

2022
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SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021



GETTING BACK TOGETHER

Trade events, dealer roadshows, demos and the return of the Service Dealer Conference

Dealers get hands-on

Stiga introduces new machines to its network

Robotic skills at Man City

Launch of new autonomous commercial mower

New player enters market

Segway hits lawn & garden sector



AGILITY & ADAPTABILITY

Q&A with STIHL GB's new MD, Kay Green

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to November/December 2021's edition of *Service Dealer* magazine. As we reach the end of the year, it seems appropriate to reflect on what a tumultuous period it has been for the independent dealer network. There has, of course, been one issue that has dominated the discourse all year – and unfortunately that doesn't appear to be disappearing any time soon. Those who know a lot more about these sorts of things than I do are now saying the industry cannot expect the difficulties surrounding the supply of whologoods and parts to be resolved much before 2023. The phrase that I heard one manufacturer use recently was that dealers must get used to making the best of a bad job.

It does make one think, just what sort of season our readers could have experienced if the supply chains were functioning normally? Anecdotally we have heard from dealers who have told us that, despite everything, 2021 has proven to be one of their most profitable years. It's such a shame to then realise there was excess customer demand that simply could not be satisfied due to a lack of stock.

I'm sure analysis will continue as the industry gathers in these final couple of months of the year, first at the return of SALTEX to the NEC and then at the *Service Dealer* Conference & Awards. Both events have been a long-time in the offing and will be most welcome when they finally arrive. At the Conference our speakers and delegates will consider the timely concept of Smart Working. Whilst there will be plenty of actionable takeaways to acquire from the day, I think equally important is the opportunity it affords to regroup socially, share stories and celebrate achievements reached under such exceptional circumstances. I look forward to seeing you there.



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INDUSTRY



HUSQVARNA FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST BRIGGS & STRATTON

Over engine supply dispute

Husqvarna Group in the US took legal action against Briggs & Stratton LLC (B&S) at the end of September.

In a statement, Husqvarna said the action came after B&S announced that it would only deliver a very small portion of the engines for ride-on mowers that Husqvarna Group had ordered in advance of the 2022 season, mainly for North America.

At this late stage, said Husqvarna, its ability to secure an alternative supply of engines for the 2022 season was extremely limited. Therefore, to protect its customers and operations, Husqvarna Group on 20 September filed a lawsuit in South Carolina to compel B&S to deliver all engines covered by its orders.

Husqvarna issued a statement saying, "In a worst case scenario, the lack of engine supply could result in a loss of top line sales of up to

approximately SEK [swedish krona] 2bn, mainly in 2022 with limited impact in Q4 2021. Husqvarna Group is optimistic, however, that the legal proceedings will have a satisfactory outcome, in which case there could be limited (or no) impact on operations, suppliers, customers and financial position.

"Given the early stage of these proceedings, and range of possible outcomes, it is too early to estimate the likely net EBIT impact of this supply dispute. It is, however, noteworthy that the affected product category has a lower profitability than the Group average."

Husqvarna Group said it would provide an update on the issue in conjunction with the Q3 interim report, which was due to be published on 20 October 2021, after this issue went to press.

At the time of publishing, Briggs & Stratton had not commented publicly.

INDUSTRY

KUBOTA IN NEW OEM PARTNERSHIP

With French manufacturer MX



Kubota has announced a strategic OEM partnership with French manufacturer MX to supply loaders for the M series tractor range throughout Europe.

The agreement covers all M-series models including the M4003, M5002, MGX-IV, M6002 and M7003 models, spanning 66-170hp.

Kubota (UK) said this agreement is expected to significantly increase sales by providing a materials-handling solution that is available to order exclusively through Kubota's dealer network. Importantly for customers, said the manufacturer, it offers the convenience of combining tractor, loader and attachments in one integrated solution.

"This agreement makes it much easier for customers to choose a tractor and high-performance loader package that closely suits their needs," said Henry Myatt, Product Marketing Manager for Kubota's M-series tractor portfolio.

"MX-built Kubota loaders are finished in our familiar orange livery to compliment the look of the Kubota tractor range, providing an integrated materials handling solution for all M-series tractors," he added.

INDUSTRY

STANLEY BLACK & DECKER BUYS EXCEL INDUSTRIES

Deal followed purchase of remaining 80% of MTD

Stanley Black & Decker has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Excel Industries for \$375m in cash.

This acquisition came just weeks after the company bought the remaining 80% of MTD.

Excel is a manufacturer of commercial and residential turf-care equipment under the Hustler Turf Equipment and BigDog Mower Co brands. According to an official statement, with over \$375m of revenue forecast in 2021, Excel serves approximately 1,400 active independent equipment dealer outlets that stock, sell and service Hustler and BigDog products in the US and Canada.

In the UK and Ireland Hustler is distributed by Southern Machinery. Philip Tutty of Southern told *Service Dealer*, "This is a very exciting development for Excel Industries. The



Hustler brand and dealer network in the UK and Ireland has grown significantly over past years and we look forward to building on this success into the future."

Excel launched the first hydrostatic zero-turn mower in 1964. The Company is located in Hesston, Kansas, and has approximately 600 employees.

Stanley Black & Decker's CEO James M Loree said, "This is a strategically important bolt-on acquisition as we build an outdoor products leader. Excel brings a range of premier, commercial-grade and prosumer [producing consumer] turf-care equipment, an extensive dealer network, a talented team and a loyal customer base."

It is said that the transaction will be funded with cash on hand and proceeds from borrowings.

PEOPLE

TORO UK NAMES NEW TERRITORY MANAGER

For north of England and Scotland



L-R: Ben Kirkby and Craig Hoare

Toro UK has welcomed Benjamin Kirkby as the company's new Territory Manager for the north of England and Scotland.

Ben has joined from FG Adamson and Son, bringing technical and sales management experience to the role.

Ben said, "I'm delighted to be embarking on this exciting journey with Toro UK, working with our strong dealer network and looking for new opportunities to grow our business further. I look forward to sharing the exciting range of new products in both the Hayter and Toro brands with our dealers."

Welcoming Ben to the team, Craig Hoare, Toro UK's Sales and Marketing Manager said, "We're really pleased Ben has chosen to join Toro UK. He brings a great deal of experience to the role and is perfectly placed to support our extensive dealer network, ensuring Toro UK continues to build successful partnerships in the consumer equipment market and helping us achieve our growth plans here in the UK."

INDUSTRY



TAP LAUNCHES NEW INSTAGRAM

Aimed at the ag and grounds care sectors

The producers of *Service Dealer* have launched a new Instagram account, @TAPintodrones, to show off the footage they have been capturing as part of their latest venture.

The TAP drone team has been capturing some amazing aerial footage for the agricultural and grounds care sectors, both here in the UK and in Spain where TAP also has offices.

Emma Craigie, Head of Content & Media, says "Viewing the world from above allows us to see things from a different perspective and what better way to do so than offering drone footage – it makes very engaging content across the channels.

"The new Instagram account gives us the perfect place to show off the incredible footage we've captured – and showcase some of the big boys' toys we get to film!"

Visit @TAPintodrones and follow to check out the latest clips and images, and find out more about the drone services TAP offers at theadplain.com/case-studies/tap-into-drones

DEALERS

MERLO ADDS SUFFOLK-BASED DEALER

Marst Agri Services



L-R: Mark Butcher, Marst Agri, Partner; Charlie Lane, Network Development Manager, Merlo UK; Tom Reily, Ag Apprentice, Marst Agri; Stewart Butcher, Marst Agri, Partner

Merlo UK has further extended its network of agricultural dealers in the east of England by appointing Marst Agri Services of Hadleigh, Suffolk.

Founded in 2017 by Mark and Stewart Butcher, Marst Agri Services has established a successful business specialising in the servicing and support of Merlo telescopic handlers.

Owen Buttle, National Sales Manager at Merlo UK said, "Mark and Stewart have both spent a large part of their combined 40 years in the industry working with Merlo products. This makes Marst Agri well positioned to offer excellent advice

and support to both existing and prospective Merlo customers."

Marst Agri said it intends to build on its established strong local reputation for parts and service with sales of new machines.

Offering the manufacturer's full range of agricultural telescopic handlers and genuine attachments, the dealership is also able to provide Merlo retail finance to support those purchases.

Mark Butcher commented, "We will continue to develop the Marst Agri business, whilst continuing to maintain an excellent level of aftersales service to all customers, both old and new".

For 70 years, Kramp has made life easier for farmers. While you've worked the soil, watched the skies, tended the crops, we've been hard at work too, making sure you have all the technical equipment and support you need. That's how we've grown into Europe's largest agri-supply specialist with the industry's most relevant product offering that's easy to order and ready to deliver fast.

We Keep Farmers Farming



GENERATIONS OF GETTING PARTS TO YOU ON TIME

INDUSTRY

NEW DISTRIBUTION FOR SPYKER SPREADERS IN UK

Turf Machinery Spares Ltd appointed



Brinly Hardy Co has announced that Turf Machinery Spares Ltd has been appointed as its distributor of the Spyker Spreaders brand for the UK and Northern Ireland.

Spyker Spreaders' Sales Director, Roger Beames said, "We're excited that Turf Machinery Spares Ltd is now leading the distribution in the UK and Northern Ireland. It has an excellent team and a very efficient operation that is centrally located with strong logistics partners nearby. Its ability to support our customers in short order, while also offering new products and spare parts online was something we wanted."

"We're confident they have the best stock of Spyker Spreaders and spare parts to support our new and existing customers."

Trevor Brooks, Sales Director at Turf Machinery Spares added, "I have always been impressed with the quality of Spyker spreaders so we felt this was an ideal product for us and we're all looking forward to working with the Brinley Hardy Group to grow the Spyker Spreaders market here in the UK."

INDUSTRY

CLUB CAR APPOINTS HUNT FOREST GROUP

As a new UK distribution partner



Club Car has announced Hunt Forest Group as a new UK distribution partner.

Hunt Forest Group, based in the south of England with nine branches across five counties, supplies specialist machinery, parts and services to the professional turf, construction and residential markets. Earlier this year it acquired Smart Agricultural Services to nearly double in size, now employing 180 staff.

The manufacturer said the new partnership will help strengthen its presence in the south and south-west of the UK, supplying its golf, commercial and consumer vehicles to a large, diverse customer base.

Andy Bourke, Club Car's Regional Manager UK&I & Nordics, said, "This is a very exciting partnership which will allow Club Car to continue growing across the south of the UK."

"There are more than 120 golf clubs in this region and having Hunt Forest Group on board will allow Club Car to serve and support this market. Hunt Forest Group is an ambitious organisation that places an emphasis on excellent service and strong relationships, so it's an excellent fit with Club Car and we look forward to building together."

Ed Smales, Hunt Forest Group Sales Director, said, "We're excited to add Club Car to our portfolio, it will strengthen our position in the professional turf and commercial market, giving us fantastic product power. Coupled with our service and support, we feel this will be a mutually beneficial partnership for not only Hunt Forest and Club Car, but also our customer base and Club Car customers."

PEOPLE

SENIOR ROLE AT ARIENSCO CONFIRMED

Executive Vice President of EMEAA

AriensCo has announced the appointment of Jochen Schneider as its new Executive Vice President of the Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia region (EMEAA).

Jochen most recently held various leadership positions with Aebi Schmidt Holding AG including CEO of North America, COO of Global Operations and Managing Director Aebi Schmidt Germany.

AriensCo said this appointment underlines its continued investment in global operations and supports its strategy to expand its presence in the EMEAA region. This includes the most recent acquisition of German professional mower manufacturer, AS-Motor, in May and completing the start-up of zero-turn mower production in the UK at Oxford.

The EVP of EMEAA will be responsible for all facets of the company's business in the region including sales, engineering, operations and profit and loss for Ariens, Countax, Westwood and AS-Motor brands. Both Darren Spencer, VP and Managing Director AriensCo UK and Maria Lange, VP and Managing Director AriensCo Germany, will report to the EVP EMEAA.

"We're excited to have Jochen join our already strong leadership team in EMEAA and utilise his over three decades of international experience to help us leverage the talent and resources already established in the region", said Larry Weyers, COO and President of AriensCo.



Jochen Schneider

DEALERS



The Krone Forage Solutions team together with Case IH Area Sales Managers Simon Pratt (far left) and Robert Fox (far right)

NEW DEALER FOR CASE IH

Based in Oxfordshire

Case IH has announced that KFS, based in Chipping Norton, has been appointed as a new Case IH dealer.

The Krone-owned dealership will provide a full dealership service for the Case IH machinery range alongside its existing Krone and Lemken equipment.

Commenting on the development, Paul Harrison, Case IH Business Director UK and ROI, said, "We're delighted that KFS is joining our dealer network. The dealership is a well-respected business working with strong independent brands, covering an area of the UK that was previously open for Case IH."

"We look forward to working with the KFS team as it grows sales of our products in the years ahead."

Eddie Caulfield, General Manager at KFS added, "The addition of the CASE IH franchise strengthens our position of providing specialist machinery solutions to our customer base. Since moving to the area two years ago, we've seen our customer base grow as the Krone and Lemken brands have become established. The addition of Case IH to our line-up means we're now in a position to offer a wide range of tractors and combines to complement our forage harvesting and seed establishment offerings."

INDUSTRY



From northern England and Scotland are: Steven Sorrie, Jack Johnston, Charlie Scurrah (Rickerby); Ollie McLellan, Shaun McClune, Dylan Service, Stuart Armstrong (Gordons); Aidan Brebner, Graeme Stewart, Kyle Ross, Lewis Stevens (Sellars).
From Ireland are: Eoin Walsh (Alan Douglas); Christian Cullen (Breens); Mark Byrne (Kellys); Gavin McCarthy (McCarthy); Luke McGovern (Ardagh Agri Services)

CLAAS APPRENTICES LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Great interest shown in Barony course

Despite the difficulties of the past 18 months and the impact this has had on education, Claas says it has received "an exceptionally high level of interest" in its Agricultural Apprenticeship scheme.

Claas dealers from throughout the north of England, Scotland and Ireland have enrolled 16 new apprentices onto the manufacturer's Agricultural Apprenticeship scheme run at SRUC Barony.

The new 2021 apprentice cohort is one of the largest intakes of students since Claas first introduced the opportunity to train at Barony, near Dumfries, in 2008. Ahead of starting their course, the new students recently attended an induction day at Barony where they learnt about the college and what they will be learning

and doing over the next four years.

Over the first three years of their apprenticeship the students will attend the Barony campus on a block-release basis, spending a total of 36 weeks at the college. During this time they will be given comprehensive training in the wide range of technical skills a service engineer needs to look after today's highly advanced agricultural machinery. When not at college, the students will spend time at their sponsoring dealership, where they will be mentored and supported as they put their new-learned skills to the test. In addition, they will also be invited to the Claas Academy at Saxham for specific product training, prior to undertaking further advanced technical and industry training in their final fourth year.

The manufacturer says that completion of their apprenticeship will, however, be just the start of their training with the company. Having qualified and working at their dealership they will then have access to ongoing training and development, and ultimately the opportunity to move into more specialised or management roles within their dealership or Claas UK.



Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Edinburgh

TORO

BATTERY JUST GOT BIGGER*



43cm Flex-Force 60V Recycler - 21843

55cm Flex-Force 60V Recycler - 21864

76cm eRider Side Discharge - 75500

LEGENDARY PERFORMANCE, WITH SMART BATTERY POWER

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Toro's ever expanding range of battery-powered products are designed with Toro's legendary reliability, durability and performance, combined with the benefits of battery power. Finally, a cordless range without compromises.

If you're interested in partnering with Toro then please email sales.uk@toro.com

*Model 21843 and 21864 uses a 60V Lithium-ion battery and model 75500 uses a 72V lead acid battery.

DEALERS

REEKIE TAKES ON BAUER

Sales, service and parts support



Rob Jackson (left), Bauer UK and Ireland, with Sam Mercer, Reekie Ltd General Manager at Cupar and Perth

Reekie Ltd, part of the Hamilton Ross Group, has been announced as a newly-appointed official dealer for Bauer's premium range of crop irrigation equipment.

The main focus of the new partnership is on the group's depots at Perth and Cupar, which cover some of the largest potato and vegetable growing areas in Scotland.

Reekie Ltd has already supplied a Bauer Rainstar E31 to a long-standing customer, and to underscore its commitment to the new partnership has taken a second E31 into stock and placed a substantial order for critical parts to support future customers for the machines.

Sam Mercer, General Manager at Cupar and Perth, said, "We have a long-standing involvement with irrigation equipment and wanted to get back to supplying new irrigators again with a premium brand that would sit well alongside our agricultural machinery franchises.

"In Bauer, we have that premium brand; the company has a well-deserved reputation for its engineering and manufacturing quality, and the performance and durability of its irrigators."

Rob Jackson of Bauer UK and Ireland said: "We're delighted to have reached this agreement with Reekie Ltd, an established and well-respected dealership with people in sales, service and parts who know and understand irrigation equipment and the crucial part it plays in growing high-quality, high-value potato and vegetable crops.

"We're already taking orders and securing build slots at the factory for irrigation reels to be delivered in time for next year's growing season, so it's important for growers to look ahead and plan their requirements now for next year and beyond."



Photograph: Cobra MX51S80V, Which? 'Best Buy' May 2021.

COBRA

Why Not Become a Cobra Dealer in 2021?

With over 150 products in the Cobra range including the largest range of lawnmowers in the UK, Cobra is fast becoming a market leading brand in garden machinery. Contact us today to join the growing number of Cobra Dealers across the U.K. For information on becoming a Cobra Dealer contact Andy Marvin: 07771 581 296 or call: 0115 986 6646 today.

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Petrol Mowers

From Just £111.55*



Blower Vacs

From Just £90.69*



Brushcutters

From Just £84.93*



Cultivators

From Just £109.86*



GETTING DEALERS BACK IN SEATS

Autumn 2021 saw manufacturers, including Stiga UK, take their upcoming products around the country to get dealers trying out new launches in person for the first time in 18 months.

Editor STEVE GIBBS joined dealers in the South-West to check out a host of new machinery coming soon from the company



Gary Whitney

Stiga UK organised a series of dealer roadshow events across the UK throughout September.

Taking its new equipment to its dealers around the country, these events were in place of the company's traditional three-day dealer conference which, like everything else, had to be cancelled last year.

Always a huge event in the network's autumn calendar, the recent editions of the conference had taken place at the National Motorcycle Museum near Birmingham's NEC. Across the three days, concentrating on the company's three brands of Stiga, Mountfield and Atco, I've consistently been impressed with just how many of their dealers make the effort to visit

Birmingham to attend. This year, however, the company felt that things needed to be done a little differently, so on a rainy Tuesday, I joined a heathy turnout of south-west England dealers at the Wincanton Racecourse stop-off in Somerset. I overheard plenty of attendees chatting amongst themselves about how this was the first opportunity to get out and meet one of their suppliers, and indeed fellow dealers, for the best part of 18 months.

Speaking to Gary Whitney, Stiga UK's MD, he told me he was delighted with how the roadshows had begun and how he had high hopes for how the forthcoming dates would pan out based on the bookings he had for each venue. Gary said, "We're very pleased with attendance. You're always going to get one or two

no-shows, but actually there's been a far lower drop-out rate than we'd have at our normal conference." Gary put this down to dealers having much less distance to travel. He said they were anticipating seeing as many people as they do at their normal three-day conference. "We'll absolutely see as many dealerships," he confirmed. "We estimate that at these roadshows we'll see two-thirds of our partners, which is on-par with what we get regularly."

With the seeming popularity of this roadshow format, the question naturally presented itself: would these tour events stay as a permanent fixture for Stiga?

"I'm going to be led by what our dealers tell us they want," Gary told me. "If they say it's better for them to attend roadshows, then that's



Trying out the new Gyro



The new Stig-A robotic mower

what we'll do. My objective is to stage whatever brings us the most people – that's super important."

To gauge opinion, attendees at each stop-off had a QR code on the reverse of their name badge which they were asked to scan to access a feedback survey. Gary said they would listen to the dealers' thoughts from this to determine if the tour is repeated in subsequent years.

When pressed, Gary did say he enjoyed the big conference event and would like to stage another one at some point because it's such a great occasion and it's fabulous to see everyone together – but right now the most important thing for him was making sure the dealers got to experience the new machines.

Getting hands-on

The order of day across all the roadshow stop-offs was facilitating the dealers getting hands-on with the new machines that were being launched. It was notable that, unlike at the conference, Gary wasn't delivering one of his state-of-the-industry-type addresses. He told me it was much more important this year to introduce the new machines and then get dealers in seats and hands on handlebars. It's this physical interaction with new kit that has been sorely lacking for dealers of

any manufacturer's products throughout the Covid pandemic.

The presentations of the new machines, of which there were plenty, actually took a hybrid form. Stiga sales managers gave brief overviews of each new product, with further detail delivered via a series of demonstration videos. These clips were filmed both as a contingency in case the roadshow couldn't go ahead for any reason, but helpfully also, so they could be shown to the rest of the dealership team back at the premises. Available online, they can be used to keep everyone who didn't get to come along to one of the live events in the loop regarding what's new.

So what was new? Cordless power was certainly top of the agenda, with many new battery products launched across the ranges. There were new petrol models too, as well as Stiga's foray into the robotic market.

"We're putting so much new product out there," said Gary, "I don't think any other supplier is coming close. Some of these products we're introducing at the roadshows, the development time has been remarkably quick."

Indeed, Stiga was keen to stress this point of just how busy its R&D department has been, reacting to feedback regarding what innovations their customers and dealers wanted to see.

Also, significantly, there were plenty of patents for various elements of design and manufacture spread across the ranges. This notion of applying a patent to their own innovations to prevent copyists, appeared to be a policy the manufacturer was keen to pursue.

Gary explained the thinking behind this policy in regard to the new Stiga walk-behind mowers as an example. He told me, "Our new Stiga mower models now feature our patented handlebar design. No one else will be able to do that handlebar the way that we've done it. Whether it's the way it clips on at the bottom with no bolts to tighten up, or how it slots in straight out of the box, or the way you can alter the height, fold it down or tip the handle from one way to the other – these patents are of great benefit for a dealer. With these mowers, we are now offering a real point of difference."

"It gives dealers who stock Mountfield a reason to maybe stock a range of Stiga petrol mowers alongside. They are uniquely different to the Mountfield and hopefully a reason to not stock somebody else's machines. Dealers like to give choice – I'd just like them to give choice between Mountfield and Stiga!"

Another product the company was launching at the roadshow was the Swift, a battery ride-on mower with a

polypropylene, twin-bladed cutter deck. "What we'll see with this," explained Gary, "is the ability to get a consumer who is buying a ride-on tractor already invested in four batteries and a charger. If they then need a brushcutter or strimmer, they can buy into the range." He told me if the Swift was the only new product they'd had available this year, he would've been pleased to have held these roadshows just to launch that.

A new electric ride-on that caught the eye of the dealers was the Gyro. Steered by an innovative joystick controller, there was a prototype on show for test driving with the production model scheduled to hit the marketplace next year. "This is another product that's been made from scratch to be battery," Gary said. "Once you start designing things from the start to be that power-source, it frees up a lot of opportunity."

Stiga's R&D team had also brought to fruition two new robotic mowers, the Stig and the Stig-A. The Stig was a conventional unit, guided by a wire installed in the garden, whereas the Stig-A used some fancy new technology to function without the perimeter boundary.

Gary explained, "The Stig A isn't just a GPS-controlled robot because GPS isn't accurate enough. Sure there's RTK GPS which is more accurate, but it needs a satellite all the time. It's fine in a wide-open space, but in peoples' gardens there are times of

the day when there's no satellite coverage, or the signal's weak. That would result in a normal GPS-driven robot stopping. Our patented technology helps the robot understand when the satellite signal isn't going to be there. It allows the robot to create a map that tells it when and when not to mow.

"This is all brand new technology – all developed internally by our engineers."

Spring '22 supply

From a dealer's point of view, of course, it's all well and good to have invented this new technology, but it's not much use if the supply isn't there to sell. To be fair to Gary, he was up front, acknowledging the problems which they, and indeed all suppliers, have experienced this year. He told me, "We're definitely in a bit of a supply hole at the moment and we're most likely not going to find our way out of that until the season's over."

"However, production is up and running and matters will improve in the coming weeks and months, so our supply will be back on track."

"The new products we're showing at our roadshow events, those will be coming into stock during the period from December through to March. We're confident about that, we've secured supply."

"You can imagine how important electronic components are and Stiga has forward-ordered in a huge way on

those. Therefore, we know we've got the supply to produce what we plan to produce."

Gary was clearly grateful that his dealers have been patient with the company during what has been a difficult period for all. He said, "They've been rightly frustrated by not being able to fulfil orders in some cases. Remarkably though, I'm told by our dealers that there are consumers who are continuing to wait for something that they perhaps ordered months previously. I do appreciate, however, that it's been tough for dealers."

"There have been situations where ourselves and other suppliers, haven't been able to give them strong guides as to when they can expect to receive deliveries – that's been the most frustrating thing."

Despite these circumstances, Gary said that overall Stiga's business had grown tremendously over this past year. "Much more than we had anticipated," was how he put it. There had been growth both in terms of revenue and more dealerships coming on board, he told me.

Now, with all these new products due to come on stream soon, Gary clearly felt that there was plenty of positive opportunity for Stiga's dealers in the times ahead. "Things won't be going backwards from here," he said, "only onwards."



Dealers could get hands-on at the roadshows



Events took place across the country

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56V
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VIBRATION
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NOISE
LpA 80dB(A)

1014m³/h
AIR VOLUME

AIR SPEED: 212km/h

FORCE: 19.2N

LEVEL 1 350mins
LEVEL 2 210mins
LEVEL 3 140mins
LEVEL 4 100mins
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PROFESSIONAL X

SEGWAY ANNOUNCES ENTRY TO ROBOTIC MOWER SECTOR



Segway Navimow

The self-balancing transportation manufacturer says further lawn and garden products are to follow. Service Dealer Editor, STEVE GIBBS reports

Segway, the manufacturer best known for its self-balancing transportation vehicles, has announced its entry into the lawn and garden sector, with the launch of its first robotic mower, the Navimow.

In an online presentation, the company said that four models of the Navimow would be available in dealerships from spring 2022, with the first shipments scheduled to leave its factories in December 2021.

Dennis Hardholt, President of Segway Europe said, "With cutting-edge mobility and robotic technologies, Segway aims to bring innovations to the mower industry and the outdoor power equipment industry as a whole.

"This is the first time that Segway has entered the field of garden and outdoor tools, however, our goal is not to be a tool manufacturer, but to provide users with more labour-saving and intelligent solutions through robotics. Technology is the way to achieve it while the product itself is at the core."

Introducing the product in more detail, Senior Sales Manager Ryan Kong explained that the robot navigates via what the company calls an Exact Fusion Locating System (EFLS) – a satellite-controlled system that means there is no need for a boundary wire installation.

"We understand that great technology should understand the way people live and deliver improved experiences to match," said Ryan.

"With this technology users will no longer need to worry about installation and maintenance. All they need to do is

to set up a digital boundary – or in our words, a virtual boundary." Ryan went on to demonstrate how this could be achieved via the use of the Navimow's app.

The company said the robot employs a Frequent Soft Cut System (FSCS) that means that the lawn is cut from above and the desired height is reached gradually. Offset blades allow cutting as close as possible to edges and corners. Obstacles such as flower pots are automatically detected by the unit and bypassed; if children or pets get too close, Blade Halt technology immediately kicks in and the blades stop spinning.

Addressing the question of cost for the mower, Ryan said there will be four models available from spring 2022 for different sizes of lawn, ranging from €1,199 for the smallest, up to €2,499 for the largest.

Explaining that the product is now in beta testing, Ryan said, "Navimow is close to mass production and we're ready to fill orders. The first batch of shipment will be sent December 2021. We pursue the perfect user experience and are doing numerous tests to improve the product."

Ryan ended the presentation by confirming that Segway intends to follow up this launch with further products for the OPE sector. "Navimow is our first entry into the lawn care industry," he said, "but it will not be our last. We promise there will be more to come. Another robot will be soon to join our robotics family.

"Segway robotics will continue to invest in providing users with a more convenient life."



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PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

Engineered to harness the power of today's high-performance saws with the industry leading performance you expect from Oregon®. This chain is ready to work as hard as you are.

- LubriTec keeps your saw chain and guide bar oiled, for less friction and longer life
- Blued Cutters deliver high-quality protection against corrosion
- Top-Plate Filing Indicators make accurate sharpening easy
- Our exclusive OCS-01 Steel delivers greater durability
- NO BUMPER DRIVE LINK



PowerCut® 20-Series LGX Loops

.050"	.058"	.063"
20LGX056E	21LGX056E	22LGX056E
20LGX062E	21LGX064E	22LGX062E
20LGX064E	21LGX065E	22LGX063E
20LGX066E	21LGX066E	22LGX067E
20LGX067E	21LGX067E	22LGX068E
20LGX072E	21LGX068E	22LGX072E
20LGX078E	21LGX072E	22LGX074E
	21LGX076E	
	21LGX078E	
	21LGX080E	

PowerCut® 20-Series LGX Reels

.050"	.058"	.063"
20LGX025R	21LGX025R	22LGX025R
20LGX100R	21LGX100R	22LGX100R



Standard Sequence

20LGX	0.50"	1.3 mm
21LGX	0.58"	1.5 mm
22LGX	0.63"	1.6 mm





RoviMo, the UK's first autonomous battery-powered cylinder mower, in action at Manchester City FC

ROBOTIC SKILLS DISPLAYED AT MAN CITY

The latest autonomous mowing solution for turf professionals, the RoviMo, was recently unveiled to an audience of Premiership groundstaff. Service Dealer's LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR, joined them to find out what the robot could offer – and at what price?

