive hotspots to give visitors the chance to get up-close with nature and learn more about the fascinating world of trees. The walkway also includes a crow's nest viewing platform, rope bridge and mesh-floored section to provide new and unrivalled views.

Robin Lennie, STIHL GB Managing Director said, "The opening of the STIHL Treetop walkway will be a

significant milestone for the company. As a company with such a rich heritage in tree management, it's important for us to support initiatives that help educate people on our wildlife. We're proud that this magnificent new structure will carry the STIHL name."



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EXHIBITIONS

SALTEX TO INCREASE THIS YEAR

Expanding floor space at NEC

Organisers of SALTEX 2016, which is being held on 2 and 3 November at the NEC, Birmingham, have revealed that the show is expanding to accommodate an increasing number of exhibitors.

The extra floor space marks a show growth of 1,120sq/m as exhibitors continue to sign up for the event. In fact, 81% of allocated space at SALTEX 2016, which includes the extra floor space,

has already been accounted for.

The extra space will not only allow for more exhibitors but also provides an extra seminar theatre to accommodate an enhanced free-to-attend LEARNING LIVE programme plus Young Groundsmen's Conference sessions, sponsored by Rigby Taylor and Top Green, which will now be held on the show floor.



APPOINTMENTS

SUMO ESTABLISH NEW TEAM

Five new appointments

Drill and cultivation equipment company, Sumo, has announced five new appointments as they grow and strengthen their UK and worldwide operations.

Robbie Polson joins the team as southern area technical sales manager. He'll be working closely with distributors, introducing new products and changes to both drills and cultivators, planning stocking and taking orders.

The next appointment sees Will Wainwright become the company's drill specialist. He'll be managing demos, talking to potential customers, attending open days and sorting out any issues customers may have.

Rob Atkins, now Mid-counties area technical sales manager, has spent the past three years with Sumo and says he is looking

forward to the opportunity to pass on the knowledge he has learnt through demonstrating the drill and cultivation equipment.

Then Christian Townend moves on from his role as the last set of eyes on the assembly line to become Northern area technical sales manager. He's covering an area from north of the Humber bridge to the tip of Northern Scotland.

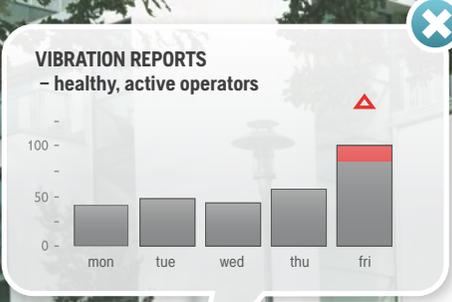
The final member of the new team is well-known across the industry. Karen Wealleans has worked at Sumo for around 15 years, the company was started by her husband Shaun. She takes on the role of sales coordinator, providing central, office-based support for the sales team, for order taking and liaises with production to make sure order

dates are achieved.

"This gives us a very strong and stable team," says managing director Simon Herring. "The business is going from strength to strength, and we've some exciting new developments in the pipeline."



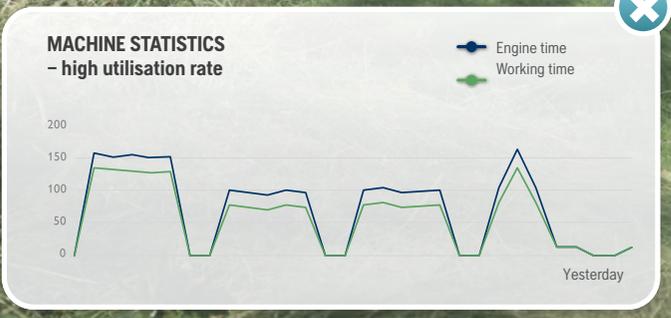
Karen Wealleans



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DEALER PANELLISTS ANNOUNCED

Sharing their experiences and knowledge



The first dealer panellists for this year's *Service Dealer Conference*, which is entitled *The Customer Is King* and takes place at the Oxford Belfry Hotel on Thursday 17th November, have been announced.

Hailing from all corners of the UK and from dealerships large and small, the dealer panellists will take part in debates and in the three Breakout Sessions which will be offered on the day (these will be on Social Media, Websites & Technology and Traditional Marketing Methods.)

Lewis Anderson – Rochfords Garden Machinery

Since 2008 Lewis has worked for Rochford Garden Machinery during holidays, weekends and evenings while finishing his education and attending university. He has now graduated from the University of Strathclyde with a degree in Finance and Economics.

Soon after graduation he joined Rochford Garden Machinery formally as the New Business Development Manager focusing on identifying opportunities in new markets and products for the business.

James Hayes – Hayes Garden Machinery

James Hayes is owner of Hayes Garden Machinery and UK Garden Power & Backsaver barrows.

He won Garden Machinery Dealer of the Year in 2015 and more recently North Devon's Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

Tim Lane – T H WHITE

Tim joined T H WHITE in 1999 as a graduate trainee and worked across various departments. His roles within the company include Sales, Spares,

Branch Manager, Divisional Manager, and more recently Divisional Director.

He is also the Divisional Director for the Machinery Imports business.

Bryan Hynds – Bryan Hynds Garden Machinery

Established in 1994, Bryan Hynds Garden Machinery Ltd stands in its original location on the Dobbin road, Portadown, Co Armagh.

It holds a number of franchises for front-line brand names for garden machinery and its new showroom, just completed this year, holds 35 ride-on tractors and up to 40 walk-behind mowers. Currently the company's Facebook page has over 4,000 followers, and it regularly runs competitions which Bryan says always prove to be a great success.

David Ayres – Arun Mowers

David says he has grown up in the shed helping his father build up the business. He left a couple of times to pursue other avenues including an engineering degree and qualifying as an accountant. Although now he is the Sales Manager, he often makes use of his box of spanners.

David has been back for the past four years and introduced more dealerships to grow sales, however the main focus is still on servicing.

Joanne Balmer-Smith – Balmers GM Ltd

Joanne's day-to-day role within the company is taking care of online and print marketing and merchandising for the company's showrooms.

In addition, she was heavily involved in the recent design and construction of Balmers' new depot and showroom in Burnley and the opening of a second outlet in Wakefield.

Robert Gusthart – Gustharts

Robert Gusthart has been in the chainsaw and lawnmower sales service and repair business since 1969 when he started work with his father working for the company H Irwin & Sons Ltd.

Gustharts has been trading in partnership for 30 years and Robert, together with his sister Julia, his brother-in-law Michael and their son Phillip are very much a family firm. The business has grown considerably in the past few years necessitating a move into much larger premises at the Milkhope Centre at Blagdon.

Emyr Jenkins – Jenkins Garden Machinery

Emyr is Managing Director of Jenkins Garden Machinery and software company Excalibur, which specialises in software designed to manage repair workflow and EPOS for the garden machinery industry. He has worked within the industry since he was 16.

He graduated from the University of Glamorgan in 2006 with a first class degree in marketing.

Ben Turner – Ben Burgess & Co

Ben Turner is Managing Director of Ben Burgess & Co, one of the UK's largest agricultural, construction and grounds care equipment retailers. Ben joined the family business in 1977 and says he strives to lead a business that develops and sustains strong, stable and profitable partnerships by providing outstanding innovative services and products.

As a supporter of education in agriculture, Ben focuses on investing in apprentices and is keen to provide opportunities to inspire the next generation.

YOU & YOUR TEAM'S CHANCE TO SHINE

Make sure you're in the running for Dealer of the Year and nominate your stars!



Don't forget that nominations are still open for our prestigious Dealer of the Year Awards – and this year dealers are able to enter themselves in the competition. We are looking for excellence across the Garden, Professional Turfcare, Farm Machinery, Forestry Equipment, and ATV/Quad sectors.

And this year we are also adding two new awards to the ceremony which takes place after the Conference on November 17th. We want you to tell us who really goes that extra mile to help make your business a success.

We are now taking your nominations, via our website, for:

2016 STAR OF THE DEALERSHIP AWARD

Dealers will be asked to nominate a member of staff from the sales, parts, service or support team who have demonstrated exceptional skills, commitment to customer service or any other compelling reason during the 2016 season - and who are deserving of industry recognition.

SPONSOR FOCUS

Gardencare success branches over to Great Britain

Over the past 11 years Gardencare has become the leading garden machinery brand for independent dealers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Over the past year, the company has brought that same successful formula to Great Britain. Gardencare believes that the key to its success is focused around building relationships and putting a strong emphasis on delivering quality service to its dealers.

“The dealer network has been and always will be the heart of the Gardencare brand,” said Mark Mallon, Head of Sales.

“Our main focus for the first year of the launch was to establish a presence within the GB market. I feel that we have done that by offering dealers a best-in-class service, generous margins and market-leading five-year warranties on lawnmowers and handheld products. As the years progress we plan to bring the same level of marketing support that we offered across Ireland and Northern Ireland to the dealers in GB. That will be done both online and offline, driving traffic back to their websites through online promotions as well getting feet through the door with traditional media, such as print, TV and radio.”

The Gardencare network is still growing and it welcomes any dealers who may be interested to get in touch on info@gardencaredirect.com or via cyriljohnstontrade.co.uk.

2016 APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Similarly, we wish to recognise an Apprentice who, during the 2016 season has demonstrated the desire, willingness and ability to progress within the dealership and the industry.

You can nominate deserving candidates for these awards on our website now. Please visit www.servicedealer.co.uk and head to the 2016 Conference and Awards section.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

This year the finalists for the Dealer of the Year awards will be assessed via feedback from your customers. If nominated, we will send you a link which you could email to your customers which will take them to a page on our website where they can submit comments in favour of your dealership. We will also provide you with a logo you can add to your own website and a Word document you can print off and hand out at your premises.

We are gathering this feedback from now up until 30 September 2016.



AEA CONFERENCE 2016

A YEAR OF MIXED FORTUNES

The AEA's Annual Conference took place once again this year in the magnificent surroundings of the Institute Of Civil Engineers at One Great George Street in Central London.

This was back before the EU Referendum took place so that thorny issue was a common theme that kept cropping up throughout each speaker's presentations.

But beyond that, there was plenty of fascinating food for thought for the attending members to consider.

Ruth Bailey

First up to welcome the delegates was AEA Director General Ruth Bailey who spoke of the Association's successful year.

"We have invested in our people, in our assets and have maintained control of our expenditure and finances," she said.

However, she was unfortunately unable to paint quite as positive a picture for the industry in general.

She explained, "It has been a year of mixed fortunes for our sectors. The Outdoor Power Equipment sector has been fortunate enough to see a steady growth of about 1%. This is perhaps not at the heady levels of 2014 when we were looking at around 11% – but this small increase is leaving members of this area feeling somewhat positive for the future.

"For the Agricultural Equipment markets however," she continued, "the picture is slightly different. For

2015 we are seeing a significant downturn of about 15% in most product groups. Even more telling is that farming conditions are looking to remain difficult across all sectors for the immediate future. And unfortunately there's not much give in that forecast."

She said it was in situations such as these that the AEA could be of real value to its members. "We can offer information, direction and representation," she promised.

Interestingly, Ruth went on to talk about the value of shows and exhibitions, saying the AEA questioned their prevalence.

"There is now an abundance of high-cost, hard to quantify events that struggle to be cost-effective or develop a strong enough footfall," she said. "There are new shows cropping up all the time and at some point the industry has to take a long hard look at where it's going and how the rationale of these shows can benefit us all. They are a necessary part of what we do but we need to look at how we approach them."

She also said the industry needs to embrace the digital age, citing the launch of the Outdoor Power Equipment Directory as an electronic app in a joint initiative with BAGMA as a good example of this. She said, "It's available on tablet and smartphone and we believe that everyone who uses the Directory from the AEA, or the BAGMA Price Guide, should be signing up."