A recent trip to Manchester City's Training Academy enabled myself and other invited guests to witness the unveiling of what was described as the UK's first autonomous battery-powered cylinder mower – the RoviMo – developed and manufactured by Ronovatec, a Swiss-based company. The unit is being distributed by the GGM Group <https://www.ggmgroundscare.com/> here in the UK, overseen by their Managing Director, Chris Gibson, who readers will know as *Service Dealer's* current diarist of the season.

Chris was excited about the potential of this new product, telling the invited guests that RoviMo is the world's first intelligent electric vehicle capable of mowing patterns autonomously according to the guidelines of

national football associations, UEFA, or FIFA, precisely and over the shortest distance. It can offer a range of cutting patterns at the touch of a button.

Now into its final phase of development, the object of the day's demonstration was to allow some professional Premiership grounds staff to come and see it working. Also the day meant Ronovatec and GGM could receive some feedback and observations from these leading grounds professionals.

As we all know, mowing grass is generally a repetitive, time-consuming, noisy and environmentally-damaging process. In the season between April and October for example, outdoor football pitches have to be mowed about 50 to 60 times. Stadium football pitches are mowed 70 to 90 times a year or more, depending on use. The tight occupancy of the football pitches, the availability of staff, the condition of the grass, weather dependency and noise regulations are influencing factors that put professional grounds teams under time pressure.

With much more focus and attention on climate change issues, and the fact that many of our land-based industries are now being forced to move away from oil-driven vehicles, the time has come for companies and business to start investing in these new cleaner initiatives and move to a more sustainable way of managing their sports facilities.

The approach of Ronovatec, however, was to take this concept a stage further and produce a fully autonomous battery-powered vehicle that does away with having to tie up valuable staffing resources.

I was looking forward to the demonstration and, like many of those attending, had several questions about the concept and how it could deliver on its promises.

At the event we had representations from Arsenal, Burnley, Everton and a strong contingent of the Manchester City grounds team under the leadership of Roy Rigby.

Roy has been in this industry 40-plus years and knows only too well that we, as grounds professionals, have always been looking for innovations and efficiencies to make our jobs more productive and a safer environment

to work in. The opportunity to reduce staff man-hours on such basic tasks as brushing and mowing, on both natural and artificial pitches, may well be a sound investment for the club – especially if it can deliver the high standards that are now expected at Manchester City FC.

Innovative ideas

The day began with an introduction to the company that took on the production of this autonomous vehicle and has spent six years bringing it to fruition. First up was Marcus Riva, CEO at Ronovatec, who gave us an insight into how this project came about, starting with his initial thoughts on its merits in 2015. He said a partner was found in the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Lucerne who, along with sponsorship from Innosuisse, produced the first prototype in 2018. Thousands of working hours were invested into R&D with regards to intelligence and mechanics. The result is the first fully electric spindle (cylinder) mower robot to autonomously mow lawn patterns.

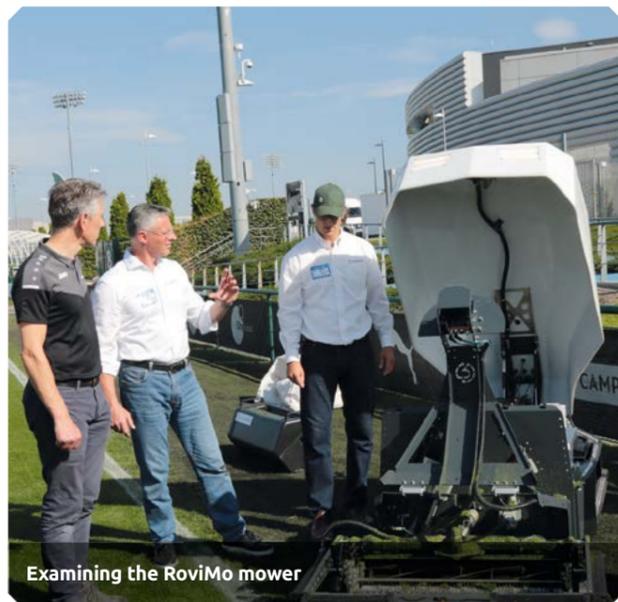
To date the company has built seven of these RoviMo units, with six actively working in Europe.

The development of this autonomous unit, Marcus



Marcus Riva (right) explaining the concept and development of the RoviMo





Examining the RoviMo mower

explained, was essentially to provide an equipment carrier system that can autonomously, quietly and precisely perform various repetitive operations associated with the maintenance of professional sport playing surfaces, both natural and synthetic pitches.

The company is currently looking at providing a set of rotary mowers, brushes and verticutting units to add to the unit, along with developing a triple-cylinder mower attachment that will be able to open up the market to golf clubs. In fact, the scope of attachments that could be developed is staggering.

It was then left to Flurin Arner, the company's software engineer, to take us through the finer points of the machine and demonstrate it in use.

The RoviMo is an autonomous mobile robot or AMR. It is a multifunctional platform for the management of lawns and other green spaces. In essence, it's a computer-controlled, fully-autonomous robot on three wheels. The front wheels are individually controlled and the rear wheel allows manoeuvring around tight curves due to its swivel axis and precise bearings.

The steering has been designed to be gentle on the turf leaving no marks or gauges in the surface.

The unit can also be controlled by a phone app and has a manual cable controller, if you so want to be in control yourself.

The mower is described as having a small footprint with a total weight of circa 300kg. This low weight is designed to protect the turf and underlying soil from excessive load or compaction.

The robot is driven purely electrically with the battery not only providing long operating times but also a low centre of gravity, thanks to the design. The modular design allows diversity and multi-functionality for outdoor use, especially regarding sports fields.

With the provision of numerous built-in sensors ('sensor

fusion' of GPS/RTK data with odometry, IMU, etc), it is possible to manoeuvre the vehicle according to a predetermined path with centimetre precision.

In addition to the navigation sensors, multiple safety sensors are integrated onboard so surroundings are scanned constantly for obstacles and dangers.

If RoviMo spots a danger, it will slow and then halt, alert the operator via text and if the obstacle disappears, ie an animal moves off, it will automatically resume its planned path unless otherwise directed by the operator.

The battery, we were told, consists of multiple lithium-ion cells, which are connected accordingly and supply a nominal voltage of 48V DC. The battery supplies all components such as motors for the locomotion of the vehicle, an electric cylinder for lifting the stem and a drive for the spindle or similar along with the navigation and security elements.

The integrated battery has a capacity of 7.5kWh, with which an area of 8,000m² can be managed – eg mowed with the cylinder module twice.

The charging cycle is low at approx. 2-3 hours, with charging life cycle in excess of 3,000, cycles as guaranteed by the manufacturer. The unit is powered by six batteries that can be interchanged with any replacement batteries held.

Essentially the mower is said to be able to mow two full-size football pitches in a day (8hrs), usually taking three to four hours to mow each pitch. However, depending on ground conditions and on the type of pattern chosen, along with the weather, it may slow down operating times.

The model we saw on demo was fitted with a single-cylinder Cub Cadet Infinicut floating head unit with grass box. This prototype does not offer automated emptying of the grass box at present, but this feature will be in place for the official launch of the machine in 2022.

Questions to be answered

During the presentations several questions were asked by the professionals in attendance. I was keen to know the price of the machine and its running costs. The company stated that the unit is currently priced at around £75,000 and there are some other operational costs such as servicing charges, software updates and battery replacement fees to add on.

As the unit is driven by six batteries, and each one comes at a cost of around £2,000 each, it's a staggering £12,000 for a set of additional or new batteries! No doubt by the time a user takes all these costs into account, they may be looking at a figure of around £100,000 plus.

A lot of money, but the company stresses it is the longer-term gains from saving on labour, reducing running costs and reducing emissions that may influence customers to invest.

Speaking to a number of the professional groundstaff

during the day, there were still a lot of questions to be asked and issues to be fulfilled before they could see it as a viable alternative to the current machinery they use.

Several told me they would be keen to see how the company design and implement the self-emptying grass box system and, more to the point, where and what type of dumping area would it need?

Also questioned was the issue of the wheels and the affect they would have on the pitch. Some said they would much prefer a set of front/rear rollers fitted to the RoviMo.

Another question raised was what configurations and size of the cassette systems would be available, and at what cost?

One of the ground staff did comment that it would be a good acquisition for the maintenance, essentially the brushing and cleaning, of artificial pitches – something he described as one of the banes of his life. Artificial pitches experience a lot of use and wear, and regular brushing with a robotic machine would be a godsend, especially if it freed labour resources up to spend more time on the natural turf pitches.

It appears from the information provided by both companies that there will be further developments for this machine. They are looking to provide a wider range of implements and tools to make it increasingly versatile and effective in helping to reduce valuable labour time.

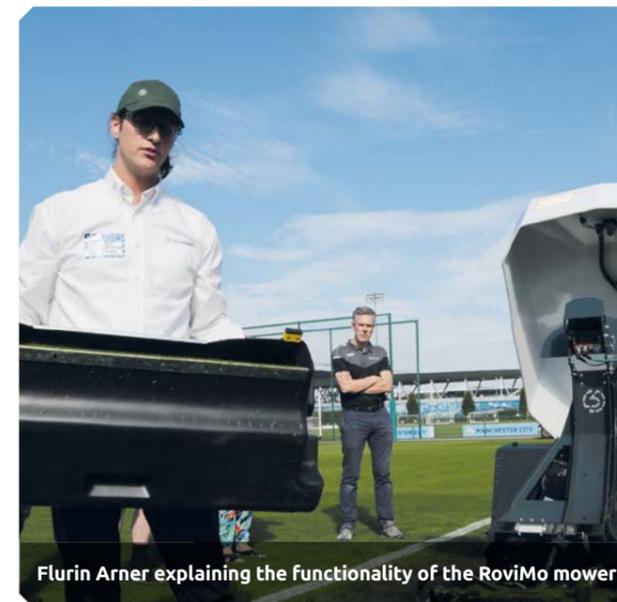
The company also spoke of the opportunity to provide many more modules that could include rotary mowing decks, triple mowing decks, brushes, hoovers, fertiliser spreaders, a sprayer and other UV and ground securing devices. However, the first hurdle will be the need to produce a self-emptying grass box.

The list could be endless, but for me, this new concept is all about freeing up labour to do other essential tasks, not about reducing staff levels.

At present I believe the cost of investment in the unit would be a tight call, even at the level of the Premiership. £100,000-plus could, at current pay levels, effectively pay for three or four additional staff members. However, the bigger picture is smarter ways of working and helping to drive down carbon emissions, making the work place a safer environment.

These new technologies are now moving at a great pace and with the constant battle to reduce carbon emissions and to be environmentally-friendly, the days of petrol- and diesel-powered machinery will surely be on a steeper decline.

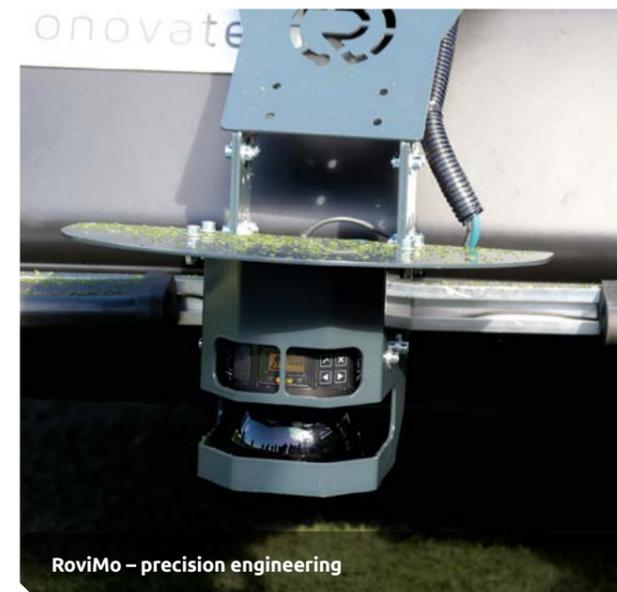
The key message with the RoviMo was all about improving efficiencies and, in the longer term, making the working environment a more attractive place to encourage the next generation of grounds professionals to come and work in the diverse and challenging sports turf industry.



Flurin Arner explaining the functionality of the RoviMo mower



The RoviMo batteries cost around £2,000 each



RoviMo – precision engineering

AGILITY & ADAPTATION

Those are the key attributes that Kay Green, who took over as STIHL GB MD on 1 March this year, believes that dealers need to thrive. Editor STEVE GIBBS caught up with her to find out what has surprised her about the industry, the importance of their dealer relationships and the ongoing issues surrounding supply

Kay Green took over earlier this year at STIHL Great Britain as Managing Director, following the retirement of long-standing predecessor Robin Lennie in December 2020.

For the past three years, Kay had been UK and Ireland Country Manager for toy company Hasbro UK Ltd. During her career at Hasbro, she also held several senior commercial roles including director level positions in both sales and

marketing, and a two-year period as Nordic Country Manager in Copenhagen.

When I met Kay in September, she told me that when she was looking for a new challenge she didn't want to work for a competitor in the toy industry.

"I was looking for a company in another field that had the same family values as Hasbro," she said.

"I think to find a company like STIHL with the family at the heart of it is incredible."



Kay Green

SERVICE DEALER: Have you had the chance to meet many of STIHL's dealers yet?

Kay Green: I have actually. I initially focussed on understanding the business – I'm a farmer's daughter so I'm not a complete novice to the sector. However, I think it would've been a bit naïve to run out and see dealers before you've got a bit of knowledge about the company you're representing, so in June I started making visits and I'm trying to do two or three days every month, concentrating on various regions. It's been great because they are so friendly.

SD: Has much surprised you about the sector since you've been in your role?

KG: I think the biggest thing that has surprised me is the fragmentation of the dealers. I'm used to having some big players in the market, including some dominant multi-nationals. This industry, though, is still very much fragmented, with many true family businesses being important players, and the diversity is much greater.

I think it's heart-warming that people who have invested their own money, can still make money out of this industry.

It means our relationship with our

dealers is a real partnership – and it needs to continue to be so. They are the representation of our brand. That's why we're so particular about how we want our brand to look in-store and online, because that's how a consumer sees STIHL.

SD: You must need to be in constant communication with your dealers?

KG: Dealers want us to have a close relationship with them. It helps in their conversations with customers if we're all going out with the same message. We make these efforts because we're all passionate about the industry.

I admire dealers because they've got their livelihoods on the line. That's how I grew up, my dad was like that, so I have a lot of admiration. Working with them to be agile and to continually move with the times is important to me.

What's going to weather the storm for everyone is agility – as well as being consumer-friendly and adapting. If you think about over these past 18 months, it's those dealers that did things like establish a hand-over kiosk so customers didn't have to come into the store, so they could remain open, that thrived. It's about thinking fast, and I think Covid has given us all a little kick to do that.

SD: So, there's a commitment there to an independent dealer network?

KG: Absolutely, they are the bread and butter of our business. They are the heartland of STIHL and that continues going forward. The key is how we work together to be agile and to adapt. That's how any business is successful.

As I said, it's a partnership. The same as the dealers will be reviewing us and the offering we're giving, we need to continually look at whether standards are being met and is the partnership working? For me it must be a win-win partnership. We need geographical cover, and we need product cover. If we ever introduce new dealers, it's

because another isn't taking a product group.

It isn't about a race to the bottom. We want the value in our brand.

SD: Even with the online discounters?

KG: I'd rather say, let's not moan about what they're doing, what can you do to grow your business? I think you must own your own growth and your own development, rather than bash somebody else. I think they can co-exist.

Of course, some online-only retailers (in other sectors) are now offering additional benefits at extra cost, including online product tutorials etc, so it's not all just about lowest prices.

SD: How has STIHL coped with the worldwide supply crisis we have all experienced this year?

KG: It's been the perfect storm, but we're lucky in a way because a lot of our manufacturing is our own, so we're now on round-the-clock production. I think the challenge is that demand has gone up and we're a long lead-time product, therefore it's very difficult to just flick a switch and make it all alright. People might say, when will the demand slow down? But you can't complain. A lot of industries have really suffered through Covid – whereas we've been a growing industry throughout.

We must try to give as much communication to our dealers as possible, though. If we've got the information, they are the first to know. That's the best you can do. Honesty is the best policy, whether it's good news or bad.

One of the other things we put in place, is a document that shows what is available. If you can't have a particular product, you can see what alternatives are available. It was something we put in place when I joined, because otherwise there's the risk of becoming fixated on what you can't get hold of.



SD: Do you have predictions where the supply situation is heading?

KG: I'd be buying currency if I did! Seriously, I think the challenge is consumers have created new habits and they're spending more time at home, with more disposable income to spend on their gardens.

Our projection now is that it will get better gradually into next year, but it won't be a light-switch moment. If demand doesn't increase, probably by mid-year we'd start to feel a bit more normality. If demand changes upward, it's harder to predict.

SD: Is there still good margin for dealers to make with STIHL?

KG: We're not here for us to make money and for dealers not. We need it to be a win-win relationship. We all know that costs to our business have gone up, but I think if you ask dealers specifically about STIHL, we have tried to absorb as many of those as possible. There is a tipping point though, where we must pass them on.

I believe that as demand has been so high, the price elasticity has meant that retail prices have been able to jump as well. The costs we're passing on should be going through to the consumer. They shouldn't be chipping away at the margin of the dealer. It's true inflation and whilst demand outstrips supply, that will continue.

SD: What product trends do you see on the horizon?

KG: I think the conversion to battery will continue. Also, I think robotic products will increase in popularity. If I talk to some of my colleagues in Scandinavia, the numbers they are doing there are phenomenal. I don't know how successful the robotic market is going to become here, but for sure it's going to grow.

SD: Is there still a place for petrol-powered products in STIHL's portfolio?

KG: There is because the battery conversion doesn't happen overnight. As one declines the other grows. And then there's the professional side. Obviously, battery technology has advanced rapidly to allow it to be used for the most power-hungry tools, but I think for the high-end professional, where power levels and recharging are issues, petrol is here to stay for a good while yet. Battery works perfectly well in professional horticulture, but it's quite different in professional forestry. Technology will develop and we may see things differently in the future. But right now, petrol isn't going anywhere for pro-forestry and other sectors like construction.

SD: Should servicing dealers be worried at the proliferation of battery-powered products?

KG: Again, it's back to being agile. It's about looking at other aftermarket revenue streams where dealers can make good margin. For me it's about focusing on what you can do and what you can control, rather than what you can't.

It's also about educating your customers. We've been trialling with some dealers putting screens in stores, promoting the accessories that the customer needs and this is really helping them sell additional products.

Maintenance is still required on battery products, so there's plenty of opportunity for dealers to get additional and repeat business from that. Our STIHL Connected digital system, for example, can help our dealers see when customers' machines require maintenance. This helps drive servicing back to the STIHL dealer network. We will continue to put even more focus on helping the dealer to acquire that business. I'm not putting the onus on them, like everything, the aftermarket is a partnership.

SD: STIHL isn't attending the next couple of national trade exhibitions; do you still see worth in them?

KG: When we were making our own

internal decisions on the 2021 shows last year, it was still a volatile situation. We decided not to go, with our paramount concern being the protection of our people. That was a short-term decision though – of course we want to return to trade shows. It wasn't a case of never again.

As part of a future hybrid model, face-to-face contact is important, but any show we attend would need to represent value and be relevant to our needs. Any choice to attend must stack up. We're not going to be forced to go to shows. We want to be there if it's the right place for us.

SD: What are the company's marketing plans?

KG: The best way still to reach lots of people is TV. Until that changes, we're still going to have that in our suite of marketing. But fish where the fish are. We'll continue to make sure we're reaching lots of consumers. We're the brand owner, that's our responsibility. It's all about tailoring the message for the different audiences, such as telling stories and offering more engaging content on Facebook for example.

We still have a lot of awareness to gain as there's always new consumers coming into our market. We want to have that first handshake with those consumers and get them into the brand, taking them through their lifecycle of gardens. Same with the pro equipment. We must make sure we're relevant to the professional people and deliver the messages they want to hear. It's critical to the growth of our brand and for our dealers.

A significant amount of our marketing spend is also in digital – and it's highly targeted spend. It's micro targeted, geographically targeted and dealer targeted. It's all geared towards pushing consumers to their nearest dealer.

SD: Any upcoming plans to get your dealer network together?

KG: We're planning on some regional events into next year. We'd also like to

do something a bit bigger too, it's just deciding what that looks like. Ideally, we'd like to do something significant at the end of 2022 to launch 2023, but I think it will be prudent to see how this winter goes before making a final call on that.

SD: Has in-person training started up again?

KG: We're doing some, but we're still more digital – where we've learnt to do some great things. Using a hybrid model of in-person and virtual is how we're planning next year. Digital allows us to get to more people, but face-to-face, bespoke training is critical, particularly on the technical side.

SD: Does the company still plan to move from your current HQ?

KG: Yes we do. We should be starting building work at the end of this year, beginning of next. We hope to be finished and in place by early 2023. Located close to our current building in Camberley, it will be purpose-built from scratch on what is an empty plot of land. It's exciting. We're creating a very large warehouse that will give us the space we desperately need. Areas such as picking and packing stations and goods-in and goods-out can be expanded for example. We're going to have some automation, but we're not

looking to reduce people. All our products should then be able to be distributed from one location. The new offices will also facilitate much more collaborative spaces for our team.

What has taken so long until now is sorting the access to the new building because we need to put a new slip road in place from the dual carriageway. Getting planning for that has been a complex process, but that's all complete now.

SD: Finally, what can give STIHL dealers reasons to be cheerful looking forward?

KG: I think that this industry should be grateful that we've been lucky in many ways during Covid. We've continued to mostly stay open, the industry has grown, and I believe there is a long-term effect that people have reconnected with their gardens. They want to live in nice environments, and I think there will be a long-term benefit from that.

I also think if people are going to have to make the conversion to battery, they must buy into it completely. Yes, that comes with some challenges, but it also comes with many benefits.

I think this is a great industry to be in.

SD: Thank you.





AGENDA ANNOUNCED FOR 2021 SERVICE DEALER CONFERENCE

Smart Working theme to be fully explored

Following last year's hiatus due to Covid, *Service Dealer* is pleased to be welcoming our dealer readers and sponsors back to the DoubleTree by Hilton Oxford Belfry, on **Thursday 25 November 2021** for the *Service Dealer* Conference and Awards 2021.



This year's conference theme couldn't be more appropriate, as we delve into the world of Smart Working. *Service Dealer* owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke, explained, "Smart Working is a concept that we know many of our readers will have

adopted over these past 18 months. At the conference our expert speakers will fully expand on the idea, opening the discussion out for the benefit of all."

Covering a range of topics on the theme, attendees will be treated to a stellar line-up of presenters, from both within the industry and beyond. Sharing their knowledge will be **Sam Watson-Jones**, founder of the Small Robot Company, **Teresa Heath-Wareing**, TedX speaker and digital marketing expert, and making his return to the *Service Dealer* stage, futurist **Ed Gillespie**.

Duncan continued, "The conference will explore all angles of Smart Working, from the dealership to the field, taking into account where we are now and where technology could take us. The day will consider how businesses of all

sizes can use new tech to their best advantage. We're confident that the conference will not only present new concepts for our attendees, but will also provide practical takeaways that can be quickly actionable within their own businesses."

The conference organisers understand the impact of Covid won't be far from people's minds, so rest assured all efforts will be made to consider delegates' comfort while attending the event. *Service Dealer* will be adhering to the latest government guidance, whilst also implementing our own measures in line with our Covid-19 risk assessments. Keep an eye on the *Service Dealer Weekly Update*, sent every Friday at noon, for the latest up-to-date information regarding measures that will be undertaken.

www.servicedealer.co.uk/2021-awards

The agenda for the day is as follows:

Welcome

Duncan Murray-Clarke
Service Dealer owner Duncan, will welcome delegates and introduce the day's Smart Working theme.



Breakout Sessions

These will include a Social Media Masterclass with Teresa Heath-Wareing providing delegates with practical tools for developing their business presence online – plus Sam Watson-Jones will be taking a look at how robotics can be an opportunity for your business.

Round Table Discussion

The day will wrap up with Ed Gillespie as he leads a round table discussion considering riding the 'hybrid work-horse' – wrangling the pros and cons of new ways of working.

Speakers

Ed Gillespie



The popular, futurist speaker returns. Reflecting on his predictions from his appearance in 2018, Ed will be opening the event launching delegates into the theme of Smart Working in a changing world. What does the future look like for your business?

Teresa Heath-Wareing



Award winning TedX speaker and social media marketing expert, Teresa will be discussing "How to have social media success and use it to find your next customer". Teresa was part of the development team behind the *Service Dealer* Toolkit and her familiarity with the sector will offer some great takeaways for your business.

Sam Watson-Jones



Small Robot Company founder, Sam is no stranger to the challenges of bringing technology to the field and will be exploring The Fourth Agricultural Revolution – which he believes is coming sooner than you think!

Popular host returns



Bringing the magic to our awards evening once again, stand-up comedian, actor and TalkSport presenter, **Charlie Baker**, will be returning to complete his hattrick of hosting gigs. As ever, Charlie will guarantee a fun-filled evening of laughter and celebration. We look forward to welcoming you!

Exceptional set of Dealer Of The Year honours

Presentations will reflect endeavours of past 18 months

Given the impact the past 18 months has had on businesses of all sizes and specialisms, *Service Dealer* felt our awards this year should recognise the extra efforts dealerships and their staff have made to rise to the challenges.

As such the honours have been modified for 2021 to reflect and reward the ingenuity and resourcefulness that has been displayed across the network. These might involve efforts helping the community – recognised by the Extra-Mile award – or by innovative marketing ideas – honoured via the Most Creative Communications award.

Duncan Murray-Clarke said, "We are holding these one-off awards to mark this extraordinary period that we have all lived through. We want to honour those dealers who have gone that extra mile to survive and progress through these tough times."

There are six award categories that have been up for nomination:

2021 Dealer Awards categories:



There will also be two special awards made at the behest of an expert panel:



Our 2021 Sponsors

The following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2021 *Service Dealer* Conference and Awards. We'd like to welcome them on board and thank them for their support and input.



TILLAGE LIVE BRINGS DEMOS BACK TO LIFE

The return of the Agricultural Engineers' Association's Tillage Live event to the autumn farm machinery demonstration calendar was welcomed with full plot bookings from manufacturers and importers, and a healthy visitor attendance. MARTIN RICKATSON picks out some of the highlights

After a year's Covid-enforced break, the return of the annual Tillage Live event to September's demonstration schedules saw a strong turnout of exhibitors and visitors to the Farmcare hosted site at Down Ampney in Gloucestershire. While brand new concepts were thin on the ground, there were more than a few trends and timely new introductions among the cultivation kit on show, plus some tractor debuts and even the first public showing of a new sprayer.

CNH provides tractor highlights

While it also had multiple machines from its Kongskilde-derived tillage line on the demo plots, **New Holland** surprised visitors with the first UK public showing of two significant new tractors. First up was the new

generation T7 HD tractor, now with fully-revised operator accommodation and what New Holland terms PLM Intelligence – essentially full two-way telemetry capability. Detailed in a previous issue of *Service Dealer*, the new tractor changes centre around its larger Horizon Ultra cab with new interior and controls, and its next-generation PLM Intelligence features.

The machine on show was the largest in the three-model 250/270/300hp-rated line, which all sport the larger, longer cab. Apart from added space, key improvements are said to include the areas of noise and visibility. New Holland's innovative CentreView tractor data display, which is sited in the middle of the steering wheel, appeared to be attracting a great deal of attention from interested visitors to the

operator's seat.

Also on show from New Holland, and being demonstrated during the day, was one of the final pre-production units of the brand's T6.180 Methane Power tractor, which is to begin series production at the New Holland's Basildon tractor plant during 2021 for Europe, with units currently undergoing practical testing by farmers across European markets – including in the UK.

First shown in 2017 and launched officially two years later, the T6.180 Methane Power features a re-engineered six-cylinder FPT NEF engine producing 175hp like its diesel-fuelled equivalent. Gas injectors and spark plugs replace the diesel injector, with the gas injected into each cylinder. In other areas, the tractor resembles its diesel-powered equivalent, but the key other change

Tillage Live exhibitors such as Horsch suggested compact/short discs were likely to become an invaluable tool in future arable farming

fuel for around eight hours of road haulage or PTO work.

"The T6.180 Methane Power has the same 175hp maximum power output with boost as its conventional cousin, and produces maximum torque of 740Nm," explained New Holland's David Redman.

"Compared with the limits allowed under EU Stage V emissions rules, carbon monoxide emissions from the methane-powered T6.180 are 80% lower. Particulate matter is down by 98%, nitrous oxide by 62%, and CO₂ by 11%. Running costs are up to 30% lower, and during operation it is quieter and produces less vibration.

"With anaerobic digesters now commonplace across the UK, we believe there is a future for the energy-independent farm to grow its own tractor fuel by tapping into the methane produced. We've had machines working on farms in Scotland down to Cornwall and across to Essex over the past year, with very successful results, and we are now on the road to production at our Basildon plant during 2022."

CNH Industrial stablemate Case IH, which has an informal partnership in the UK with Czech cultivation equipment and drill maker Bednar for the former's products, was expected to launch imminently a newly-updated 250-300hp Optum AFS Connect tractor range, with many benefits similar to those found on the new New Holland T7HD PLM Intelligence

models. For now, though, it was content to give a full working debut to the flagship of its Magnum AFS Connect range launched in 2019, given the past 12 months' lack of shows and exhibitions. The Magnum 400 actually produces the same 435hp maximum power output as the Magnum 380 it leapfrogs to the top of the range, but produces this constantly, without a power management boost requirement. It also has more fuel capacity – 678 versus 617 litres. While, as with the Magnum 380, it is available in fully-wheeled or Rowtrac rear track configurations, there is no CVX continuously-variable transmission option, a 21F/5R powershift being the standard fitment.