There were some interesting words on LE-TEC and



The AEA Conference once again took place in the magnificent surroundings of The Institute of Civil Engineers

apprenticeships which you can find covered in the *Training & Education* pages of this issue and it was said the main focus of 2016-17 should be the “making good” of investments and schemes which have been put into place over the past couple of years.

Ruth concluded saying, “With all the issues that are forthcoming we want to continually strengthen the organisation, enhance our services to our members, while at the same time our focus and our goals remain the same: to add value to our sector and add value to our members.”

The Guest Speakers

First guest speaker up was expert in forecasting and innovation, **Professor James Woudhuysen**. His engaging presentation set out to remind the delegates present of the “romance of agricultural equipment”. He urged the manufacturers present not to be afraid to incorporate a sense of romance and pride back into their equipment design – this he stressed was very important for engagement with the public.

He then offered several controversial, forward looking views saying there was a “culture of fear surrounding innovation”. He dismissed claims that we are running out of oil, gas, metal and water and said, “More innovation is required in



Broadcaster and former government minister, Michael Portillo, gave a fascinating and amusing after lunch speech

recycling on an industrial scale. This is far more important than guilt-tripping homeowners.”

Also his views on websites were interesting, pointing out that a modern site needs to be mobile-friendly first and foremost, offering the user a one-click ability to call your business.

Next up was **Dr Séan Rickard**, an independent economic analyst who was presenting on Agricultural Engineering – Looking at the Long Term. He seemed to

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have several ideas that clashed with the first speaker, specifically about the finite resources that industry needs to utilise in the most economic way possible.

He said, “We are going to need to produce 60-70% more food for the world during the next 30 years, with the new demand coming from the emerging economies. To solve these attendant problems the industry is going to have to use a method of ‘sustained intensification.’” This involved a close relationship between productivity and investment. He said that larger scales farms would be needed, in order to create larger profits, in order to continue to increase investment.

Finally farmer **Guy Smith**, the current NFU Vice President gave an entertaining speech, which among other things highlighted the importance of encouraging an interest in farming among the younger population. He cited how the proliferation of technology in the industry is something we should be proudly letting the wider public be aware of.

He said, “In 10 years’ time tractor drivers will become tractor programmers – and this isn’t something to be frightened of.”

He was enthusiastic about farming’s future though, with the next generation. He said the public have a natural interest in how farming works, pointing out the large crowds that turn out every year to enjoy the machinery on display at his local country show and the 4,000 school children who attend an open day on careers in agriculture each year at Writtle College. “You wouldn’t get those sort of numbers turning up if the local firm of accountants was putting an event on,” he joked.

New President

Briggs & Stratton’s Head of Sales and Marketing, Ian Small, became President of the AEA at the conference.

Ian took over from Opico’s James Woolway who had held the position for the past year.

In his inaugural speech as President, Ian, who has worked for Briggs & Stratton for 27 years,



said, “To quote a current phrase from politicians, ‘we’re all in this together’. So what can the AEA do to help the industry face all it’s current issues?”

“To my mind the single most precious quality for our continued prosperity is knowledge. This must be at the forefront of our thinking at all times. We must ensure we are providing the best training for our people in all forms.

“The AEA Training for Business Programme was developed in 2015 as a result of industry requests for the AEA to provide industry specific training – particularly appropriate for smaller companies without access to extensive resources. We are now entering our second season – for key personnel from manufacturer, distributor and dealer staff. This offering ranges from apprentices to chief executives.

“This year has been difficult and we’ve all had to tighten our belts, looking closely at our budgets. But we can’t compromise on training, so I encourage you all to support the AEA Training for Business initiative. It’s a not-for-profit AEA service and always industry specific.”

Ian went on to say, “If knowledge is the key to our success, then clear, effective communication is an essential tool for this best practice.

Communication internally, between the AEA and its members and with the industry as a whole; but also communication externally, to get our voices heard by the people in authority, with the media, with farmers and consumers.”

Ian concluded his speech saying, “If I can leave just one legacy from my presidential year, it is that we have a continued, uninterrupted communication line between the membership and the executive – so that the association can be fully representative of your views.

“The AEA must always remain relevant, valuable and viable – so please share your ideas, wishes and wants with us.” ●

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

DEALERS ARE INTEGRAL TO ALL THAT STIHL DOES – HOWEVER, THE COMPANY BELIEVES THE NETWORK NEEDS TO MOVE WITH THE TIMES AND EMBRACE THE POTENTIAL OF CORDLESS. STEVE GIBBS REPORTS

“The business environment is changing. It changed all the time in the last 90 years and I think it will keep doing so in the future as well.”

Those were the words of the head of the company which still bares his grandfather’s name. However, as well as the strong family ties at the heart of the company, Dr Nikolas Stihl, chairman of the STIHL Group’s advisory and supervisory boards, believes there’s a constant which will never change – and that’s the company’s utter faith in the value of a specialist dealer network.

On a recent visit to the company’s facilities in Wil, Switzerland and Waiblingen, Germany in celebration of the company’s 90th year, the integral nature of the worldwide dealer network to all that STIHL does, came up time after time. The company clearly wants the family ties which run through its corporate structure to extend out through its retailers and on to the end users.

New range

The visits to the chain and saw production factories, which also included a rare glimpse into the high-tech Research and Development facility in Waiblingen, were designed to both give a flavour of STIHL’s on-going

ethos, and more specifically to launch a new range of cordless machinery.

That C-word again! But refreshingly, although the company believes there is ample mileage to be had from cordless machinery, it freely admits that it’s never going to reach the levels of its petrol offerings. It sees it as an additional opportunity for dealers, not something that is going to replace traditional engines.

This summer the company is launching a range that it is calling the Compact Cordless System, which comprises four lithium-ion battery tools. The range includes a cordless chainsaw, hedge trimmer, grass trimmer and a leaf blower.

Each machine is available as a set with a charger and one of two new batteries, each of which has a different energy capacity. As the batteries are compatible with all machines in the system, with one swap of the battery, various different gardening tasks can be undertaken.

Wolfgang Zahn, Executive Board Member Research and Development, at STIHL AG, talked about the new product line.

He explained why STIHL believes cordless machinery is gaining in popularity: “Cordless technology has numerous user benefits. Compared with corded machines, cordless power tools provide significantly more freedom of movement and enable users to work in places where there is no power supply – as is the case in many gardens. Naturally, the same applies in the professional sector too.

“In view of these and other advantages, cordless technology has gained respect within a relatively short time and the market potential is correspondingly high.”

Asked where he sees cordless machinery going, Wolfgang Zahn said, “We believe it will continue to gain traction across all product segments and for all target user groups – from professional to casual gardeners.

“We will continue to develop our range of cordless power tools both for professional applications and for private users.”

The customer decides

STIHL’s belief in cordless machinery is readily apparent. And in visiting the production facilities and being allowed a quick peak into the Research and Development building in Waiblingen, it’s clear that it is taking the quality of its offerings very seriously.

But as *Service Dealer* found from the results of our



COMPACT CORDLESS SYSTEM



MSA 120 C-BQ cordless chainsaw

Weights 2.6 kg without the battery and is suitable for cutting small to medium sized branches

survey which we published in our previous issue, there are still some real concerns out there among dealers about the rising proliferation of battery equipment.

As such, when the visiting group was able to put some questions to the man at the top, Dr Stihl, I took the opportunity to ask him what he would say to the traditional servicing dealer, who with the influx of all this new machinery, may be nervous of the impact it will have on their service departments?

Dr Stihl gave a very open and considered answer, saying: “First of all, it may sound mean, but they will simply have to deal with it because at the end of the day the customer decides what they want to buy.

“What we can do is offer products covering the whole range – from consumer to professional – and we sell these products dealer-exclusive. This part of the business will not change.

“On the one hand, since cordless products are a little less in need of service, their service levels will probably change a little bit. However, on the other hand, over the course of the next 10-15 years we do not expect the level of our petrol products in dealerships to go down very much.

“There are customers who still really want to have petrol-powered products; and indeed, there are areas still where you will not be able to generate enough

power without using fuel.

“So in my opinion, it’s really an additional business. It will, if done right, bring additional customers into their shops. They may have to change their appearance a little bit, but we are in the process of doing that anyway.

“The business environment is changing. It’s changed a lot in the past 90 years and I think it will keep doing so in the future as well.”

Adapting for the digital age

But will STIHL’s attitude to retail change? With more products aimed at the domestic gardener, is there a temptation for the manufacturer to take a more mainstream route to market?

“Not at all,” said Dr Stihl. “First of all,” he confirmed, “let me say we will not go to the sheds.

“However, I would say some of our dealers will need to adopt the business tactics of the digital age. Though we will not ourselves be selling over the internet, we do enable our dealers to sell online. We want our dealers to pick up new customers over the internet, who will then visit their stores to collect the product.

“Moving forward, we will need to find new ways to gear customers towards our dealer’s bricks and mortar stores and the internet is invaluable to this.

BGA 56 cordless blower

Lightweight, powerful blower clears leaves and cuttings, significantly quieter than petrol-powered models





HSA 56 cordless hedge trimmer

Light and well-balanced for trimming smaller hedges and shrubs

“It’s our firm conviction that there’s a good place in our future for the servicing dealer. But of course, some of the ways the dealers do business will have to change over time.”

While Dr Stihl didn’t go as far as to say that no STIHL products whatsoever could ever be ordered online and delivered directly to an end-user’s home, he did say that this would never be the case for ‘dangerous’ items.

“We feel that products such as chainsaws will always have to be picked up at the dealership,” he said. “We will always require the dealer to demonstrate to the

consumer how to operate a dangerous product such as this.”

He explained how the company had recently had to undergo lengthy discussions with the German authorities about this subject. For healthy competition purposes, the powers that be had tried to force the company to fully commit to internet sales. STIHL, however, has managed to protect itself by the compromise of the ‘click and collect’ style of purchase.

“We have to provide our end user the experience of being able to research their purchase online before they buy it,” Dr Stihl said. “On the other hand, we try to do everything we can to actually bring the end user and our dealers together. Because as soon as we have established a connection, the probability that this user will come back, for consumables or to buy another product directly from the dealer, goes up a great deal.

“We still feel that a big part of business is still personal. If we can craft a journey for the consumer that ends at the dealer’s place and is a pleasant experience, we’ll have a new loyal customer for that dealer – which is what it’s all about for us.”

Looking beyond this summer, STIHL says it will eventually end up with four levels of battery-powered products. From top-end professional tools, through semi-pro machines also used by enthusiastic gardeners, to this new domestic Compact Cordless System, and coming soon a lower cost range for those with smaller gardens. This tier of machinery will not utilise universal batteries.

The first of this level of product went on sale last year – small cordless shrub shears called the HSA 25 – and Dr Stihl confirmed that its sales out-performed the company’s expectations three-fold. “At this price range of around £120,” he said, “we feel there’s a big market out there.”

How big? Well certainly never on the levels of the company’s petrol machines. The United States market alone will make sure that these units are not going anywhere any time soon.

But pushed on a figure for what cordless could represent for STIHL’s business?

“In 10 years,” said Dr Nikolas Stihl, “I would envisage 20%.” ●

FSA 56 cordless grass trimmer

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BIG PLANS FOR EXPANDING INTO AG

Buying implement maker Kverneland, opening an agricultural tractor factory in France, entering the 130-175hp tractor sector – Kubota’s intention to become a major farm equipment force is obvious. But what is it looking for from existing and potential dealers? Martin Rickatson talked to Rob Edwards, Kubota UK Agricultural Business Development Manager

Think Kubota, think compact tractors. Established in 1890 in Osaka, the Japanese firm began as a manufacturer of cast-iron water pipes, but by the time it established a UK base in 1979, it was well-known around the world for its compact tractors, and almost singlehandedly introduced here the concept of compact design

for machines under 30hp. In doing so, it helped create a number of new markets for dealers to sell into – turfcare, market gardens, glasshouse produce growers, smallholdings and, when paired with a backhoe and loader, even builders.

Over the next three decades or so, the firm seemed happy to

remain focused on this sector, and indeed, came to dominate it. While it moved beyond ‘sit-on’ compacts to add ‘sit-in’ cabbed machines of 45-130hp to its range, in the form of its M and ME series, this really only reflected the desire for more power among its amenity-dominated customer base, while adding a few small farm buyers to its clientele.

But with the opening of its new Dunkirk factory in northern France, and the development of the 130-170hp M7001 series now manufactured there, the firm now has a product offering designed to cater not just for livestock farms and smaller arable units, but for larger arable and mixed farming and contracting businesses looking for mid-range machines to take on a multitude of tasks. At the same time, it has developed its turf offering to offer a complete line of ride-on and walk-behind mowers, earned a solid place in the compact excavator market, and has a strong-selling RTV utility vehicle range.



Kubota’s entry into the 130-170hp sector indicates its intention to become a serious player in the agricultural tractor market.

While it may not yet be a 'full-liner' in the sense of the term used to describe other tractor makers with 40-400hp ranges, combines and other farm machinery, its line is growing. Development of six-cylinder tractors looks likely, while its 2012 purchase of Norwegian livestock and arable implement giant Kverneland has brought almost every key farm machine bar a combine within Kubota's reach – although there is no suggestion yet of full rebranding in the UK, or pairing of Kubota and Kverneland franchises. Add to this the recent acquisition of US firm Great Plains, with its line of cultivators and drills, and Kubota's ag business is growing rapidly.

The firm is in the midst of a concerted campaign to recruit new dealers to develop agricultural sales and add to the current Kubota network, and to this end the UK business has made a number of appointments at its Thame HQ. Key among them on the dealer

front, with 30 years' experience in the trade, is Rob Edwards, formerly of Same Deutz-Fahr and prior to that, incidentally, Kverneland. His role as Business Development Manager for agriculture includes dealer appointments, and *Service Dealer* was able to put to him a few questions about how the Kubota agricultural dealer network is shaping up and what the firm is looking for from its dealers.

What are you seeking in terms of qualities and traits in a business when looking to appoint a Kubota agricultural dealer?

There are, of course, some essential criteria, such as financial security and evidence of succession planning which will ensure the business's continuity. Beyond that, though, much of what we are looking for is qualities which reflect our own key focuses. That means we want to see drive and ambition, and a clear indication of

commitment to our franchise and products.

Are you happy for dealers to dual-franchise and sell Kubota agricultural tractors alongside an agricultural offering from another maker?

Today we do share some of our network, so I can't say that we demand complete exclusivity. But if we look to the future and our path for achieving the vision set out for Kubota Agriculture, then it has to come. With our plans for further extensions to the product range, exclusivity and commitment from the dealer will, of course, become more and more important.

What help will Kubota give to new dealers to aid them in promoting, selling and supporting a make that, until recently, has been an unknown name in high-hp agricultural tractors?

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importantly help the dealers to market and sell the products. Our new dedicated marketing division will work closely with the dealers to support them, but will also work with our end users, ensuring we continue with our 'customer first' philosophy.



Rob Edwards: Kubota has no intention of copying other manufacturers' business models, and is happy to work with small, single-branch dealer businesses.

Are there any plans to offer dealers the Kverneland product lines – or Kubota-branded versions – alongside the agricultural tractor range?

Our Kverneland and Vicon product lines are distributed through different dealer networks in the majority of cases in the UK, and this will continue – there's no need for us to change it. But we have a great range of implements to offer, and they'll eventually be part of our product offering to a committed agricultural Kubota dealer network. I suggest you watch this space...

How long might it be before six-cylinder tractors are in the Kubota product offering?

As you know, we currently don't have a six-cylinder engine in our range. That means this is a question which can only be answered when this important strategic decision is made by the Kubota senior management.

Will new dealers also have available to them the construction and homeowner equipment lines where there is no clash with an existing dealer?

It's certainly a possibility where the network and dealer skills allow. We know that Kubota as a full line supplier will help both the dealers and our Kubota business.

Are you happy to work with smaller, single-branch operations, given that the major tractor manufacturers appear to be moving away from these?

Yes, we are – some of our most successful dealers are single branch businesses. We have our own vision of what we believe is an ideal dealer set-up and profitable business case, and we will follow that direction. This means that we will not copy other manufacturers'

With the opening of its new French factory, and the development of the 130-170hp M7001 series made there, Kubota now has products suiting a wide range of farm businesses



business models, but will look into the best option in each area, with consideration, of course, to our existing partners, promoting their growth first. Wherever there is not a current dealer solution, we will find new partners. Kubota wants to grow and we believe our dealers will grow with us.

Are dealers expected to carry significant stocks of new tractors? Is there a particular policy on sale or return of these after a certain period?

There's an old adage that people do not buy from an empty shelf, and that still holds true today. Strong dealer financial performance is one of our priorities. This comes from strong sales, and so adequate stock is essential. We support dealers

by providing processes to manage their stock, but forecasting, order planning and tactical campaigns are also essential in achieving their sales goals.

What might encourage a farmer to buy a Kubota over any other tractor?

In addition to the key values that Kubota products provide – reliability, affordability and good residual values – there are three essential factors for farmers to consider. They need to be sure their investment is with a safe and long-term supplier, that they will receive support that exceeds their expectations, and that, in light of today's extremely small margins, the product is able to provide excellent value for money.

What are the biggest challenges you see in establishing Kubota as a significant player in the UK ag tractor market? And the biggest opportunities?

We have identified three essential pillars that underpin our success across all of Europe. These are branding, product and, of course, our dealers. They can also be seen as our challenges and the UK is no different. We have to invest and work hard to improve these key areas. In some we're stronger, in some we're weaker, but for certain we have to strengthen all of them. And our biggest opportunity, given the adequate but relatively small market share that we have today, is undoubtedly the rest of the market that we do not have...yet! ●



KEN BREWSTER

Husqvarna UK Sales & Marketing Director

Ken Brewster has held the role of Sales & Marketing Director at Husqvarna UK since February 2015. With 30 years experience, he has held similar roles at companies such as Black & Decker, Adidas, Barbour and Pure Fishing. Editor Steve Gibbs spoke to him about technological developments, innovative marketing and the dealers of the future

SERVICE DEALER: What can you tell me about Fleet Services?

KEN BREWSTER: We're just launching Fleet Services at the moment. It's been in development for about four years. Essentially it's a combination of hardware and software. It's a package that provides a programme for professional users who are running fleets of machines. Its aim is to provide them with technology to monitor the usage of those machines and their fleet, in order to make gains in efficiency out of both individual machines and operators.

What the system does is give fleet managers factual information about their machines and the way they're being used – as opposed to anecdotal information. It works via a sensor that is attached to each individual machine as well as a tag which the operator wears, linked to the machine they're operating. When they get back to base the sensor and the tag download to a 'mother-station', where all that information is compiled by the computer system. This gives the user some hard, factual data to analyse on areas such as run time, idle time, operating revs, vibration exposure etc.

SD: What role are the dealers playing in this?

KB: We're selling the concept into the dealers so they can then sell it on to their customers. We showed the system at Saltex last year where we received a huge amount of interest from dealers and end-users.

The dealers will attach the sensor to the machine and supply the docking station. We also sell the tags the operators use through the dealers. Then there are two variations of software that can be bought into on a monthly subscription basis, dependent on the amount of information they want back.

SD: Moving on to other new technology, the Automower Challenge – how is that going?

KB: It's going really well. We had a very strong response to our request for volunteers. We had about 11,000 applicants, from which we selected 100 to be our sample. Selection was based on a few different criteria, but principally it was dependent on the applicant's familiarity with social media. We require our chosen 100 to post on their experiences with the Automower across all their social media channels. We also have our own Automower Challenge website where our testers are contracted to post a minimum of eight videos. And as long as they keep to their side of the bargain that

Battery grass trimmer



Automower in action



they've signed up to, at the end of August they'll be able to keep their Automower forever.

With the 100 testers we've achieved a really good geographical spread across the UK and Ireland, linking each with their local dealer. We provide the Automower free of charge and the dealer does the recce visit plus installation free of charge. We've got around 80 different dealers involved to look after the 100 different testers. Some of those are familiar with robotics, having installed Automowers before, but others are deliberately new to the technology, as we want to get more dealers to recognise the opportunities that are afforded by robotics.

SD: What do you hope to achieve from the endeavour overall? Is it quantifiable?

KB: It's difficult to specifically quantify it – it is indeed more of an awareness of robotic mowing we wish to promote. We did this exercise in France last year, which was tremendously successful. We're now doing it in the UK as well as five other countries in Europe. It's a very large undertaking for us but what we should end up with is 100 evangelists in each territory, spreading the word both on our behalf and on behalf of their local dealer.

One positive aspect for dealers that cropped up in France was that the testers there started to post videos of the dealers turning up in their gardens to do the recce and to undertake the installation. So in our advice pack to the UK dealers taking part we've said make sure you turn up with a branded van and overalls so that as you're being filmed your business is getting publicity as well as the Automower.

SD: Why in general hasn't robotic mowing taken off in the UK as it has in Europe?

KB: It is indeed hugely popular and growing all the time in Europe. It's scary the number of Automowers we sell in certain markets. I think perhaps here we're a little bit different to the European markets – but not fundamentally so. Our gardens may be a little smaller on average, we may want stripes on the lawn, but I see no practical reason why the UK shouldn't start to adopt robotic mowers to a similar level that we've seen in France, Germany, Holland, Sweden and so on. For example, one in five mowers sold now in Sweden is a robot. Switzerland is the most extreme example with 50% of mowers sold being robotic!

I think perceptions of it are shifting in the UK. I think the biggest reason the UK lags behind though is lack of marketing investment. Most consumers are simply unaware that robot mowers even exist. Once they do become aware, mostly they're really interested and seriously think about them.

SD: That idea of awareness, is that similar with growing the popularity of cordless machinery?

KB: Yes, certainly. We've introduced our first battery lawnmower for the 2016 season and that's been very well received by those who've had a chance to use and see it in action.

We have a very large line-up of battery-powered machines in the Husqvarna range – the majority of those are professional machines, though we're starting now to add in more consumer options.

What we've found in other European countries is that



the uptake on battery lawn and garden products tends to be led by the professional. The consumer is often heavily influenced by what they see the pros using.

SD: Is the development in cordless technology going to change the outdoor power equipment industry?

KB: I think it will fundamentally change the industry – whether it will ever dominate petrol, I don't know about that. But it's certainly not a passing fad; it's a big part of our future.

SD: What would you say to dealers who are nervous about the impact that battery machines will have on their service departments?

KB: I do understand dealers' nervousness because the nature of the service work will be different. I also think that some dealers may just be nervous because it's different from the normal petrol, mechanical engine they're used to working on. But you can generate service income out of battery. And I do believe that dealers know that battery is coming and it will be an important part of what they do in the future.

In the shorter term it can represent incremental business over and above petrol. A lot of battery machinery is being bought in addition to petrol machines, particularly with the professional users.

I also believe that a lot of battery sales will come from the younger generation of purchasers. So I think there's a challenge there for the dealer to attract a newer customer through their doors.

SD: And Husqvarna is committed to the independent dealer network for these new technologies?

KB: Absolutely, we're 100% committed. We don't supply product into the UK market through any other channel and we have no plans whatsoever to change that. We're investing in both product and business training for our dealer network. We're very comfortable to continue as we are.

SD: To finish, what do you consider the biggest challenges you face going forward and are you optimistic?

KB: Hugely optimistic. There's a lot of very strong leadership in the company right from the very top. I've worked in a few companies and I can honestly say I've never come across a clarity of vision that I have in Husqvarna.

In terms of challenges, we have a 'quality first' initiative running through the company, which applies to both our products but also to our business operations as well. So we're striving to improve our quality in every corner of what we do.