Shallow cultivation dominates displays

Bednar equipment on demonstration behind Case IH tractors included the monster Efecta CE12000 drill, shown working behind a Case IH Magnum Rowtrac 400. Featuring a leading toolbar that can be fitted with cultivation elements as required or hydraulically raised when not needed, it is said to suit a broad range of work from direct drilling through min-till operations to sowing into conventional seedbeds. Tool options include straight or wavy-edged discs or levelling paddles. The 12m machine is to be joined by a 10m stablemate.

The 12m model essentially works as four 3m sections, each with its own



New Holland unveiled its new T7 HD tractors with PLM Intelligence telemetry and steering wheel info display, plus this pre-production T6.180 Methane Power tractor



Väderstad used the loamy site at Tillage Live to promote the wide capabilities of its Rapid drill, including direct sowing



Amazone's 12m 12001-C Condor is designed as an essentially simple drill that has a relatively low power requirement yet is capable of high-speed, large-scale sowing



Kverneland chose Tillage Live to show off the 2300S, which replaces the EG200 in its plough range



McConnell's Agribuggy 2 is said to have been redesigned from the ground up, with a revised mechanical transmission with larger clutch pack, redesigned chassis and new axles

metering system and distribution head. Two pressurised tanks split capacity 63/33%, with respective capacities of 3,800 litres and 2,200 litres. Seed is placed by double-disc coulters spaced at either 12.5cm or 16.7cm and producing a maximum coulters pressure of 130kg.

Not to be outdone in the big drill stakes, Amazone showed a 12m 12001-C version – a 15m is also available – of its Condor. Designed as an essentially simple machine that has a relatively low power requirement yet is capable of high-speed, large-scale sowing, the drill features Amazone's individually depth-guided ConTeC Pro coulters. Benefits are said to include minimal soil movement, for minimal soil moisture loss and weed seed stimulation. To follow up there are multiple press wheel options to suit different soil types.

Amazone also displayed its universal drill for conventional, mulch and direct sowing, the Primera DMC. Capable of working speeds up to 18km/hr, it features parallelogram-guided chisel openers, claimed again to minimise soil movement, water

loss and weed stimulation. The machine can be had in widths from 3-12m, and is said to suit systems from conventional to min-till to direct sowing. Hopper capacity is up to 13,000 litres.

Depending on soil type and system, some long-established min-till drills are also well-suited to direct sowing, suggest some firms, among them being Väderstad. The company used the loamy site at Tillage Live to promote the wide capabilities of its Rapid drill, suggesting that in some circumstances it was easily capable of working straight into stubble. It also, though, displayed its Spirit drill, a range promoted as a lighter land machine.

Compact disc cultivators remain a popular tool in many min-till systems for fast, shallow tillage, straw incorporation and germination of volunteer and weed seeds. Among those to put machines to work was Horsch, the German firm demonstrating both mounted and trailed versions of its Joker, with a 3m CT mounted model working behind

a Claas Arion 640. Horsch says mounting discs in pairs gives its machine good clearance in high trash conditions, and reports heightened interest in such machines from farmers looking to incorporate cover crops.

The firm also reported continued interest in its Avatar SD drill, as farmers increasingly seek versatility and a machine that will adapt to different drilling systems and circumstances. Available in 3-8m working widths, the Avatar uses a two-row single-disc coulters design with 16.7cm spacings. To meet demand for combination drilling of seed with fertiliser and with companion crop seeds, double and triple hopper options are available alongside single.

Still space for ploughs

Despite the continuing move to minimum and no-tillage establishment systems, plough demand remains strong on root crop farms and in areas where manure incorporation is necessary, to cite just two examples. Kverneland chose

Tillage Live to show off the 2300S, which replaces the EG200 in its plough range. Available in three-, four- and five-furrow configurations, it offers 10cm more under-beam clearance, at 80cm, and can be specified with 85cm or 100cm point-to-point clearance.

Benefiting from features previously found on larger Kverneland ploughs, the 2300S can be equipped with an optional trailer-transport headstock, allowing the plough to track the tractor when trailed on the road.

Concerns over soil conservation, carbon impact and fuel use mean shallow cultivation systems are here to stay, reasons Lemken, and while ploughs retained their role on its Tillage Live plots, its Rubin compact disc cultivator was a core focus.

Designed to work at depths down to 14cm, its latest Rubin 10 intensively processes residue and ensures homogeneous mixing of organic matter and soil, says the firm, aiding the prevention of

evaporation. A revised disc arrangement on both sides of the implement ensures directional stability without lateral pull, claims Lemken, reducing fuel consumption and aiding pass-to-pass alignment.

Disc cultivators were also a focus at Opico, where the He-Va Disc Roller Contour XL was being demonstrated. Designed to cultivate more aggressively than the standard Disc Roller Contour, it is said to be suited to primary and secondary cultivations at high speeds, from stale seedbed preparation to the destruction of standing cover crops. Key features are similar to the Disc Roller Contour range, but larger 610mm Sabre discs allow the Disc Roller XL to work at depths of up to 160mm and process greater amounts of residue.

Also on the short disc front, Pöttinger showed a compact model, its Terradisc 5001. The trailed 5.0m implement is part of a range of 4.0-6.0m models; all versions feature 58cm cutaway discs spaced at 12.5cm,

with the gangs spaced at 90cm. Multiple rear packer roller options are available.

Sprayer news

Tillage Live was not all about cultivation and crop establishment equipment. Best known in this sector for its Shakaerator, McConnell debuted its latest Agribuggy self-propelled sprayer, from a product line that is a legacy of parent firm Alamo's previous acquisition of Kellands' sprayer manufacturing activities. Said to have been redesigned from the ground up, the Agribuggy 2 is powered by a Stage V Cummins 148hp engine, driving through a revised mechanical transmission with larger clutch pack. The 3,000-litre machine is built around a redesigned chassis, and incorporates new axles and brakes and a new 65 litre/min hydraulic system. A new digital machine management display completes the package.



OH WE HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS!

We can't wait to share it with you really soon, but for now you can catch us at stand D012 at Saltex. Hope to see you there.

www.fgmclaymore.co.uk









SALTEX BACK TO CELEBRATE 75 YEARS

After being forced to cancel last year, the organisers of SALTEX say 2021's edition will be a time for the industry to celebrate

The SALTEX exhibition returns to Birmingham's NEC this November following its enforced absence in 2020.

Always worth a visit for dealers of commercial outdoor powered machinery, it will be interesting to see if more specialists make the trip than in a usual year, considering how long it has been since the previous edition.

For those dealers who do decide to come along, *Service Dealer* will be in attendance both days. Do pop by our stand at F041 to say hi and have a chat. It will be interesting to hear just what our readers think of the show and what their suppliers are exhibiting.

The organiser of the event, the GMA, says as well as a wide range of products on display within the three halls, visitors will have the chance to see an 'electrifying' showcase of products in a dedicated area on the show floor called the Eco Village.

Featuring a programme of daily demonstrations in sustainable technology, the Eco Village allows visitors the opportunity to witness a multitude of products in action. Organisers say expect to see a powerful line-up of new innovations from the likes of Avant UK, Dennis Mowers, Campey Turf Care Systems, Overton UK, GroundWOW and Allett Mowers – with more expected to join in.

Also part of the show again will be the SALTEX Innovation Awards. Since its launch at the 2017 edition, the Innovation Awards has helped to highlight some ground-breaking products and services within the grounds care industry. Visitors will be able to see every entry on the show floor and there will be a winner in each of a range of product categories. Organisers say visitors should keep an eye out for news on when and where the final ceremony will take place on the show floor.

There will also be a number of education opportunities through Learning LIVE, SALTEX's free-to-attend education

programme. Learning LIVE will take place in large seminar theatres situated on the show floor and will feature a wide range of topics.

One panel debate that readers may be interested in includes *Service Dealer* contributor and Editor of our sister title *TurfPro*, Laurence Gale, who will be offering his expertise in a discussion entitled *The impact of Covid and climate change on green spaces*. This will take place on Thursday 4 November, commencing at 10.00am.

Other highlights of the programme this year include: a virtual tour of Leicester City FC's new Sports Turf Academy hosted by Grounds Manager John Ledwidge; an insight into how ongoing research by county cricket grounds and England's Centre of Excellence will impact the recreational game, led by Andy Mackay (ECB), Gary Barwell (Warwickshire CCC) and Will Relf (Loughborough University); Grounds Managers Ed Ramsden (Perse School) and Greg Smith (Nottingham University) will be offering advice on how to achieve a quick turnaround on multi-sport surfaces; pesticides and what the future holds for them will be explored by Dr Christian Spring (STRI) and Glenn Kirby (Syngenta); the pressures of the job, coping mechanisms and work-life balance will be discussed by Ian Avery (Sutton Valence School), Jim Dawson (BT Murrayfield) and Maria Kuzak (CALM) and Turf Consultant Richard Hayden will be providing a behind-the-scenes look at the turf care techniques that ensured that the pitches shone at Euro 2020.

In addition to the opportunities available on the show floor, one lucky visitor will be presented with a battery-powered compact loader from Avant UK worth approximately £30,000. Every person who registers will be in with a chance of winning the prize – on loan for six months – and the live draw will take place on the first day of the show.

SALTEX WHAT'S ON SHOW?

Machinery innovations to look out for

Among the machinery exhibits to look out for, some innovations which could be of interest to machinery dealers include:

GreenMech will be displaying its most recent introductions, the EVO 165P Sub-750 and the new 8" EVO 205D. The former benefits from the key features of the EVO 160 including wide infeed chute, twin horizontal rollers, all-steel bonnet and heavy-duty flywheel, but combined with a economic 37hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard petrol engine. The latter unit is the big brother, comprising a Stage V compliant 50hp Kubota diesel engine, powering a heavy-duty flywheel.



STAND H055

Pellenc promises two new innovations with the Excelion V2 Brushcutter, which benefits from a rotational speed of 6,600rpm and a cutting diameter of 420mm, and the Airion Backpack Blower that has an airflow of 1,280m³/h and a thrust of 24N.



STAND C085

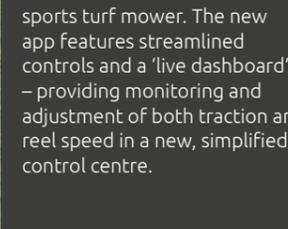


Price Turfcare, the UK and Ireland distributor of the Ventrac and Ryan equipment ranges, is returning with a larger stand and more products on display. For the Ventrac range, the company will be promoting the seven different mowing decks, including the recently introduced flails, blowers, stump grinders, blades, grapples and brushes.



STAND B124

Infinicut will show updates to its INFINIApp as well as a new adaptation kit which converts a JD2500 into a dedicated 85" sports turf mower. The new app features streamlined controls and a 'live dashboard' – providing monitoring and adjustment of both traction and reel speed in a new, simplified control centre.



STAND H070

Vanmac will exhibit developments including the first showcase of Progressive trailed and mounted rotary mowers following its appointment as a full-line distributor in March. The show will see the debut UK outing of the tri-deck TDR-X contour mower.



STAND K070



Aspen will be discussing its range of ethanol-free Alkylate fuels. Following the recent switch to E10 grade at the UK petrol pumps, operators of garden and grounds machinery can find out more about the increased risks of reliability issues, attributable to the increased ethanol content.



STAND M055



STATISTICS ARE LIKE BIKINIS...



David Kirschner

Responding to a recent survey, DAVID KIRSHNER, independent consultant to land-based engineering, says one of the biggest challenges facing this industry is the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce

I am ever conscious of the challenges industry faces on the recruitment front and have a passion for portraying our industry in a positive light. My industry journey covers being born and raised on a farm to becoming an apprentice technician, then service manager and dealership director. The challenge and enjoyment in this phase was always to provide service excellence and a bottom line that was black. It is challenging but not impossible. The ability to see and understand the whole picture is the key. We all work hard in industry but unfortunately not everyone works smart because they are too busy working hard. For every £1 added to a technician's hourly pay rate to attract or to retain them there is a choice of applying a combination of reducing your overheads by £8 per day, increasing your efficiency by £8 per day or charging the customer an additional £8 for a day's work. It's as easy and clinical as that. If the business is working at maximum efficiency and still makes no margin, then prices have to increase. As Technical Director of the Fendt tractor importer and subsequently the UK aftersales manager for Renault Agriculture, it was essential to provide service manager training courses. These only succeeded if the dealership principals attended with their service managers to gain an understanding of the principles of maximising the profit centre of service support. It was a revelation to some that

unlike parts and machinery stock and even perishable goods, a technician's time has no shelf life. Show me a company that is 100% efficient in the running of its service operations and I will be amazed.

Statistics

I learnt very early on in my industry career that statistics are like bikinis in the fact that they promote speculation whilst obscuring scrutiny of the areas of interest. The same goes for opinions which without close examination give a personal perspective which may not necessarily reflect what is actually happening out there in industry. These are lessons that every member of the industry who is faced with making diagnostic decisions must consider. If statistics and data aren't quantified, they are of little use. It would have been helpful to the reader of *Service Dealer's Business Monitor* article in the September/October 2021 issue to understand, the number of survey responders, the sectors that they represent, the size of the business, the number who employ apprentices etc. If this had been the case then a conclusion could be drawn on the credibility of the survey as being industry representative. The article is headlined *Cautious Optimistic Attitude Prevails*, the reason for this being the response options offered to question 1. The most positive option, which 92% chose, was being cautiously optimistic. Why not optimistic or confident, which would have reflected the positivity in proactive companies?

As an industry we are very good at shooting ourselves in the foot, almost apologising for our existence rather than promoting the positives that are on offer to the customer and our potential employees. There appears to be nothing in the survey results (see below) that points to anything on the horizon apart from the perennial challenges which have come and gone in cycles in the past 50 plus years that I have been involved with this industry.

Skills required

The *Your Say* is the area that really needs to be quantified as it has the potential to be the most damaging. The industry organisations I am involved with absolutely recognise the skills required and are doing what they can to have a positive influence on this front. Industry representatives have been involved in compiling the apprenticeships available today and the development of the new T qualifications which will be on stream in 2023. This will provide a pool of industry recruits who have the competencies mentioned in one of the responses. To state we are recognised as a low wage sector is a generalisation, but not the case. Yes, there are employers who pay low wages, but conversely 3rd year apprentices in certain areas of the country are earning the £20k mentioned in one of the *Your Say* responses and without question fully-skilled master technicians are earning considerably more than that. The industry is not defined by the lowest common denominator, so please don't present it as if it's the 'norm'. It's a fact that one of the bigger challenges facing this industry is the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce. I would suggest that it's time for all links in the supply chain and their supporting organisations/voices of industry to take ownership of the challenge. It might not be your immediate problem, but it will be and its resolution is your responsibility.

Yes, of course, it's difficult and different sectors of our industry are experiencing very different challenges. In my experience it's the service offered backed by strong proactive management that differentiates any company from its competitors. Change is an undeniable identified requirement, and no industry can afford to stand still. Unfortunately, positive changes will only happen if our industry makes them happen.