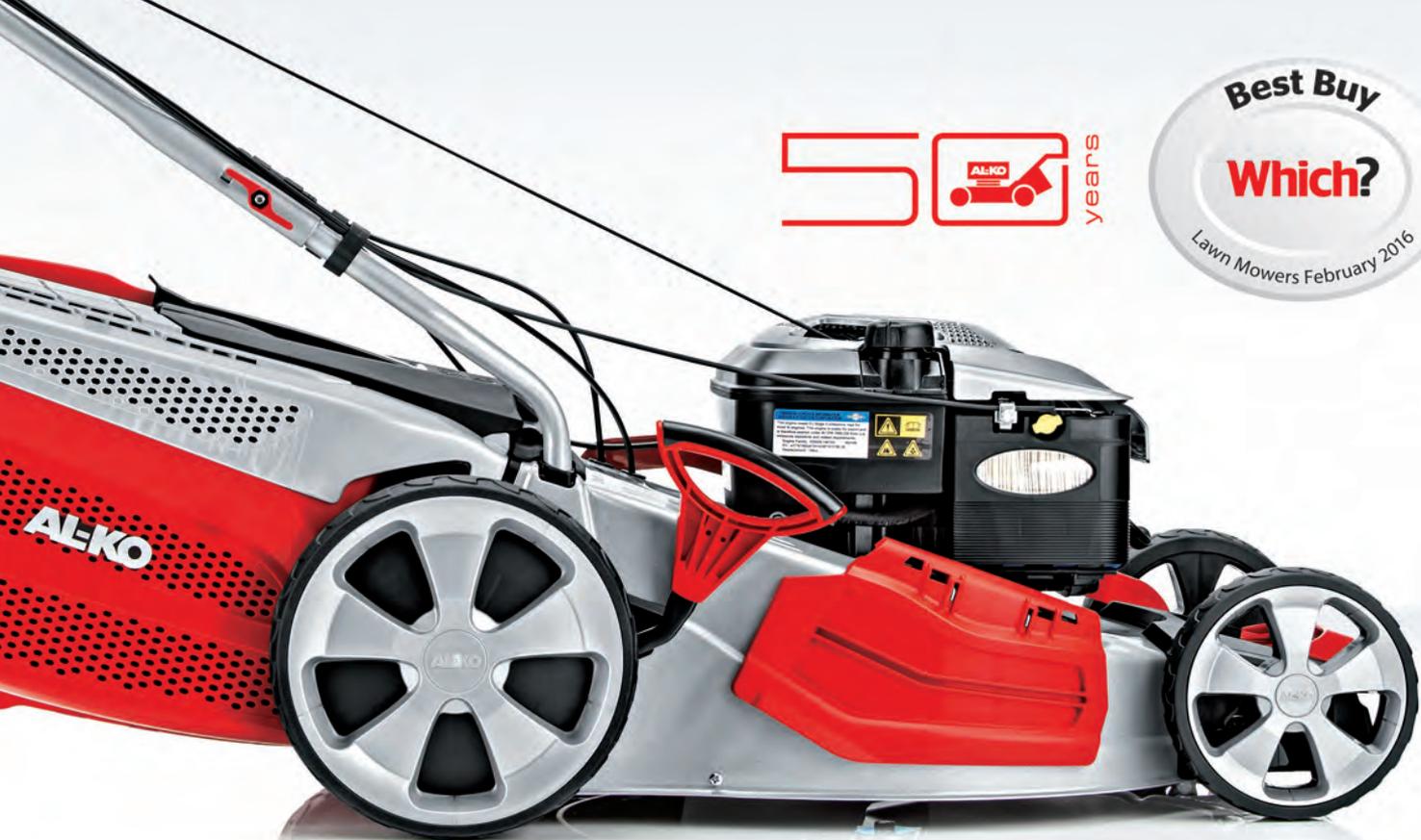
If you look at what Husqvarna sells, we have perhaps under performed in the professional segment – our market share is smaller than we believe it should be.

So that's a challenge for us, but it's also a huge opportunity.

If you look at some of the mega-trends, urbanisation and an aging population for example, these support the shift to battery products that we are very encouraged by.

And in terms of our future tech we have our Ramus, augmented reality hedgetrimmer coming soon, which we're very excited about.

SD: Thank you.



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ON THE WHOLE DEALER BUSINESS IS STILL ON THE UP

But increasing numbers are seeing a downturn

Once again there appears to have been a strong start to the season, with the majority of dealer respondents to our Mid-Season Survey 2016, saying that their Overall Business is up on 2015.

In total, 47% of respondents described their dealerships this year as being Up or Well Up on last. However, a concern would be the 28% who said they were looking at a downturn so far in 2016 – this compares with just 7% who said the same at this time last year.

Machine sales are doing well it seems, with 42% saying they are either Up or Well Up. Again, this has to be balanced though, against the 35% who said whole good sales are Down or Well Down on last year.

Parts sales seem to be doing okay with 38% saying they are the same so far in 2016 compared to 2015. 33%

though are saying they are down – which is a huge leap from last year when only 3% said parts sales were down.

A similar trend is seen in Service sales where the majority said they stayed the same (33%) but a much increased percentage on 2015 said they were down (25% compared with 3%).

Staffing levels in the most part have stayed the same (69%) but a significant number fewer than last year said they had actually increased staffing levels (12% compared with 32%).

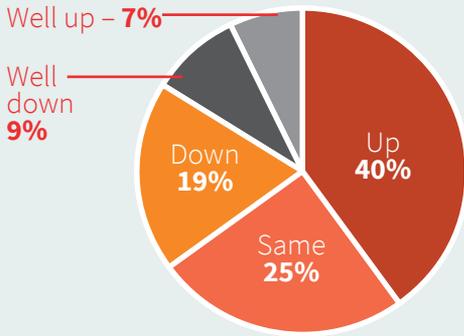
Interestingly though, despite these downward trends which we have seen emerge in this year's Mid-Season Survey, business confidence for the rest of the year remains buoyant; 63% of respondents told us they were either Confident or Very Confident for their dealership's prospects.

YOUR SAY

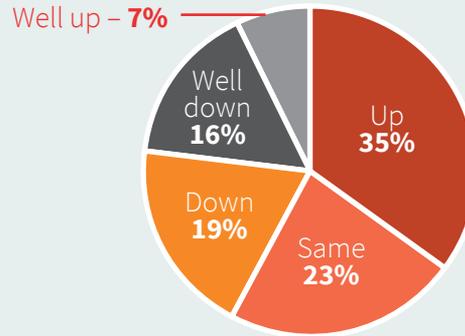
WE ASKED YOU WHAT FACTORS ARE CURRENTLY HAVING THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS – BE THEY POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE – AND ONCE AGAIN THOSE OLD PERENNIALS THE WEATHER AND THE INTERNET KEPT CROPPING UP.

- The cold start to the year has not been good.
- Strangely the weather has caused extra workload.
- Huge discounts on the internet. It will close us all in time.
- Climate, late spring and the potential of a Brexit – all have led to a general feeling of a lack of confidence in the economy. The only trending product is Automowers – thank god!
- Margins on new machines are poor with certain brands.
- Good ride-on mower/tractor sales.
- The economy being positive, but may change after the referendum – so we are optimistic about the whole year.
- Financial climate and poor weather.
- Negatives – consumers buying poor quality machines online and from DIY supermarkets. Positives – mild winter kicked things off early.
- Amazon and eBay sales have increased dramatically.
- Impact of internet on margins.
- Farm incomes, late single farm payments, online retailers all having a negative impact.
- Poor weather and job uncertainty have hit us.
- Milk and grain prices, very late farm payments and no confidence in the future from farming.
- Sheds selling machines with no parts.

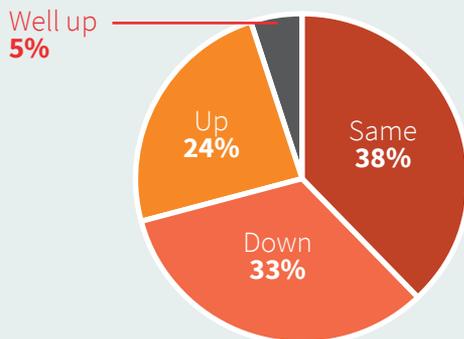
How has your OVERALL BUSINESS been so far in 2016 compared to this time last year?



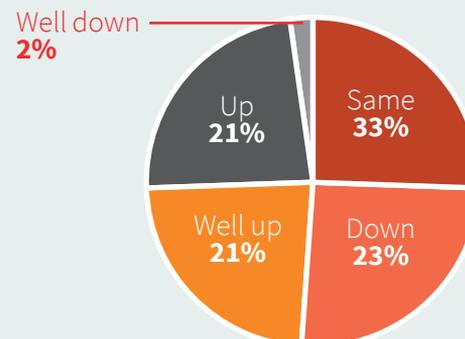
How have your MACHINE SALES been so far in 2016 compared to this time last year?



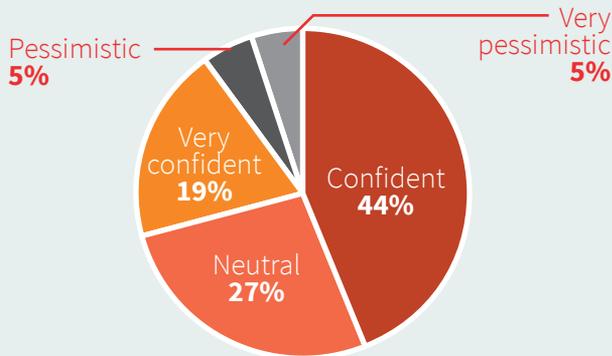
How have your PARTS SALES been so far in 2016 compared to this time last year?



How have your SERVICE SALES been so far in 2016 compared to this time last year?



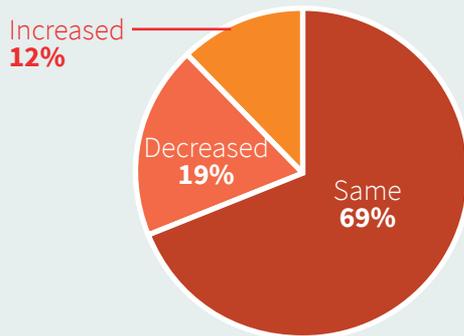
How CONFIDENT are you for your business for the rest of 2016?



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FROM DIRECT DISTRIBUTION TO DEALER FOCUS

In the decade following the launch of its strip-till drill, Suffolk firm Claydon chose to sell direct, but in recent years it has begun to build a dealer network. Martin Rickatson discovered why, and what it's looking for from potential agents

For the 10 years following 2002, when Claydon put its twin-tine direct drill into commercial production on the family farm where it was designed, the company chose to retail its products straight to farmers and contractors, supplying service back-up, parts and operating support from its Newmarket base. Beyond the drill design itself, one of the firm's unique selling points was the fact that buyers were promised they could pick up the phone at any time, should they need some operating instruction or product support, and could speak directly with drill designer and farm owner Jeff Claydon.

But with domestic demand for the drill increasing, export markets being developed and the firm broadening its equipment line to include light surface cultivation and

consolidation equipment, recent years have seen a shift in the firm's thinking regarding distribution. Since 2014 the firm has been appointing dealers across the UK, as it seeks to grow its business with the assistance and support of a distribution network.

Jeff Claydon is no stranger to designing and manufacturing farm equipment, having introduced his first product, the Claydon Yield-o-Meter, in 1980. The grain monitoring device could be fitted to almost any combine to give accurate readings of the number of tonnes being harvested, providing many farmers without the luxury of access to a weighbridge the opportunity to more accurately measure their yields. In 1995 the firm he had founded brought the Furrow Cracker to the UK market, enabling faster breakdown of ploughed land.

Seven years later, having become convinced that moving less soil was a better management choice on heavy land, Jeff designed and launched the Claydon V Drill, his first direct-seeding strip-tillage machine. Since then, Claydon reckons to have become the European market leader in strip-till drilling, with machines working in over 20 countries around the world.