22%	If the 22% of employers planning to appoint an apprentice can find one this would yield a record industry intake. Something to celebrate
36%	If 22% are considering new staff and 14% undecided there is a potential 36% who will recruit to maintain the continuity in customer support and profit potential required
If 22% are more confident, fantastic but why? Share the inspiration with industry	
9%	9% are looking to rationalise the franchises held, great news for profitability and an indication of proactive management
91%	91% of dealers are maintaining their training plans, that's reassuring when trading is in a challenging phase
56%	And finally 56% say word of mouth is the most effective method of finding new customers. It shows that good service sells and needs to be promoted not apologised for

CLAAS REVAMPS GREEN AND GOLD HARVEST LINES

With new product introductions across its 'green' and 'gold' equipment lines, Claas has given its dealers new ammunition in the battle for the 2021-22 forage equipment and combine sales seasons. MARTIN RICKATSON takes a closer look at what the introductions involve

As farm sizes continue to increase, Claas is adjusting the lower end of its combine range for 2022. Ever-lower sales volumes means it's goodbye to the Avero models, while the Tucano line – save for the smallest 320 model – makes way for the Trion, which is available in a number of formats and becomes the new farmer-focused offering in the Claas combine line for 2022.

The introduction of the Trion line marks the completion of the total replacement of the Claas combine range, which began with the introduction of the new generation Lexion 8000/7000 combines in 2019. It consists of 20 models and, much as the Tucano line did through its history, comprises a multitude of types, from conventional five- and six-straw walker combines to

single- and twin-rotor hybrids. Claas says the Trion can be specified for individual business situations, and it uses the slogan 'designed to fit your farm' to promote a system of specification that can be tailored from a wide range of features and options, to span everything from a small mixed farm customer seeking a simple, straightforward machine, to a large arable unit looking for a more technically advanced combine to maximise output.

The range comprises two 500 series five-walker models, three 600 series six-walker machines – including the Trion 640, a new entry point in the Claas six-walker sector – and three 700 series hybrid models, of which two have a single rotor and one has twin rotors. Common to all is the APS primary threshing system,

designed to thresh out up to 90% of grains before the crop reaches the secondary separation system. Trion 500 and 700 series models are fitted with a 1,420mm wide drum, and 600 series combines a 1,700mm unit, where the superseded Tucano models used either 1,320mm or 1,580mm units.

The APS system comprises a 450mm diameter accelerator and a 600mm diameter closed threshing drum, again some 33% larger than the threshing drum on the Tucano models it replaces. As a result, the concave area is also greater, with the concave on Trion 600 models being 31% larger than on the Tucano 450, and the concave on Trion 700 models 9% bigger than on the Tucano 580. The front concaves are interchangeable and the speed of all three drums is synchronised and adjusted using the

CEBIS terminal, which is also used for adjusting the concaves – these are also synchronised.

New drive system

Claas has redesigned the Trion drive system to minimise complexity, with six fewer belts on hybrid models and three fewer on straw walker machines. As on the latest Lexion combines, the drive system is based on that used in the Jaguar forage harvester and is said to ensure a more positive, smooth engagement of the threshing and auger systems.

Five- and six-straw walker Trion 500 and 600 models come as standard with the Multifinger Separation System, which fluffs the straw for greater separation efficiency. The straw walkers use an open walker design and are 4.4m long with four steps. Total separation area is increased over Tucano models, at 6.25m² on Trion 500 models and 7.48m² on Trion 600 combines, said to be the largest of any combines of this size on the market.

Trion 730 and 720 Hybrid models come with a single 4.2m long/570mm diameter rotor with six grates, the Trion 750 featuring twin 4.2m/445mm diameter rotors with five grates. Hydraulic adjustment of four rotor flap 'bomb doors' is possible, and rotor speed is infinitely adjusted

independently of the APS system via the CEBIS screen.

A further new feature on Claas combines of this size is Jet Stream cleaning, with six or eight turbine fans depending on model, meaning this is now used across the complete Claas combine range.

Trion 600/500 models are fitted with 3D sieves, while 4D sieves are also available on Trion 700 combines. Other options include Auto Slope fan speed adjustment, Cruise Pilot, Auto Crop Flow and either CEMOS Dialog or full CEMOS Automatic.

Engines are 8.9- or 6.7-litre Cummins six-cylinder Stage V units, and all Trion models come with Dynamic Power, said to cut fuel use by up to 10% by reducing engine power output when not under load. Rated engine speed is 1,900rpm, and full road speed is possible at 1,650rpm.

Extended track and hillside options

The Claas Terra Trac fully-suspended front track system is available on models as small as the five-walker Trion 530, making this the first Claas combine this size to have this option. The Trion 530 is also the start point for the optional Montana hillside slope compensation system, which again has been extended to more models than previously. Buyers can opt for lateral

slope compensation of up to 18%, or for both lateral and longitudinal compensation of up to 6% when the optional Multi Contour elevator is specified. Power Trac all-wheel drive is optional on all Montana models.

New cab design

The Trion range is the first Claas combine line to benefit from a new cab design, with larger interior, narrower A-pillars, new seat options with 30-degree each-way swivelling and footrests. The 12-inch CEBIS operating screen colour monitor can be controlled via touch or armrest buttons, and now accommodates the controls for CEMOS Dialog and CEMOS Automatic, if fitted.

Automatic steering system options include Laser Pilot on the cutterbar, the cab-mounted Field Scanner, or the satellite-based GPS Pilot, controlled using the new CEMIS 1200 terminal.

Tank sizes span 8,000 litres on the Trion 520 to 12,000 litres on the Trion 750, with unloading augers pivoting 105 degrees and unloading rates ranging from 90 to 130 litres/second. A new option is a pivoting spout, controlled using the CMotion control lever, said to be particularly useful when working on side slopes or with deeper trailers.

Chopper options range from a standard mechanically-controlled unit



Claas has launched new ranges of two- and four-rotor Liner rakes for 2022, with 6.2-15.0m working widths



The redesigned cab frame on the Trion models includes narrower A-pillars for an enhanced view



The new Claas Trion combine line supersedes the Tucano, and includes five- and six-walker plus single- and twin-rotor hybrid models

to an electronically-controlled radial power spreader with deflectors for wind compensation. In addition to the Standard Cut chopping unit, with 52 knives on narrow-body Trion 700 and 400 models and 64 knives on Trion 600 versions, there is Special Cut option with 72 or 88 knives respectively.

New two- and four-rotor rakes

Meanwhile, Claas has also updated its range of two- and four-rotor Liner rakes with the introduction of seven new models with simplified controls. The twin-rotor machines span working widths from 6.2-10.0m and the four-rotor models from 9.3-15.0m

Of the smaller range, the Liner 2600 and 2700 feature a four-wheel chassis, and the 2800, 2900 and 3100 a six-wheel unit. The front two chassis wheels are steerable. On six-wheel models the rear rotor wheels are replaced with pendulum axles.

Rake height is read from a scale on the rotor's central shaft and adjusted via a crank handle on the rotors. Hydraulic rotor height adjustment is optional for the dual-rotor swathers with central swathing.

Rotors are fitted with individual friction clutches, said to respond more smoothly than cam clutches and allow work to continue non-stop, even during load peaks. The freewheel of

the drive shaft is positioned directly inside the Y-gearbox, enabling the rotors to rotate freely in the transport position.

On Liner 3100, 2900 and 2800 models, working width and swath width are adjusted hydraulically and synchronously using the telescopic arms. The Liner 2700 uses a single-acting hydraulic ram, and on the 2600 working and swath widths are adjusted mechanically. The Liner 2700 uses a pin and hole system with four different positions, while on the 2600 three different working widths can be set using adjustment bolts.

Functioning in a similar way to the suspension of the same name in Claas's Disco Contour disc mowers, Active Float hydraulic rotor suspension is standard on Liner 2800 and 2900 Business models, adjustable via a gauge on the main frame indicating the pressure in the hydraulic circuits.

All new Liner twin-rotor rakes are steered by a wide, robust transport axle with zero-play mechanical forced steering. Steering angle can be mechanically adjusted.

There are three new Liner 4000 four-rotor rakes covering 9.3-15.0m working widths. The three models feature rotor widths of 3.8/3.5/3.3m and 14/12/12 tine arms per rotor.

At the heart of the machines' design is a main frame with a geometry resembling that of a telescopic crane. Claas says its large cross-section combined with the trapezoid profile absorbs forces evenly to maximise stability, and cites field endurance and rig testing as having proven its effectiveness. The control block, electronics module and hydraulic valves are located on the inside of the chassis for protection.

In a change from the models they supersede, the new rakes feature telescopic arms that extend and retract by means of a patented three-stage system comprising a C-profile and slide rails, said to enable rapid working width adjustment. On Business-spec models the arms can be retracted individually, and on Trend models in pairs.

Working widths can be adjusted by 3.4 to 4.9m depending on model, with maximum widths ranging from 9.3-15.0m. Swath widths can be adjusted from 1.3-2.2m (Liner 4700), 1.4-2.4m (Liner 4800) and 1.4-2.5m (Liner 4900). On Business models swath width is hydraulically adjusted using the control terminal. All four rotors feature a redesigned floating cardan suspension system which enables them to move in three dimensions.



The Trion range is the first Claas combine line to benefit from the new cab design, with more interior space



Engines are 8.9 or 6.7 litre Cummins six-cylinder Stage V units, and all Trion models come with Dynamic Power

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 40V Max Brushless Line Trimmer - UR003G
 40V Max Brushless Split-Shaft - UX01G
 40V Max Brushless Hedge Trimmer - UH007G
 40V Max Brushless Hedge Trimmer - UH006G
 40V Max Brushless Hedge Trimmer - UH005G
 40V Max Brushless Hedge Trimmer - UH004G
 40V Max Brushless Blower - UB001G

makitauk.com/XGT

PORTRAYING PROFESSIONALISM

Sara Hey, Vice President of Operations and Development at Bob Clements Inc, the dealership development company based in Missouri, shares the insights she offers US dealers with Service Dealer's UK readership every issue.

This issue, assessing the professionalism of your dealership



Our team at Bob Clements International are fanatics when it comes to dealerships generating obscene amounts of money! In order to do that, you must have a business that meets your customers' expectations throughout the experience. Most of the dealerships we work with sell a high-quality product and provide excellent service, for which they charge a premium price. The struggle that many dealerships run into is keeping the professionalism of your team at the level it needs to be to justify a premium price.

How your people look = how customers perceive the value of your dealership

Your personal presentation and the personal presentation of your people is important in how people perceive your business. That may sound like an obvious statement, but the core of it is this: if you want your dealership to be a business that gets a premium price for your wholegoods, parts, and service, you and your people must look the part. People get nervous spending thousands with someone who looks like they have never seen that amount of money in their life. However, if we can give the customer a perceived value by the way our people appear and interact with them, customers will feel more comfortable spending their money at your dealership.

Personal presentation goes far beyond physical appearances, even though that is a major component. The professionalism of your people

when they interact with customers on the phone or through email is also incredibly important. Do you have standards that you require your people to abide by?

Ask yourself these questions:

If I were to walk into my dealership as a customer, would I be comfortable giving any of my employees xx amount of money?

What is being portrayed by my employees when they answer the phone?

What standards do I have for my employees, and are they aware of them?

Am I utilising my employee handbook?

You may be thinking, "Well, I know this is true, but how do I implement this change?"

First, set your expectations. What do you expect from your employees in regard to dress, personal appearance, and communication? Once you decide, communicate that to them. Communicate consistently and point out people who have done a good job of portraying the image you want your dealership to have. There is something powerful about positive reinforcement, it takes you very little time to tell someone they are doing a good job, costs you nothing, and yields great results.

The next thing you need to do is make sure that your expectations are clearly outlined in your employee handbook. I know, an employee handbook, that sounds like a lot of

work. But, we have to keep in mind that your employee handbook is the process for your HR department. I am aware that many dealerships don't have employee handbooks. However, the HR side of the business is going to be there as long as you aren't your only employee. If an employee comes to you and has a question about something, there is a breakdown in process. The same holds true in the Human Resources side of the dealership.

All of this to say, there should be a page in your employee handbook that addresses what is expected of your employees regarding personal appearance and what steps will be taken if the appearance of the employee does not meet the standard that you have set.

Be consistent

One of the keys to encouraging your employees to maintain a professional appearance is being consistent with your expectations and how you want your business portrayed. This starts with you as the owner or manager of your dealership. You are the standard for your people. If you don't adhere by what you are asking your people to do, you will be saying one thing and doing another, which will not give your dealership sustainable change. Taking an objective look at your business and your people regularly will set up your business to portray the image you have worked hard to create: a dealership with premium products and services that are worth the premium investment.



Chris Gibson

WHAT A YEAR IT'S BEEN!

In his final diary entry Chris Gibson, MD of GGM Groundscare, reflects on a tough, yet successful 12 months of trading

As I sit down to write my final diary entry, it's hard to believe we're approaching the end of the year – and what a year it's been! I started the year unsure as to what level of business there would be this season. I needn't have worried, as we like many have seen substantial sales growth across the business.

The strong demand for equipment that we've all experienced throughout the year has, of course, been very welcome, but it's something that few in our industry foresaw or were prepared for. Coupled with the now well reported component shortages and increased transportation costs, it's almost been a perfect storm, resulting in increased lead-times and price increases from most manufacturers.

Let's hope that the worst of these problems are now behind us, although speaking to many manufacturers, it seems it's going to take some time for supply to return to normal – so this autumn it will be more important than ever to forward plan for 2022.

An important part of this planning process is the seasonal round of manufacturer dealer days and events which this year have occurred either face-to-face, online or in some cases in a hybrid form. For me there's still no substitute for getting out and meeting our supplier partners in person.

This season has seen a marked increase in the growth of battery-powered products as well as robotic

machines, with larger commercial machines being launched. From what we are seeing, there does now seem to be a desire from the marketplace to evaluate and embrace these changes as a positive, not only to the environment, but also in freeing up manpower to undertake other important tasks.

For me, this was most recently highlighted when we were fortunate enough to be invited to demonstrate RoviMo, the autonomous mower designed to cut professional turf, delivered from our Swiss partner Ronovatec to the Etihad Campus of Manchester City FC.

As dealers we're used to adapting to change and learning new skills, but the need to keep up to date with new technology will certainly mean we need to update our training plans to ensure all our team are able to service and support these new innovations. We've already started this process and have run a series of training courses this autumn with the aim of having a stronger team that's well placed to face the challenges of the future.

During the year our aftersales department has remained busy and as we enter winter it's great to see our workshops filling up with winter service work, together with our ever-growing contract service work. Parts and service are the backbone of our business as they are the face of the company in times of customer need, so I'm delighted to report we've been able to expand the team with the recruitment of both

apprentices and experienced staff.