Its latest Hybrid drill range continues the same principle, with each 'unit' consisting of a leading ground-breaking tine, adjustable from 0-15cm working depth followed by a second seeding tine, which can be adjusted via the drill's centrally-mounted depth wheels to put the seed in as shallow or deep as necessary. Various leading and seeding tine formats and arrangements are available, including leading cutting discs for slicing through heavy trash, and a twin-tine seeding kit for difficult conditions. In addition, fertiliser can be placed below the seed (front tine) or above the seed (rear tine) with the standard tine set up, while with the twin tine option, fertiliser can be placed above the seed only.

"As I developed the system here on our home farm," says Jeff, who farms with his brother, Frank, "I was able to learn from different seasons and situations, and that's what led us to discover the importance of good straw distribution and slug control – the key reason we introduced the Straw Harrow – and consolidation to conserve moisture, which led to us introducing our own range of rolls. We've also recently added the TerraStar light surface



Claydon is investing heavily in manufacturing facilities, with new buildings and offices being erected, a new paint shop recently installed, and more than 50 staff now employed

cultivator to the range, for soils with a tendency to cap, to encourage weed chitting.”

It's this growth, particularly internationally, that has led the firm to begin to hand over the responsibility for retailing of drills, service and parts back-up and in-field support to a carefully selected network of dealers, says Jeff, whose sons Spencer and Oliver are respectively now Commercial Director and Design and Production Director.

“Our business grew very strongly during its first decade, and we're investing heavily in our manufacturing facilities, with new buildings and offices being erected, a new paint shop recently installed, and more than 50 staff now employed. But we still see significant potential to expand both the business and product range even further.

“Key to achieving that will be to work closely with strategic partners who share our enthusiasm, which is why we set out to appoint a dealer network.”

Building a network

In early 2014, the firm appointed former Simba Managing Director Guy Leversha in a consultancy role to evaluate the potential of introducing dealer distribution in the UK and helping the firm capitalise on the overseas interest generated through attendance at international shows such as Agritechnica.

“Our plan was to identify high-quality, innovative dealers to expand our geographical coverage, stock the Claydon range and demonstrate our products,” explains Jeff.

The first UK dealer appointment announced was that of Buglers, the long-established family-owned South-West business with branches at Beaminster and Charminster in Dorset, Axminster in Devon, and Yeovil in Somerset. Claydon also appointed H Curtis & Sons,



operating from near to Bristol and to Taunton, and Andrew Symons Ltd, at Holsworthy and South Molton in Devon. In Scotland, meanwhile, the firm took on Ross Agri Services, at Montrose and Turriff.

Since then, there has been further expansion. Ross Farm Machinery now covers Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gwent, Haynes is responsible for sales in the South-East, PA Turney sells Claydon from its Oxon territory, G&J Peck looks after the Cambs and Lincs area, and J Wood and Son are responsible for North Yorkshire.

But there are still gaps to fill, and Commercial Director Spencer Claydon identifies a number of qualities which the firm has found in these dealers, and is seeking in potential appointees.

“The drill market, particularly that for strip tillage machines like ours, is becoming very competitive, but we believe there are a number of reasons why our system is unique, and we need to find dealers with the people in sales, services and spares who understand what we do and why.

“We've developed a system that now comprises four key

implements, based on the principle that fast, shallow, light passes that move just enough soil and no more are key to keeping weed and slug activity to a minimum, ensuring good moisture retention and giving crops the best start.

“Dealers need to understand our system, and the fuel and cost advantages of the package of equipment over min-till or conventional tillage systems. They need to understand the principles of what we're trying to achieve with the equipment, and how it fits together – the Straw Harrow, the TerraStar, the Hybrid drill and our rolls. And we need them to be prepared to educate farmers on why each element is important and how they work alongside each other.

“We also need dealers who are keen to demonstrate machines, and of course are committed to full parts stocking and service training. In return, we will give full support from the factory, and assistance with whatever is required in terms of back-up.

“We host many days at the factory on our farm in Suffolk to train dealers, and hold many open days, so are keen to work in conjunction with dealers to get potential



Hybrid drill is now manufactured in models with 3-6m (mounted) and 4-8m (trailed) working widths.

customers along to view our crops.”

The firm is not only growing its dealer network, but is backing that by appointing more dealer support staff. Its team now includes former farm manager Taig Norman, now looking after dealers and customer in the North and East of the UK, Mike Green, who oversees the

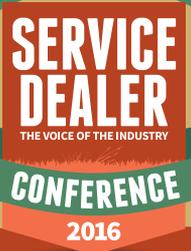
Southern and Western areas, and recent appointee Pete Homer, formerly of Sumo, who is responsible for Wales and the North-West.

“With this team, we have available to dealers and to customers a great deal of experience and good sources of advice,”

says Jeff Claydon.

“As such, I’m sure we will soon fill the remaining gaps in our network, but we’re always keen to speak with experienced dealers who understand what we’re seeking and would like to discuss taking on the Claydon franchise.” ●

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The Power Behind The Brands



ATV & UTILITY VEHICLE SALES ON THE UP

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE SUSTAINS REVIVAL



There is encouraging news for dealers, as sales of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and Side by Side units recorded by the AEA ATV/Quad Group increased by 5.1% in 2015, up to 11,310 units.

The figures reflect machines sold into agriculture and related industries and do not cover leisure or sports machines.

Utility ATV sales hit their peak around 2008 and after 2009 went into a steady downturn, hitting a trough at the end of 2013.

Since then, there has been a steady upward trend –

which these new sales figures have confirmed.

ATV Group Chairman, Rupert Archer-Smith of Yamaha Motor, commented: “This was a satisfactory result coming after a healthy market revival in 2014 and utility units were one of the few product groups to increase sales in what was a difficult year for many branches of farming and rural industries.”

The AEA does not comment on individual manufacturer performance, only on industry trends, so there is no indication of which brand might be dominating the market.

SALUTE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC LAUNCH FOR NEW POLARIS AT HIGHLAND SHOW

Choosing the Royal Highland Show for the UK public launch, Polaris has introduced the GENERAL which it describes as “the most versatile side-by-side ever built”.

Starting with a 100-horsepower ProStar® 1000 engine delivering the most power and torque in its class, users can accelerate from 0-40mph in 3.6 seconds, thanks to its power-to-weight ratio.

In terms of payload the vehicle offers 1,100lbs (498kg) and a 600lb dump box to get the job done. Factory-installed half doors with armrests offer extra protection

from debris, and easy in-and-out, work-friendly cab access.

There are also dual bolstered bucket seats, adjustable for the driver, providing a secure feel and ample leg room, while the thin-film technology under the seat cover provides a dry ride in wet conditions. Space-optimised foot rests for both the driver and passenger also make for a secure ride.

Ground clearance is 12 inches unloaded and the dual A-arm front suspension has 12.25 inches of suspension travel and 13.2 inches rear travel.

To meet a variety of recreational needs and do battle with the workload, the Polaris GENERAL is available in two different models: The Velocity Blue and Deluxe Orange Burst. Both models include automotive-style paint; Sport Low Profile Front Bumper and Polaris HD 4500lb winch; and 14-inch Matte Black cast aluminum wheels paired with eight-ply, 27-inch GBC Dirt Commander tyres providing better side traction, stiffer sidewalls, better tracking through corners and increased durability in tough work environments.

In addition, the Deluxe Orange Burst has premium adjustable Fox Podium X 2.0 QS3 Shocks, a Polaris GENERAL Pro-Fit Lock & Ride Sport Roof, rear-view mirror and MTX® Premium sound system with Bluetooth connectivity.

Also available are more than 30 brand new Polaris engineered accessories and 90-plus common fit items available to customise or for utility use.



The Deluxe Orange Burst

HIGH TORQUE OFFERED BY NEW MULES

KAWASAKI'S PRO-DXT AND PRO-DX NOW AVAILABLE

The two new Kawasaki MULES, the PRO-DXT and PRO-DX are designed primarily for work applications.

Their high-torque 993cm³ four-stroke diesel engines deliver performance and allow on-site fuel compatibility. They produce 18kW (24PS) of power and 52Nm of torque and have a towing capacity of 907kg. Fuel capacity is 30 litres and bright headlights are complemented by auxiliary LED lamps.

Hydraulic disc brakes are now fitted as standard to the front and rear, while double wishbone suspension enables the wheels to drive over obstacles with the minimum effect on the chassis.

The Trans Cab system of the PRO-DXT enables the flexibility to maximise either cargo space or people-moving potential. It can be changed from two-person mode to four-person mode in just one minute and by one person. In

two-person mode, the cargo bed capacity is 453kg and in four-person mode it is 158kg.

With a greater focus on cargo carrying performance, the PRO-DX features a long, flat cargo bed – the largest in the MULE fleet – which is easy to load from three sides. It has a dry weight of under 816kg which enables access to most weight-restricted areas.

The new MULE PRO is new from the ground up, incorporating many features such as independent all-round suspension, selectable four-wheel drive, disc brakes together with comfort for the driver and passengers.

The PRO-DX has a RRP of £11,129 + VAT and the PRO-DXT is £12,329 + VAT.

Simon Riches, Kawasaki UK Product Manager for ATV and MULE, said: “We’ve had a fantastic response to the announcement of the new MULE machines and we’ve been up and down the country exhibiting the models at shows – with fantastic feedback.

“Our dealers have been taking advanced orders since the new machines were announced,” he added.



ATV DEALER PARTNERS WITH SCOTTISH YOUNG FARMERS

CAN NEXT GENERATION HANDLE ATVS?

The Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs (SAYFC) has partnered with ATV Services Scotland Ltd.

The specialist ATV and UTV dealers are supporting events organised by Young Farmers. These have included the Ayrshire Rally, Highland Rally, Grampian Rally and the upcoming East Rally (9th July). They are also supporting the association's competitions at the Ayr Show.

This unique partnership sees the SAYFC incorporate ATV competitions into its events to see if Young Farmers have the skills to handle the quad bikes safely and efficiently. It has also been an opportunity for some members to try something new under the safe guidance of an experienced team of stewards.

Janis Yuille, Director of ATV Services Scotland Ltd said, "ATV Services Scotland Ltd is proud to sponsor the Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs. The farmers of the future face an ever-changing industry



L-R: Janis Yuille, Director of ATV Services Scotland Ltd and Scott Wilson, SAYFC National Chairman

and we're pleased to support them going forward."

SAYFC National Chairman Scott Wilson added, "We're delighted to form this new partnership with ATV Services Scotland. It offers our members the opportunity to try something new while learning about the various models on the market and what would best suit their needs."

SUZUKI ADDS NEW ATV DEALERS

SEVERAL JOIN NATIONAL NETWORK

Suzuki GB has recently welcomed several new dealerships into its national network, most recently with the addition of Godstone All Terrain in Surrey.

New dealers have also been welcomed in the form of Agri Farm Services (Corley, Warwickshire), Barlows of Henbury (Macclesfield, Cheshire) and SJH Machinery

(Weston-super-Mare, Somerset).

George Cheeseman, Head of ATV for Suzuki GB, said, "We're excited to have appointed such a great selection of new dealers across the country. These new partners in the franchise make our extensive dealer network even stronger. They bring a wide range of expertise into the fold, and give the brand excellent geographical coverage, which allows our customers to reach us."

George continued: "Suzuki is dedicated to establishing strong relationships with its UK-wide dealer network as ultimately they are representing our brand and look after our customers. We're pleased to be working with such well established and knowledgeable dealerships, and excited that more dealerships are wanting to sell Suzuki."

Suzuki ATV has some 80 dealers in the UK selling the manufacturer's range of utility and sports ATVs.



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BOB WILD APPOINTED BY POLARIS DEALERSHIP JOINS THE NETWORK

Polaris has appointed Bob Wild Grass Machinery Ltd of West Yorkshire as the latest authorised dealer to join the rapidly growing Polaris UK network.

Bob Wild Grass Machinery is very much a family run business, located in a rural area with many small livestock farms, smallholdings, and amenity facilities in the surrounding area. The business is ideally placed to stock and provide the extensive Polaris range, from children's ATVs to the latest Sportsman, the 450 HO, and the top-selling petrol and diesel Rangers including the three and six-seat Ranger Crew.

The dealership will also offer a complete range of accessories and attachments to cover all weather conditions and work situations, plus a comprehensive range of Estate Management Equipment.

Polaris says it is pleased to

be working with Bob Wild and the dealership in Mytholmroyd, Calderdale.

"Bob and his team have years of experience in both the Groundscare and Agricultural sectors," says Neil Everett, District Sales Manager for Polaris, "and I'm looking forward to working with the team to develop sales and full service support around Halifax and the

surrounding area."

Bob originally started the business in his home town of Halifax in 1997 and today the company has 15 full-time and one part-time member of staff involved in the sales and servicing of everything from small mowers, compact tractors, agricultural tractors, utility vehicles and now the full range of Polaris youth and utility vehicles.



HONDA ATVS HEAD TO THE COUNTRY

APPEARING AT THE GAME FAIR 2016

Honda has confirmed its attendance as an exhibitor at The Game Fair 2016 at Ragley Hall 29th-31st July.

The Honda display at the show will showcase its range of ATVs, alongside a selection of Honda Lawn and Garden products. In addition, there will be a skills arena where visitors will have the chance to get hands-on and experience the capabilities of a Honda ATV as they tackle an assault course over logs, see-saws and other obstacles.

The Game Fair is a celebration of British summertime and the nation's countryside. The newly launched show will feature artisan food and drink, stalls and displays to peruse and shop at, along with a host of outdoor activities such as clay shooting, archery, gundog scurries, international championships, fishing, falconry, ferreting and equestrian trials and, of course, Honda's display and skills arena. ●



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PRODUCT SAFETY REGULATIONS

AND IT ALL CAME TUMBLING DOWN

In an ever complex world it's not unsurprising that products in all areas of life are being recalled and outdoor power equipment is not exempt, writes Peter Shervington, senior associate at Eversheds specialising in product safety and crisis management.

To prove the point, Flymo has a recall notice on an UltraGlide lawnmower from 2014 because of an issue that may cause motor overheating.

While no producer is immune, retailers should also reflect how well prepared they are to respond to major product safety issues.

When it comes to product safety, EU law, the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSR) places the primary obligations on the manufacturer, brand-owner or first importer into the EU.

But while the primary obligations around product safety are placed on producers, and regulators typically look to them to take the lead in resolving product safety concerns, retailers also have obligations under GPSR not to supply any product which is known to be or should have been presumed to be dangerous.

They also have an obligation to participate in post-sales monitoring of safety, including by passing on information as to the risks posed by the product.

The important part of this, for retailers at least, is that where they become aware that a product it has supplied is unsafe, they also have an obligation to notify Trading Standards.

A failure to take these issues seriously has

consequences as non-compliance with many obligations under the GPSR is a criminal offence, and the negative publicity associated with a regulatory investigation or prosecution often has a disastrous impact on brand image.

Aside from regulatory obligations, retailers caught up in product safety crises may face civil claims from consumers for personal injury (or damage to personal property other than the product itself). And it doesn't take

much to find lawyers who will act for aggrieved individuals.

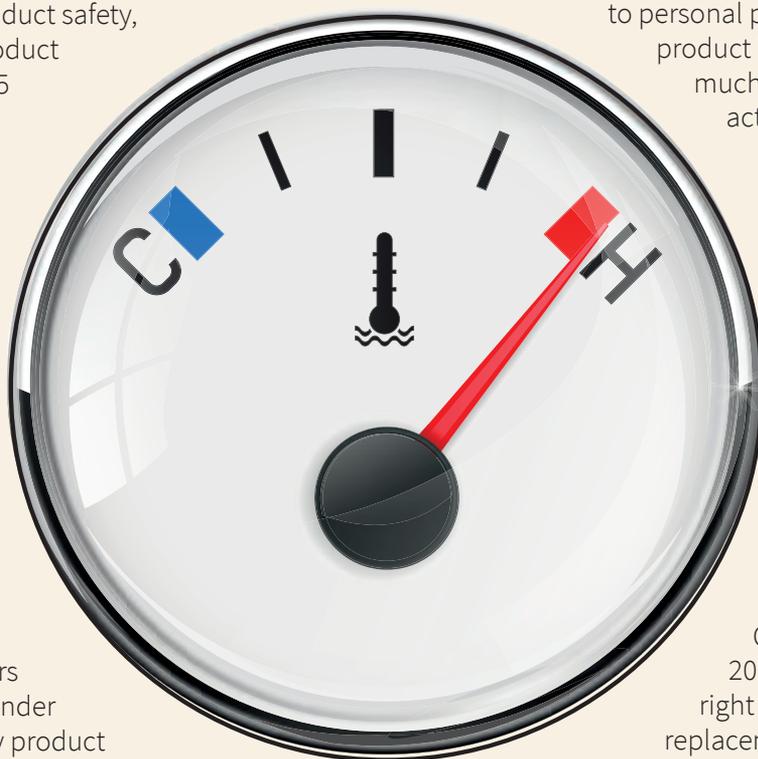
While there may be no injury caused by a faulty product, a consumer may wish to reject the product and claim a replacement or refund on the basis of a breach of the implied terms of satisfactory quality and fitness for purpose, inserted into the contract by law. Further, under rules brought in by the

Consumer Rights Act 2015, consumers have a right to demand a repair or replacement where they fail to meet these standards. If the retailer

fails to repair or replace defective goods within a reasonable time and without significant inconvenience, the consumer has the right to reject them and receive a full refund without any deduction to reflect the use they have had of the goods, if they do so within six months of receiving them.



Edited by Adam Bernstein



For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/product-safety-for-manufacturers>

PAYMENT

WHEN CAN EMPLOYERS MAKE DEDUCTIONS FROM AN EMPLOYEE'S WAGES?

Employees are entitled to receive regular payment of the amount set out in their contract of employment. There are, however, situations in which an employer may need to withhold an employee's wages, or temporarily reduce the sum paid, says *Mark Stevens, an employment lawyer at Veale Wasbrough Vizards*.

The definition of 'wages' is any sum payable to the worker in connection with their employment. This will include non-contractual bonuses, commission and statutory sick pay.

It is unlawful for an employer to make deductions from a worker's wages unless the deduction is required or authorised by legislation; or the worker has already given written consent to the deduction being made.

When can employers make deductions from wages?

First of all – and perhaps most obviously – an employer can

lawfully make deductions from wages in accordance with a statutory requirement to deduct and pay sums over to a public authority, such as to HMRC via the PAYE system.

Secondly, where the deduction arises as an "error of computation", for example, where an automated pay roll system makes an error, deductions may be lawful to the extent that they are necessary to right the mistake.

More importantly, an employer wishing to make deductions will need to check the contract before making any proposed deduction. If the contract says nothing about making deductions from wages, then an employer will need to obtain prior written agreement from the employee first.

Where the employee has not given written consent, whether in the contract of employment or otherwise, an employer should take care to avoid making deductions.

Non-payment of a worker's wage on any one occasion will be classed as a deduction. A deduction also arises from late payment.

If an employer reduces one element of a wage but increases another element, leaving no overall reduction in pay, this could also be an unlawful deduction.

Not paying a worker wages can lead to the employee bringing claims for breach of contract, constructive unfair dismissal, or a claim for recovery of the money that they are owed as an unlawful deduction of wages.

The remedies an employment tribunal may award to a worker for unlawful deduction of wages include a declaration that the employer has made an unlawful deduction and an order to the employer to pay the sums deducted.

For more see <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4125>

EMPLOYMENT LAW

HOLIDAY PAY RULING

The rules surrounding the calculation and payment of holiday pay have been around for some years now, writes *Mark Stevens, an employment lawyer at Veale Wasbrough Vizards*. Even so, firms

still make mistakes and cases end up before the courts.

Most recently one case has been rumbling through the court system relating to how employers should calculate workers' entitlement

to annual leave. We have now received the Employment Appeal Tribunal's (EAT) decision in the case – *Lock v British Gas* – as to whether commission payments should be taken into account when



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calculating holiday pay for private sector workers.

By way of background, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) said that holiday pay cannot simply be calculated based on basic salary alone where that worker's remuneration also includes commission payments. If the payments received by workers were only calculated with reference to basic salary, only, a worker would suffer a loss of income by using their statutory entitlement

to annual leave. As a result, an employee who regularly received payments of commission would be deterred from taking their annual leave entitlement.

Following this decision, the ECJ referred the case back to the UK's domestic courts. In February 2016, the EAT confirmed that domestic legislation could be interpreted in a way which conforms to EU law on holiday pay, finding in Mr Lock's favour. This decision, is likely to have a significant

impact on businesses across the UK – particularly those whose employees receive commission payments as part of their remuneration package.

This latest judgment doesn't actually change anything – results based commission must still be calculated as part of holiday pay and domestic legislation can still be read as being consistent with EU legislation, albeit by adding in wording to domestic legislation.

This case was entirely a question about who pays. Had the appeal by British Gas been successful the remedy for underpaid employees would have been against the British state for a failure to implement EU legislation correctly in the Working Time Regulations. Since the appeal was unsuccessful, it remains the case that British Gas and any other employers with commission schemes must factor these into the calculation of holiday pay.

For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights>

SME NEWS

Consultation on terms and conditions

Complicated and extensive terms and conditions that customers face, or all too often choose to ignore, are being reviewed by the Government.

The essence of the review is that the Government is hoping to support consumers by reducing the risk of any 'nasty surprises' hidden within opaque or lengthy terms. This could include being tied into long contracts or facing demands for the payment of unexpected fees.

The Government, in a now closed call for evidence, is thinking about the creation of a power to apply civil fines to businesses that do not comply with consumer protection rules in this area.

See <http://bit.ly/1TXIQza>

Small and medium sized businesses credit data sharing scheme

A new credit data sharing scheme went live on 1st April 2016 with the aim of making it easier for new challenger banks and alternative finance providers to check credit worthiness of potential business customers. Under the scheme, the Government is requiring nine banks and three Credit Reference Agencies (CRAs) to share, with the SME's permission, the credit information they hold

on SMEs equally with all finance providers. This, the Government hopes, will increase competition in the SME lending market and help more businesses find the funding they need to grow.

The Government expects data sharing to begin later in 2016 when tests between banks and CRAs confirm that data can be shared accurately and securely.

See <http://bit.ly/1WdMqX5>

New credit card payment fees take effect

HMRC has introduced a new schedule of fees for those making payments by card. The fees replace the former 1.5% fee and vary depending on the type of card used and whether the card is a personal or corporate card.

Broadly, the fees for paying using personal credit cards have been reduced and the rates for corporate credit cards have increased.

According to the explanatory memorandum to the Regulations, the change is being made to ensure HMRC recover the costs for credit card use charged by the various card-providers.

The new rates can be found at <http://bit.ly/1SbmCeM>

Please take proper advice before acting on anything written here.

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AEA TO REVIEW LTA AND LE-TEC Scheme ‘at a crossroads’



LTA was launched in December 2007 at the Heritage Motor Museum, Gaydon.

At the AEA Conference in London recently, AEA Director General Ruth Bailey pledged that the association would this year be looking to revise LTA and LE-TEC.

She said, “We’re going to take a particular look this year at the work of LE-TEC – the LandBased Engineering Training and Education Committee sponsored by AEA, BAGMA and IAgRE. They have been responsible over the years for the development and the management of the LTA Accreditation schemes and they are responsible for developing the LandBased Engineering Trailblazer

Apprenticeship courses.