As a business we have already completed several initiatives to reduce our impact on the environment, including electric vehicles, LED lighting and solar roof panels, and we have started to look at what we can do to minimise and recycle more of the waste we produce. Our next challenge will be to help our customers to do the same. For this to happen we'll require assistance from our suppliers to produce new environmental solutions, and with SALTEX just around the corner I'm certainly looking forward to seeing what's new, at what will be, for many of us, the first opportunity to meet up as an industry.

I'm also looking forward to the Service Dealer Conference which will feature speakers on the subjects of the environment and robotics as well as social media marketing, all of which will continue to be increasingly relevant to our businesses as we plan for the future.

I'd like to close by recognising all the support Steve Gibbs and Duncan Murray-Clarke (owner of Service Dealer) have provided, working with dealers and manufacturers throughout the pandemic, keeping us all informed and promoting best practice and innovation across the dealer network. As a result, I'm sure we're all better placed to face whatever our politicians, our manufacturing partners and/or the environment chooses to throw at us next.

BUSINESS MONITOR

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DESPITE SUPPLY ISSUES, DEALERS REPORT GOOD BUSINESS

Survey respondents overall fared well in 2021

The results of our autumn 2021 dealer survey indicated that despite the much-discussed supply issues which no business has escaped, those who chose to respond said they have seen good business this year.

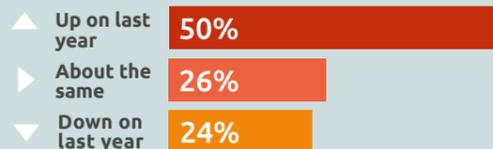
To the key question of how was your overall business compared with 2020, half of those who answered said it was actually up on last year; the others were pretty evenly split on 'about the same' and 'down on 2020'.

In terms of whole goods where we know there have been serious disruptions to deliveries, it was interesting that of our respondents, **44% said sales were up on last year.** Again, there was a close split between those who described wholegood sales as similar to the previous year and those who said they were down.

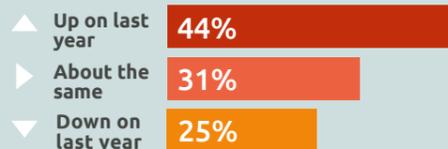
There was a close split on how respondents had experienced parts and accessories sales this year, which may be an indication of the variation in stocking capabilities from different suppliers.

Workshop business was described by a clear majority (62%) as staying roughly the same as in 2020, and perhaps unsurprisingly, most who answered the survey (69%) said their staffing levels hadn't changed this year.

How has your overall business compared with 2020?



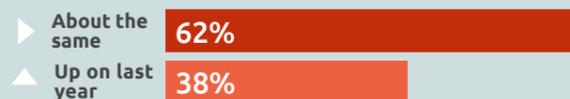
How have your machine sales (whole goods) performed this year against 2020?



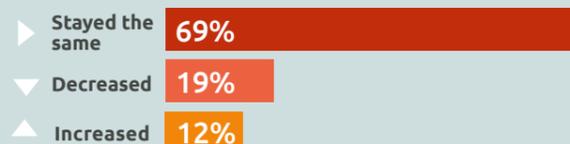
How have your parts and accessories sales performed this year compared with 2020?



How has your service department/workshop performed this year compared with 2020?



How have your staffing levels been this year compared with 2020?



YOUR SAY...

We asked: how has 2021's supply situation impacted your dealership – and how do you see matters playing out into next year?

- We have had one of the busiest seasons for a long time. The supply issue has affected us mostly on the basis that if a distributor does not have stock of the parts or new products required, then that's where the trouble is. We have never had as many machines in various states of repair waiting on spares. This can damage your relationship with customers who originally found this difficult to accept – however, they are now starting to realise how bad things are. This is topped off with unreliable delivery information. You can wait weeks or months for goods arriving. I don't see any improvement until late spring, early summer 2022.
- The supply situation has made life very difficult. We keep good stocks and have done our best to plan in advance, so we are not conscious of us losing much business through a lack of stock. The hardest part has been the lack of communication from many suppliers about stock availability. We understand that things are difficult for suppliers too, and that delivery dates that have been advised may slip, but that's no excuse for not telling us when things change. We want to do the best for our customers and be proactive in advising delivery dates and keeping them informed when dates change, but we aren't getting that level of service from our suppliers. Suppliers telling us "it's difficult for us too" or "dates are only estimates" doesn't really help. We don't see the supply situation being much better in 2022, but we do hope that suppliers have used the experiences of 2021 to put much better systems in place to advise us of stock availability and changed delivery dates in 2022.
- Supply has hurt us. We would have been well up on last year had the supply been available. We normally average cancellations at about 3% of orders placed – this year we are at 15+%. Also, as we show the lead times on our website, this will be adding to a slow down on the amount of orders placed due to the lead times being extended.
- Supply issues have been apparent for a while. Within the ag industry the end users have got used to the delays out of season, but when they need the parts for a machine down in a critical moment, they still expect the next/same day service that they have been used to for many years. This causes much unrest and disappointment when you are not able to guarantee the parts deliveries.
- It's been the same as most businesses for us. Delays in obtaining machines and spare parts running into months not days – plus rising carriage charges and subsequent price increases on products. From experience we are looking well into 2022 before the industry returns to anywhere near normal. The way the government talk they seem to think it is normal service resumed. It is far from that. The support from national and local government for small businesses in rented property has been non-existent. If you paid your business rates via your landlord, then claiming any grants was long-winded and the replies often dismissive and demeaning.
- Supply in 2021 has been worse than 2020. It is looking even worse for 2022. We need the whole world to step up to the mark, rather than accepting the current situation (easier said than done!).

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Edited by Adam Bernstein

WORKING PRACTICES



A private member's bill that seeks to reform the law on flexible working was introduced into Parliament over the summer. Put forward by Tulip Siddiq MP, shadow education minister, the bill has cross-party support and seeks to give employees the right to flexible working from the first day of their employment, unless exceptional circumstances exist. The bill would also require employers offer flexible working in their contracts and advertise roles as such, writes SME Digest Editor, Adam Bernstein

ON THE MATTER OF FLEXIBILITY

But flexible working isn't anything new says Mark Stevens, senior associate at VWV; the right to request it came in April 2003 and is set into the Flexible Working Regulations 2014. But as Stevens explains, "there presently is no right to work flexibly, but rather the right is for an employee to make a request for flexible working. The regulations say that employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous employment can make a request - for any reason." But of course, as Stevens says, "there is nothing to stop an employee making an informal request on day one of their employment."

In the context of the return to work, Goldman Sachs told staff to return to the workplace in June. NatWest on the other hand, has a new model that could see just 13% of its staff in the office full-time.

Referring to the bill, Stevens is keen to understand the detail behind its wording and asks: "Would the right extend beyond employees and include workers? What exceptional circumstances are envisaged and who would decide whether they apply." And then there's the matter of how, in practice, would contracts of employment offer flexibility?

From a union perspective, Frances O'Grady, General Secretary of the TUC, supports Siddiq's bill. She says: "TUC polling shows that four out five workers want some form of flexibility after the pandemic. This proposal would make sure many more people can access this." O'Grady reckons that it could be a catalyst for equality by addressing some of the barriers faced by women, disabled workers, carers and older workers.

Importantly, the TUC sees an emerging class divide. She says: "Those who can work from home will be more likely to get flexible working options in the future, compared to those who must be in a workplace." The TUC thinks the bill would stop this happening as it would extend flexible working options, including flexitime, term-time working, job-sharing, compressed hours and predictable shift patterns, to all workers.

Will the bill get any traction? It's unlikely because of a lack of parliamentary time. But the

idea isn't dead and puts pressure on the government which was thinking about the matter as per an announcement at the end of September for a consultation and legislation.

Amanda Steadman, principal knowledge lawyer at BDBF, thinks that "although proposals to shake up flexible working are afoot, it's unlikely that this will mean wholesale homeworking."

Clearly no one knows the government's exact thinking, but as Steadman tells, "it's possible that they will be able to rely on the same or similar grounds that justify a refusal of a flexible working request under the current regime." Presently this revolves around issues over cost, reorganising work; recruiting staff; effect on quality; customer demand; performance; and business reorganisation.

If this is the case, employers won't find it hard to deny the right, even if granted from day one. Steadman adds: "Where an employee has been working

effectively from home for a long period of time, then this may be [even] more difficult."

But when a government bill might be forthcoming is anyone's guess.

O'Grady is blunter: "There's nothing stopping the government bringing in a day one right to flexible working for all workers in all jobs. It was in the Conservative manifesto. It's time for the government to publish their long-awaited consultation and get on with changing the law."

Jamie Mackenzie, director at Sodexo Engage, hopes that transformation will come. He says that "shifting to day one flexible working would be a huge change for everyone. Ultimately it sets the precedent that flexible working is no longer a nice to have, but a must for all businesses." He reckons that day one flexible working could open the workplace to a far broader range of employees.

Meanwhile, elsewhere...

The CIPD supports the policy and launched its 'Flex from 1st' campaign in February. It, like Siddiq's bill, wants employees to have the right to flexible working from day one. The CIPD's own research found that 46% of employees said that they do not have access to flexible working arrangements. Worse, 44% of employees haven't worked from home at all since the pandemic began while 92% said it was because the nature of their job prevented it.

Claire McCartney, senior policy adviser for resourcing and inclusion at the CIPD is pleased that there is movement on the subject in Parliament: "It's encouraging to see the increased spotlight on flexible working in Parliament. [But] this needs to focus on enabling flexibility in hours and not just location as there are many whose roles don't allow them to work remotely."

Ultimately, employers are going to have to hope that either the government permits Siddiq's bill parliamentary time or brings forward workable ideas of its own.

The government consultation is at <https://bit.ly/3AHxuJ3>



TAXATION



TAX CHANGE ON THE WAY FOR SOLE TRADERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Late in July (2021), the government announced a consultation on proposals which would see a significant change to the way that sole traders and partnerships are taxed, says Adam Bernstein, SME Digest Editor

While in some ways it is a welcome simplification of often complex tax rules, Kirsty Swinburn, a Tax Senior Manager at BHP, considers that it could lead to an acceleration of tax liabilities for many businesses, with some facing higher than expected tax bills from January 2025.

It was originally proposed that these rules would come in from next April but following feedback it was announced that they will be delayed until April 2023.

As to whom it will affect, Kirsty says that the plans are for the new system to apply to all sole traders and partnerships and “will mainly affect those businesses who currently have anything other than a 31 March or 5 April accounting year end.”

The proposals

Kirsty highlights that under the current regime, businesses are taxed based on the profits for the accounts year ending in the tax year – “so if a business has a 30 June year end, the 2020-21 tax will be based on the 30 June 2020 accounts.”

This, she says, creates complexities, particularly in “the opening years of a business when profits can be assessed twice, and ‘overlap’ profits created. This overlap is used when the business ceases, but the value is often eroded by time, or lost if a record isn’t kept.”

Under the government’s proposals, businesses will be taxed on profits earned in a given tax year, irrespective of their accounting year end, with an apportionment being applied if required.

Bringing the change in

The question for many is when the change will occur. On this Kirsty says that as the proposals presently stand, the ‘tax

year basis’ would replace the ‘current year basis’ entirely from 2024-25.

She says, “2023-24 will be the transitional tax year and the transitional adjustments involving the use of the historic overlap profits may, depending on profit levels, increase the tax liability for that year. Any additional tax would be payable 31 January 2025.” In mitigation, she says that there are proposals to allow a five-year spread of the additional tax for those businesses adversely affected, but this has not yet been finalised.

As to what to do next, many businesses will no doubt want to consider changing their year-end to either 31 March or 5 April, “both of which,” says Kirsty, “are accepted as aligning with the tax year”. But she cautions that “consideration should always be given to any industry specific factors”.

That said, Kirsty notes that for those businesses currently experiencing poor trading results, arising from the pandemic for example, early adoption of a 31 March or 5 April year end may be beneficial. But again, she says that “this needs to be looked at on a case-by-case basis and professional advice should be sought”.

And for those sole traders and partners in businesses with anything other than a 31 March or 5 April year end, her advice is that they “should ensure they have a record of their overlap profits, as relief for these will need to be claimed in the 2023-24 tax year at the latest. This figure should have been recorded on the tax return each year”. Again, professional advice may need to be sought if it hasn’t.

Of course, there is nothing written down in the proposals that requires

businesses caught by the proposals to change their accounting year end, but as Kirsty details, “businesses that don’t will need to do an apportionment each year. This means, for example, those with a 30 June accounting year end will have profits assessed in 2024-25 based on 3/12ths of their profit in the 30 June 2023, plus 9/12ths of the profit for the year ended 30 June 2025.”

She warns – and emphasises – that “those with a 31 December year end would have just one month to prepare the accounts before the figures have to be submitted to HMRC”.

What comes next?

The proposed reforms are all part of the government’s Making Tax Digital (MTD) programme. MTD has been in place for VAT for a number of years now and MTD for Income Tax is scheduled to be introduced from 6 April 2024, so aligning with the start date for these is part of the proposed reforms.

In summary, Kirsty says that MTD for Income Tax will apply to all self-employed businesses and landlords with annual business or property income above £10,000.

She says that “at its core is a requirement for quarterly reporting, a process which will be much simpler if all businesses are on a tax year basis for the assessment of profits.”

So, while in general the proposed change seems a sensible one, Kirsty reckons that there will be winners and losers. From a professional standpoint, she says that “taking early advice on a taxpayer’s particular circumstances is essential”.

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COMMERCIAL

KUBOTA UPDATES FRONT MOWER RANGE

F391 offers a host of new features

Kubota has updated its F series front mowers, with the F391 offering a host of new features.

Powered by the latest 38hp Kubota Stage V engine, the F391 benefits from a 61-litre fuel tank. Drive is via a two-range hydrostatic transmission with on-demand four-wheel drive to enhance grip in wet conditions and on sloping land.

The unit has a lift capacity of 260kg, enabling the choice of a 1.51 or 1.82m side or rear discharge deck, with optional mulch kit. The mower

deck can tilt 90 degrees and is operated via a hydraulic lever. Puncture-proof tyres on the deck avoid downtime in tough conditions.

Deck height is adjustable from 25-129mm by slotting a pin at the chosen height on the front caster wheels.

With power steering and its out-front deck, Kubota says the F391 is highly manoeuvrable for mowing around play equipment and street furniture, yet with a travel speed of 19.6kph can cover

large areas in the working day.

Operator comfort and convenience has been considered with a tilting and adjustable steering wheel, ergonomic controls, new bright dashboard for visibility and a folding ROPS, while the large platform offers easy access. A new one-piece bonnet and removable radiator screen make for easy routine maintenance.

The F391 will be available from Kubota dealers at the end of the year.

COMMERCIAL

CAMPEY'S AIR TROLLEY PACK WEEDS OUT PROBLEMS



Automotive driving combined with 4WD

Campey Turf Care Systems has introduced the AIR Trolley Pack from Dutch manufacturer WeedControl BV for weed control.

The Honda GX120 motor with compressor powers the LPG/propane 3x15kw hot-air burner head with an adjustable operating temperature between 190°C – 290°C. The small footprint of the trolley and burner means it can access hard to reach areas where weeds consistently grow.