“The LTA has been in operation for several years now and it’s been incredibly successful in accrediting and acknowledging the professionalism of the technicians in our industry. But it’s now reached a crossroads.

“For the scheme to continue to grow over the coming years and to take it to the next level, we need to review. We need to revise the current process. We need to offer it new impetus and momentum. And we also need a viable route for accreditation for non-affiliated technicians. A route for LTA assessment which is independent

of specific manufacturers.

“So there’s some considerable work to do on this but we will be focusing on reforming the LTA and making significant changes relating to the organisation and administration of the scheme.”

Trailblazers

Ruth also said the AEA would continue to concentrate on preparing for the launch of the LandBased Engineering Trailblazer Apprenticeships: Parts Apprenticeships. She said, “In compliance with government legislation all apprenticeships offered by 2020 have to be Trailblazer approved or they’ll fail to qualify for any funding. So the LandBased Engineering Trailblazer Apprenticeship has been developed by LE-TEC, for and on behalf of our industry, and it’s now approved by the Government. There’s been a lot of work to get it to this stage. It’ll launch in 2017 so we still have work to do, but that’s what we’re preparing for this year.”

Training For Business

Finally Ruth also confirmed the association would continue the development of the AEA Training For Business scheme. She explained, “We’ve received some fantastic feedback from companies that have engaged with the scheme and we know this programme is building a great reputation. We’re taking on board comments and are looking at rationalising and offering courses that work for our members.

“We’re also looking at working with other training providers to offer a varied programme. It’s an undertaking that’s offered at cost to members, giving access to some of the best industry training available.”

AMAZONE OPENS NEW TRAINING, EDUCATION AND R&D FACILITY

New premises based in Finningley

Amazone has established a new Training, Education and Research Centre at Finningley, North-East of Bawtry, eight miles from its main base at Harworth.

The 12-hectare site currently comprises a range of buildings that are central to the parcel of land and which have been subsequently converted into a visitor centre with training room alongside two indoor halls for practical machine operation.

With the first courses held at the facility in early March, the training and education function began with in excess of 100 dealer staff getting up to speed with ISOBUS tractor/machine communication.

Outside, and after its initial landscaping process, some of the land has been drilled with a crop of spring barley whereas a further portion will form the backbone of trial plots, a field proving ground and practical training area. This will be used to school farm operators in the use of seed and precision drills as well as self-propelled sprayers. An ISO sprayer bump track is planned for sprayer boom performance testing and demonstration.

The facility also offers the chance to demonstrate the full range of kit across 12 months of the year giving farmers and growers the chance to come

and use the machines for themselves at a time of year when they have time to think about upcoming purchases.

An area of grass is also being improved by utilising the grass maintenance and seeding technology found in the Groundcare range and will again be used as a demonstration and proving area for turf care kit.

The premises were unveiled by Steve Clark (Head of Training) and Simon Brown (Research and Development) alongside Adrian Winnett, Managing Director of Amazone Ltd.

At the opening, Adrian Winnett explained the rationale behind this substantial investment. “The British market is one of the most technically advanced in the world,” he said, “and our farmers look to utilise these new technologies to keep ahead of the game.

“It is our duty as machinery manufacturers to make sure we understand our customers’ needs, that those growers then subsequently get the best out of that technology and that our dealers are fully trained in supporting the kit.

“Orchard Farm provides the facilities for all those aspects.”



Over 100 dealer service staff attended an ISOBUS 'plugfest' involving all the major tractor manufacturers

SPEARHEAD FORGE LINKS WITH RAU

Multicut provided to Rural Innovation Centre

Spearhead Machinery has provided a new Multicut 460 rotary mower to be used at the Royal Agricultural University's (RAU) Rural Innovation Centre to form part of student education within their land management courses.

The centre excels at bridging the gap between the laboratory and farmer and runs many academic trials for private agronomic companies. Alongside its scientific research, the University delivers a variety of vocational rural skills training which is available to

both the public and the private sectors.

This year, Spearhead has provided a Multicut 460 which will be specifically used to demonstrate the cultivation process of land, in particular looking at soil composition, nutrition and increasing crop yield.

Discussions were led by Mark Bayliss, Export Manager at Spearhead, and Nicholai Thomasin-Foster, Lecturer and Acting Manager at the Rural Innovation Centre, to deliver a further demonstrative and practical element to their education programme.

Keen to promote the use of this type of rotary mower to educate the young farmers of tomorrow, Mark commented: "It's of particular importance to me, both on a personal and professional level, that commercial business and educational institutions work together to enhance our learning and share knowledge, and this can be achieved through many different support mechanisms be they practical or financial. Spearhead is keen to educate people through the utilisation of our product in their own environment, thus seeing the benefits with their own eyes."



Nic Thomasin-Foster & Mark Bayliss

KRAMP ACADEMY OFFERING BESPOKE TRAINING

Specific courses at dealer premises

Kramp Academy, the training programme created by Kramp dealers for Kramp dealers, is offering bespoke training for its dealers

In addition to the standard courses, the company says that it can also offer dealers specific training delivered at their premises, which includes areas which may not be currently covered in its brochure.

For example, if a dealer requires Excel, Word or Powerpoint training, Kramp says it can run sessions at a dealership's convenience for eight or more members of staff.

To book a Kramp Academy course visit the Kramp Academy page on the webshop. As

standard, these courses are available at all Kramp Academy locations.

If a dedicated training day is required at a dealer premises or if there is a training requirement not covered in the brochure,

then Kramp UK says contact their marketing team at richard.kendrick@kramp.com or krampacademy.uk@kramp.com.

The new Kramp Academy brochure will be available in August.



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DOMESTIC

STRENGTH AND PERFORMANCE

Cub Cadet's new 900 series

Cub Cadet says that mowing performance, versatility and strong construction combine in its new 900 Series range.

The new machines have the ability to cover large areas quickly and comfortably due to the high back seat and rubber mounted foot pedals. The advanced cutting system has a wide discharge chute and deep cutting deck to provide

optimal grass lift and mulching capabilities, while the 12-position deck height adjustment option lets the user select the perfect cutting height to deliver optimum cutting results.

The 900 Series range consists of six new ride-on tractors, four with rear collection and two with side discharge, which are available on special order. They feature Briggs and Stratton Intek engines with 500cm³ single 9.4kW / 2,800 min-1 of power and the RevTEK technology means that mowing in reverse is possible.

Each model comes with a turning radius of 40cm and to avoid turf damage anti-scalping deck wheels are fitted as standard. The machines are all constructed from fully welded and powder coated steel frames.

The rear discharge models come

with either a 36"/92cm or a 41"/105cm cutting deck, with each size available with Autodrive™ or hydrostatic transmission options. They benefit from having a cruise control option.

The machines have a 3-in-1 option, meaning that cuttings can be bagged in the 280-litre grass bags, or the mulch plug/deflector can be utilised.

The two side discharge models come in 38" and 42" cutting deck options. As with the rear discharge models, they have an easy entry, step-through frame. The cast iron front axle provides strength and durability. These models also have a 3-in-1 option, with grass bags available for purchase separately if desired.

With cutting heights from 30mm – 90mm, the tractors are suitable for a wide range of lawns.



DOMESTIC

ARIENS OFFERS FREE PGC

With new Countax or Westwood tractor

Customers purchasing a new Countax or Westwood garden tractor before 31st August 2016 will be offered a free 300-litre Powered Grass Collector (PGC) worth a Suggested Retail Price of £495 inc VAT.

Ariens UK is working with specialist dealers in helping to promote the offer and reach potential customers in their areas, offering the free PGC and first-class after sales support.

To claim a free Powered Grass Collector customers only need to download and complete a voucher

then take it to their local participating dealer when they purchase a 2016 specification Countax C Series/B Series or Westwood T Series/F Series.

Vouchers can be downloaded from www.countax.co.uk/voucher for Countax tractors and www.westwoodtractors.com/voucher for Westwood tractors.



COMMERCIAL

JOHN DEERE GOES WIDE

1500 Series II Comfort front rotary mowers

John Deere's 1500 Series II Comfort front rotary mowers are now available in the UK and Ireland, after being sold in a number of other European countries. They are suitable for wide area mowing in the commercial, golf and amenity turf markets.

Featuring a Yanmar 49hp four-cylinder engine, hydrostatic four-wheel drive and diff-lock, a standard air suspension seat and a spacious operator platform with CommandArm armrest controls, the new 1505 and 1515 mowers provide a comfortable ride for all mowing jobs.

Maximum road speed is 15mph. Front deck suspension activates automatically during road use for a smoother ride. The optional premium cab features heating, air conditioning and all-round visibility.

The mowers can be equipped with a choice of hydraulic side or

rear-discharge decks with working widths up to 3m. A CrossCut function allows the operator to lift the deck just off the ground when turning, and a 'smart' weight transfer system shifts the weight from the mowing deck to the drive wheels for extra traction on rough ground.

There is a choice of four decks for the 1505 model, including the 180cm 7-Iron II side-discharge and 183cm Fastback rear-discharge units, a 223cm rear-discharge deck and the 300cm Fastback Commercial deck. The 1515 comes with a 180cm rear-discharge and a 120cm side-wing rear-discharge deck, giving an overall cutting width of 285cm.

Cutting heights range from 13 to 105mm or 25 to 152mm depending on the deck, and optional mulching kits are also available.



AGRICULTURAL

SKY NO-TILL AND MIN-TILL DRILLS DEBUT AT CEREALS

New from Opico



For the first time at the Cereals event recently, OPICO showcased its two adaptable Sky drills – the no-till EasyDrill and the min-till MaxiDrill – both able to cope with a range of soil conditions and cultivations systems.

The company says the EasyDrill is straightforward to set-up and use, and its unique design confers great versatility. It is suitable for no-till, minimum till, or conventional drilling systems, and is a suitable choice for drilling into cover crops.

The MaxiDrill is designed to provide a high speed minimum tillage drilling solution with various options which give it the flexibility to work in a conventional plough-based cultivation system, and as a no-till drill in light soils.

Moreover its design allows drilling to continue even when conditions turn sticky.

Commenting on the new machines, James Woolway, OPICO's Managing Director said, "Despite a challenging drilling season this spring, the Sky drills have continued to perform reliably and consistently allowing growers to get drilled despite difficult weather conditions."

LAWNFLITE LAUNCHES TWO HYDROSTATIC MINI RIDERS

Designed to operate in compact space

Two new mini ride-on mowers from Lawnflite have been designed to operate in compact space and manoeuvre easily around obstacles in the garden.

As part of Lawnflite's SMART ride-on mower range, the new LMiniRider60SDHEm side discharge and LMiniRider60RDHE rear discharge ride-on mowers each have a 60cm cut. Both machines benefit from Briggs & Stratton engines, the SDHE with the 875 series engine, while the RDHE is powered by a 1000 series, each with 223cc capacity, and a rated power output of 3.7kW and 3,300 min-1. This is coupled with electric starting and 1.2-litre fuel tanks.

The hydrostatic transmission on the LMiniRider60SDHE allows for smooth and precise manoeuvrability with the velocity being controlled with a manual lever on the side of the dash, meaning that forward and reverse speed can be adjusted without any clutching or gear changing.

The optional side discharge feature allows the

clippings to be returned directly back to the lawn. There is also an optional Mulch kit.

Weighing in at 123kg, and with dimensions of just 158cm (l) / 78cm (w) / 110 cm (h), the machine is stable, despite its small stature.

The velocity of the LMiniRider60RDHE is controlled with a foot lever meaning that forward and reverse speeds can be easily altered without any clutching or gear changing, and keeping the drivers hands free to steer at all times.

With five position cutting heights, from 38 - 95cm, the rear discharge feature includes a 150-litre grass bag to collect all clippings. If preferred, however, a deflector and mulch kit is available.

With dimensions of 192cm (l) / 83cm (w) / 112cm (h) and a weight of 189kg, this is a heftier machine, but it remains easy to store, with a removable grass bag.

Both of the Lawnflite ride on mowers also feature a turning radius of 46cm.



LMiniRider60RDHE

DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL

SUB-COMPACT OFFERING FROM SHIBAURA

SX26 from FGM Claymore Ltd



FGM Claymore Ltd, the UK importer of the Shibaura compact tractor range, says the hydrostatically driven Shibaura SX26 combines the strength and versatility of a compact tractor with the manoeuvrability and ease of use of a garden and lawn tractor.

Priced at £11,250 plus VAT the SX26 is equipped with an EU and US compliant 26hp Shibaura three-cylinder diesel engine, delivering low noise and vibration levels.

A 25.5-litre fuel tank, central and rear power take-off, three-point cat 1 linkage, safety bracket, very large driver platform and lighting come as standard, while operator comforts include easy access 'hi-lo' range shift and pto and clutch select levers at either side of the seat. An 'open-wide' hood allows easy servicing and component access. Selectable four-wheel drive and rear differential lock are standard equipment, as is full power steering.

A range of accessories are available including 40" and 60" three-blade mid-mount, side-discharge decks, front pto, grass collector, cabin, front loader and snow sweeper.



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NEW BUSHRANGER HAS THE EDGE

Specifically designed for local authorities and contractors

DJ Turfcare has introduced the Bushranger Edger E35, which is specifically designed for local authority and contracting work.

The company says this robustly built edger with an advanced 3.1hp Kawasaki FJ100 four-stroke OHV engine delivers plenty of power and long, reliable service. The machine features a number of innovations with new controls developed to reduce operator hand fatigue, notably a 'dead man's handle' with a micro switch cut-out for greater safety and which negates the need for the operator to hold down a lever.

The Exposure Limit Value (ELV) of the Bushranger is 567 minutes per day, with low vibration and low noise, aided by a muffler and cover, allowing use for over eight hours.

Controlled manually from the operator station, a simple lever is used to engage the cutting blade, with a similar arrangement for the cutting

depth and kerb wheel, the third wheel dropping down to run in the gutter. The cutting depth has seven settings up to 72mm/2.85" and the cutter head tilts to the left and right to provide several different angles for border edging.



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STIGA

www.stigalawnmowers.co.uk

DOMESTIC

OPTIMA'S PRIME

New 53cm mower

The new Optima 53SPBHWIS from Lawnflite is specially designed for people with a larger area to mow, and for land that is uneven and undulating.

It is equipped with a 53cm solid steel deck and a Briggs and Stratton EXi IS engine. The cutting height can be altered via one central lever through six

positions from 28mm to 92mm.

To further aid its ease of use, the new Optima model has an electric starter, is self-propelled and has higher rear wheels.

It features a 70-litre fabric grass collection box, and a three-in-one option of discharging, collecting or mulching.

It also benefits from a fully foldable, soft-grip handle, and a weight of 38kg.

Easy to use central wheel height adjustment allows the machine to cope with long grass or uneven surfaces and the company boasts that it is specially designed to meet the rigorous standards set by governments for reducing pollution and emissions.



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EVENTS 2016

JULY 2016

- 2-3 Smallholders' Show, South of England Showground, Ardingly
www.smallholdersshows.co.uk
- 5-10 Hampton Court Flower Show
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 6-7 Livestock Event, Birmingham NEC
www.livestockevent.co.uk
- 8-10 Kent County Show
www.kentshowground.co.uk
- 9 Newport Show
www.newportshow.org/
- 12-14 Great Yorkshire Show
www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk
- 16 Camborne Show
www.camborne-show.org.uk
- 18-21 Royal Welsh Show
www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh-show/
- 20-24 RHS Flower Show - Tatton Park
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 22-24 UK Game Fair, NAEC Stoneleigh Park
www.ukgamefair.com/
- 23 Mid Devon Show
www.middevonshow.co.uk
- 26-28 New Forest & Hampshire County Show
www.newforestshow.co.uk
- 29-30 Border Union Show
www.buas.org/show/

AUGUST 2016

- 3 North Devon Show
www.northdevonshow.com
- 3-4 Bakewell Show
www.bakewellshow.org
- 4 Honiton Agricultural Show
www.honitonshow.co.uk
- 4-7 Countryfile Live, Blenheim Palace
www.countryfilelive.com
- 6 Garstang Show
www.garstangshow.org
- 6 Emley Show
www.emleyshow.com
- 6 Dumfries Agricultural Show
www.dumfriesshow.co.uk

- 9-10 Anglesey County Show
www.angleseyshow.org.uk/anglesey-show.html
- 10 Vale of Glamorgan Ag Show
www.valeofglamorganshow.co.uk
- 12-13 Shrewsbury Flower Show
www.shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk
- 14 Ripley Show
www.ripleyshow.co.uk
- 17 Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show
www.gillshaftshow.co.uk
- 17-18 Pembrokeshire County Show
www.pembsshow.org
- 19 Cranleigh Show
www.cranleighshow.org.uk
- 21 Mid-Somerset Ag Show
www.midsomersetshow.org.uk
- 25 Monmouthshire Show
www.monmouthshow.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2016

- 1 Bucks County Show
www.buckscountyshow.co.uk
- 3 Alresford Show
www.alresfordshow.co.uk
- 3-4 Dorset County Show
www.dorsetcountyshow.co.uk
- 4-7 Autumn Fair, Birmingham NEC
www.autumnfair.com
- 4-6 spoga-gafa 2016
www.spogagafa.com
- 8 Westmoreland County Show
www.westmorlandshow.co.uk
- 10 Usk Show
www.uskshow.co.uk
- 10 Romsey Show
www.romseyshow.co.uk
- 12-14 Glee 2016
www.gleebirmingham.com
- 14 Tillage-Live, Monks Kirby, Warwickshire
<http://tillage-live.uk.com/>
- 15-17 APF 2016, Ragley Estate, Alcester
www.apfexhibition.co.uk/

OCTOBER 2016

- 5 The Dairy Show, Bath & West Showground
www.bathandwest.com/the-dairy-show
- 19-21 Green Industry & Equipment Expo, Louisville, USA
<http://gie-expo.com>
- 22-23 Countryside Live, Harrogate
www.countryside-live.co.uk

NOVEMBER 2016

- 2-3 IOG Saltex 2016, Birmingham NEC
www.iogsaltex.com
- 16 AgriScot
www.agriscot.co.uk
- 17 Service Dealer Conference & Awards
www.servicedealer.co.uk
- 28-29 Royal Welsh Winter Fair
www.rwas.wales/winter-fair/



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NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT . . . *but tell it right first time!*

I'm sitting in my lair, writing this before the result of the EU referendum, so either (a) we are back to square one (b) the word Brexit will be for ever enshrined in the British Constitution, or (c) 23rd June will henceforth be the date for The Annual Referendum whereby the people decide everything.

You can bet, however, that the 'blame game' will be far from over – the national press will ensure that the fall-out runs and runs. Which prompts me to consider the role of the press in this age of 24-hour rolling news, social media and newspaper headlines designed to fuel outrage or confirm the prejudices of readers.

Just as Bill Bloggs' Mower Shop is a retail outlet and thus falls into the same pigeon-hole as Marks & Spencer, B&Q, Argos and even Amazon in that they all sell things, so *Service Dealer* is a member of the Fourth Estate, the media.

Of course, the relationship we have with our readers is closer, less frenetic, more focussed and hopefully based on trust, but nonetheless, we still get flak from time to time. "The last issue was more like *Stihl Times / Mountfield Herald / Hayter Gazette / Deere Bugle.*" And yes, it can sometimes seem like that for a very obvious reason. News is our currency, news that is relevant to our core audience (dealers). The flow of information we get from suppliers or dealers ranges from streams of press releases from some to diddly-squat from others. So if there's nothing in our pages about your organisation then it's either because you haven't sent us anything – or that the info you provided had limited news value or didn't grab our attention. It's no coincidence that the most read stories in our weekly e-mail are often the unusual or offbeat.

We get loads of press releases about the supply of machines, or even a single machine to a customer (complete with a line-up of grinning sales staff). Nothing wrong with that, as long as they're selective and relevant. But most of them are just saying: "We've sold a machine – or two".

What makes any story relevant to readers is the background. Old-style journalists will tell you that the key is the five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why? Stick with those guidelines to accompany any press release or picture and you won't go far wrong.

Maybe you use a PR agency, and in my experience these tend to fall into two camps. The good ones who are an extension of their client's business – and others who go through the motions.

And here's my pet gripe. Agencies that haven't fully checked with their clients before sending out a press release, or didn't check the information thoroughly. They don't seem to realise that information we receive is often circulated instantly. We can get a press release mid-morning on a Friday – and if it's a good 'un, it's in the *Service Dealer* e-newsletter minutes later and up on Twitter-sphere shortly after. It's no good emailing us later to say "Please disregard the press release, we're issuing an amended version". It's too late. Get it right first time!

Lastly, your image. What makes your company tick? We get invited to press conferences, or to interview industry movers and shakers. We're there to write a balanced, but ultimately interesting, profile of your 'modus-operandi'.

And yes, we're always looking for the headline, something that sums up the company. Ideally, we want our readers to say "I didn't know that!"

To be presented with the dreaded mission statement doesn't cut the mustard. And there are times when we can only best tell your story by being told the background, even it's preceded by an 'off-the-record' clarification.

So, if you feel neglected or left out of our coverage, don't be afraid. We won't bite. Tell us, regale us with achievements and ambitions. And if a member of your staff is in the Bodybuilder UK finals or is the cheese-rolling champion, that would be a start! ●



JIM GREEN



MOW-CEANS ELEVEN

RIDE-ON, GEORGE! *Birthday present for Mr Clooney*

What to give to the man who has everything?

The answer for Amal Clooney was to present husband George on his recent 55th birthday not a diamond-encrusted iPhone or even a pair of matching Lamborghinis.

Rather, it was a ride-on mower to trim the lawns at their Thameside Berkshire home.

“We have a beautiful front lawn at our house in England and I used to mow lawns when I was a kid,” the *Ocean’s Eleven* actor told ET Canada. “So she bought me this giant riding lawnmower that is sitting at the house right now and I’m very excited about putting that to work when I’m home.”

Hands up the dealer who was fortunate enough to do the demo and seal the deal. Given that Mr Clooney’s latest film shown at Cannes was called *Money Monster*, I take it that there was no need to give away any discount?!



BLOWING OFF STEAM

LOT OF HOT AIR *Complaints about leaf blowers in Hampstead!*

If your dealership serves the good folk of Hampstead Heath, you have my sympathies.

I read that the noted thespian Tom Conti has been having a pop at people using leaf blowers adjacent to his “£15 million home complete with ballroom, home cinema and roof terrace”.

“It’s a terrible noise,” he says, “and not helpful for the creative juices. There’s a perfectly good solution – use a bloody broom.”

Sorry Tom, your des-res is usually described as being in “the leafy suburb of Hampstead” (the clue is in the name). And have you tried using a broom to clear leaves?

Even more worrying is the quote from Gary Shaw, Hon Sec of the Hampstead Garden Suburbs Residents Association who said recently: “We are approaching the time of year when you cannot use your garden on a summer’s day, because as soon as one blower stops on one side, another starts on the other.”

Tell me, has global warming created a micro climate in Hampstead? In ‘normal’ Britain, leaves don’t normally descend until November.



SPECIAL DELIVERY

MOW-STAL SERVICE *Bringing more than just letters*

Finland’s postal service will be doing more than just delivering letters and parcels this summer – its workers will be mowing lawns, too. The state-owned Posti company is offering a weekly grass cutting service, with customers able to choose either 30 minutes or 60 minutes of lawn mowing time,

reported the BBC.

It will only be available on Tuesdays, though, as the volume of post tends to be lighter than on other days, and customers will have to provide their own lawnmower. They’ll also have to be willing to pay 65 euros a month for the half-hour sessions. ●



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