WeedControl says it has explored all health and safety concerns associated with working with a flame during the development of the product. It claims special attention was paid to the ease of operation to ensure that any user can safely and easily operate the machine. All WeedControl products are made to meet legal requirements when working in public and private areas.

The AIR Trolley Pack can be optionally supplied with a hot-air bin at the front side. This is equipped with a 3x15kw hot-air burner head. For this, the AIR Trolley Pack is modified at the front side for stability.

COMMERCIAL

TYM FOR A NEW STREAMLINED RANGE

New generation of tractors

Reesink Turfcare has introduced the new generation of TYM tractors in a streamlined range with new engines and a new look, following market feedback and TYM's own rebranding.

The range now comprises four units, including subcompact and compact models. In response to EU's emission regulations, three of these models – the T255, T395 and T555 – come with a Stage V compliant diesel engine.

The models available are the 19hp T194, the 25.3hp T255, the 37hp T395 and 55hp T555.

Steven Haynes, Tractor Sales Manager at Reesink, TYM's official UK distributor says, "There are some clever features to the range. The T255, for example, is Stage V compliant but avoids the need for expensive exhaust treatments such as a DPF filter, keeping costs down for the customer. It's also now able to synchronise the HST pedals with the engine throttle for much simpler and less tiring operation. Plus, following customer feedback, it now comes with one set of spool valves as standard, rather than as an optional accessory.



"The T555 produces more power than its predecessor while still maximising on fuel efficiency, and the updated panel has a new digital element that shows tractor hours, fuel gauge and information on the engine and emission system that makes for much-improved user control."

What all four have in common is a new look. Steven said, **"The new look is sleek, bold and eye-catching and will appeal to all customers, while the redesign brings superior ergonomics and operator-focused interiors with robust and aesthetically designed exteriors to set TYM apart."**

COMMERCIAL

STIHL'S MOST POWERFUL CLEARING SAW LAUNCHED

FS 561 C-EM boasts a number of new features

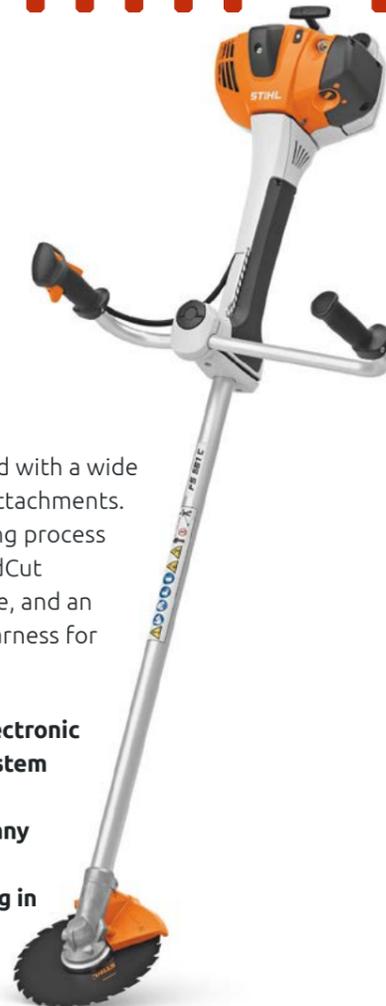
STIHL has launched the FS 561 C-EM, the most powerful model the manufacturer has produced, that boasts a number of new features.

The company says the model offers a powerful and precise performance, with a best-in-class cutting diameter of 560mm, increased storage and improved visibility. Designed to tackle tough clearing jobs, this model features a new gearbox design offering a revised gear ratio with improved sealing and bearing performance. It features 2.8kW of power at the user's fingertips and a 38mm reinforced shaft.

Designed with the user's comfort in mind, it has a more robust clutch housing. It benefits from a new and improved anti-vibration system, STIHL ErgoStart and a revised ergonomic bike handlebar allowing the machine to be easily guided.

The FS 561 can be used with a wide range of STIHL cutting attachments. It also has an easy starting process and stop button, a WoodCut 225-24 circular saw blade, and an Advance Plus forestry harness for optimal comfort.

A STIHL M-Tronic 3.0 electronic engine management system is standard on this new model, which the company says optimises ignition timing and fuel metering in all operating modes.



COMMERCIAL



HUSQVARNA DEVELOPS NEXT GEN CHAINSAW BARS

In partnership with Tsumura/Suehiro Seiko Co Ltd

Husqvarna has launched the X-Tough Light lightweight bars that have been developed in partnership with Tsumura/Suehiro Seiko Co Ltd.

The company says the bars benefit from a solid light-weight body with hard resin inserts that reduce weight, making it is easy to manoeuvre but at the same time robust. Furthermore, its high stiffness gives a robust bar, in order to improve straightness in the cuts.

The three-rivet RSN mount and an optimised oil hole give reliability and performance, according to the manufacturer. This, together with the rail hardness of the new bars, gives longer maintenance intervals. The sprocket nose also adds to the performance.

The new 3/8" lightweight bars come in lengths up to 36"/90cm. The bars fit Husqvarna chainsaws from 60cc and up with a large bar mount.

AGRICULTURAL



The new 7-Series TTV by Deutz-Fahr includes the 7250 TTV and 7250 TTV HD, which the company says offer greater comfort and higher traction force paired with highest efficiency through the new SDF TTV Compound Transmission.

The company says the engine oil replacement interval has been increased to 1,000hrs, while the transmission has been increased to 2,000hrs.

The Deutz TCD 6.1 Stage V engine now offers up to 247hp and a maximum torque of 1,072Nm. The new SDF TTV Compound Transmission – equipped with the PowerZero function and the PowerShuttle – ensures pulling performance and acceleration, while reaching 60kph at less than 1,800 engine rpm.

The TTV transmissions offer the combination of two efficient hydrostatic units paired with optimized mechanical components. The new powertrain guarantees extreme robustness, claims Deutz Fahr, through a high mechanical power flow in typical working conditions at low and high speeds.

Larger diameter rear tyres (2.05m) are now available for the new 7-Series TTV and the payload has been increased to up to 6.5t, with a gross vehicle weight of 15.5t. This increases to 16t with the 7250 HD version. Intelligent front axle suspension is available, as are dry disc brakes, for improved road safety. The turning circle has also been reduced by almost 2m.

A new steeper hood and raised cab ensures greater all-round

visibility. The front 5,450kg lift capacity can be coupled with the Dual Speed front pto to provide a change of the pto speed from 1,000 to 1,000ECO in the InfoCentre. ECO PTO speeds at the rear too, allow the operator to work at partial speeds, providing clear advantages in terms of consumption and reduction of wear.

For the first time in this power range, Deutz-Fahr has developed for the new 7-Series TTV Front-Loader Light and ReadyKit. Together with the Profiline FZ80.1 front loader the manufacturer describes the 7-Series TTV as a real loader tractor. It also has a new lifting height of more than 4.5m and a breakout force of 3770 daN.

COMMERCIAL



ASTRO TURF POWER BRUSH DEVELOPED

By Westermann UK

Westermann UK has developed its range for sports pitch maintenance with the new WR870 Astro Turf Power Brush.

The new addition to the range makes use of a rotating comb attachment, specially designed for use on synthetic sports pitches, such as 3G football pitches and sand-based Astros (MUGA pitches and similar).

The company says the stiff plastic teeth on the brush agitate the pile,

such as the rubber crumb in 3G pitches, or the sand in dressed Astro Turf, bringing the pitch back to its best. Areas in the pitches of heavy use and wear can be quickly rejuvenated after each game. It can also be used on non-dressed Astros, as well as water based Astros for cleaning of algae and moss.

The power unit for the brush is the Westermann WR870 with Honda GXV160 engine. Originally used for

farm cleaning and moss removal, this is a new application for the unit.

The machine is manufactured in Germany to a commercial grade. The jockey wheel can be raised and lowered allowing the height of the brush to be altered according to the pitch requirements.

The new model is interchangeable with all the available WR870 brush options.

UTILITY VEHICLES

PARTNERSHIP OFFERS NEW SNOW BLADES & SPREADERS

For John Deere Gators

John Deere and Douglas Dynamics, the parent company of US brands such as Western, Fisher and SnowEx, have entered into an allied partnership agreement for the Western Products range of snow and ice removal solutions for utility vehicles.

Located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Western Products offers a variety of front-mounted blades plus hopper and tailgate-mounted sand and salt spreaders, along with a wide selection of snow plough and spreader accessories and parts.

All Western products can be installed on John Deere's range of Gator utility vehicles.



There is a choice of 1.82m (72in) straight and V-blade snow plough models with hydraulic or winch lift, and each comes with replaceable cutting edges and plough markers. The hydraulic blades feature an in-cab joystick control for lifting and angling, and optional accessories include plough shoes, rubber deflectors or poly cutting edges.

Alongside the snow blades, the Western stainless steel spreaders feature variable material flow rates with in-cab speed controls. These include a 340kg capacity hopper unit with a spread width of up to 9m, and two drop spreaders with capacities of 90 or 217kg, fitted plastic covers and adjustable spread pattern widths of 76, 83 or 91cm.



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38CC ENGINE

TCS241

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40CC ENGINE

TCS250

46CM CUT WIDTH
50CC ENGINE

TCS256

51CM CUT WIDTH
56CC ENGINE



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LEVELLING UP?

If ever there was a time to stabilise pricing – it is now, says Chris Biddle



I'm writing this on the day that Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp disappeared into the ether.

Such was the worldwide consternation at the sudden inability to share vital information about nail painting techniques, or Meghan and Harry's favourite food – mostly from people you don't know, and care even less about – that you would have thought that China had agreed to close all fossil fuel power stations or JC (Jeremy Corbyn of course) had defected to the Liberal Democrats.

I don't remember such a 'kerrfuffle' when somebody lost the instruction book of the new Telex installed in our dealership.

In the event, the outage lasted six hours. Six hours! All of a sudden, the job centres were full of social media influencers and video bloggers asking where they could get a proper job.

The *New York Times* reported that part of the reason it took so long to fix (six hours) was that 'the people trying to figure out the problem couldn't get into the building to work out what was wrong'. So much for working from home.

Also, those six hours managed to wipe more than \$50 billion off the value of Facebook.

Let's hope it was a technical fault rather than foul play as it demonstrated only too vividly that the infrastructure of our fragile world, already beset with serious environmental challenges, could be brought to a standstill. Sorry to slip from frippery to seriousness, but a Third World War would not be fought on the fields of Flanders or in south-east Asia, but in the Cloud.

Price stability

Let's face it, social media has transformed the way we communicate, the way we do business, the way in which we conduct our whole lives. But it is so new. Pretty well everyone under the age of 30 has only known a world based around electronic communication.

Rudimentary social media only came into being in the 1990s, Facebook was only established in 2004, which has meant that all of us over the age of 30 (and well beyond) have had to get to grip with new technology very fast.

For industry and business it has been a game-changer. During the era of the 'big-box' stores, independents could hardly get a look in. B&Q and their ilk ruled the retail roost for hardware and home DIY. Full-page adverts in the national press, TV advertising, seven-day opening, huge car parks – and keen, keen pricing. Since those days, the pendulum has shifted. Many DIY chains have disappeared (Do-It-All, Focus) and Homebase is a shadow of its former self.

Independents have been given the power – the power of communication. It was a slow start, but many dealers now embrace that power by setting up lines of communication with their customers, old and new, which can be much more effective than sending out a newsletter or hoping for coverage in the local press.

But with power comes responsibility. Internet shopping is now an established way of life, for everyone. It was the facility that saved many

businesses during lockdowns that simply would not have existed 20 years ago.

But as an industry we seem incapable of maintaining a pricing structure that provides a level playing field for all. Most dealers now offer online sales. Many only do so where they realistically can provide back-up support.

Try to buy an Apple product, a new camera, a Dyson product, then the price point is clearly identified. Yes, they may play about with add-ons for promotions, but the price of the product remains stable.

I am genuinely shocked to see products, widely sold by a network of specialist sales and service dealers being offered online at 25% discount (and more). Current products, quality products, offered by those who call them specialist dealers (and all that implies).

And the worst thing? Those products are mainly sourced from the Far East at a time of rising manufacturing costs, component shortages, escalating freight costs. If ever there was an opportunity to stabilise pricing – it is now.

Many manufacturers have shown that they can support a sensible pricing strategy. GGP was one of the first to implement one through its online offering.

It is too glib to say that manufacturers are only interested volume. I believe that those that are an integral part of our industry do see the bigger picture.

Let's use this time of shortages and difficulty for dealers to obtain the stock they need, to sort out this pricing issue once and for all.

Status of the events listed below was correct at the time of going to press, but due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, we advise checking with organisers' websites and social media channels

NOVEMBER 2021

- 3-4 **GMA Saltex 2021, Birmingham NEC**
www.gmasaltex.co.uk
- 9-10 **Midlands Machinery Show, Newark Showground**
www.midlandsmachineryshow.com
- 25 **Service Dealer Conference & Awards**
www.servicedealer.co.uk
- 24-25 **CropTec 2021, East of England Showground**
www.croptecshow.com
- 29-30 **Royal Welsh Winter Fair**
www.rwas.wales/winter-fair

JANUARY 2022

- 5-7 **Oxford Farming Conference**
www.ofc.org.uk
- 11-12 **LAMMA 2022, Birmingham NEC**
www.lammashow.com
- 25-27 **BTME 2022, Harrogate International Centre**
www.btme.org.uk

FEBRUARY 2022

- 1-3 **Doe Show 2022, Ulting**
www.ernestdoe.com
- 5-10 **GCSAA Conference and Trade Show, San Diego**
www.golfindustryshow.com
- 6-9 **Spring Fair 2022, Birmingham NEC**
www.springfair.com
- 8-10 **World Ag Expo, Tulare, California**
www.worldagexpo.com
- 9 **AgriScot, The Royal Highland Centre**
www.agriscot.co.uk
- 9-10 **Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry**
www.executivehireshow.co.uk
- 27-5/03 **Agritechnica, Hanover**
www.agritechnica.com/en

MARCH 2022

- 11-27 **Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, London**
www.idealhomeshow.co.uk
- 26-27 **West of England Game Fair, Bath & West Showground**
www.westofenglandgamefair.co.uk

APRIL 2022

- 2 **Springtime Live, Great Yorkshire Showground**
www.springtimelive.co.uk
- 21-24 **Harrogate Spring Flower Show**
www.flowershow.org.uk

MAY 2022

- 2 **North Somerset Show**
www.nsas.org.uk
- 14 **Nottinghamshire County Show**
www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com
- 14 **Balmoral Show, Belfast**
www.balmoralshow.co.uk
- 18 **Scotgrass, Dumfries**
www.scotgrass.co.uk
- 21-22 **Smallholding & Countryside Festival, Royal Welsh Showground**
rwas.wales/whats-on/smallholding-countryside-festival
- 24-28 **Chelsea Flower Show**
rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show
- 24-26 **The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC**
www.cvshow.com
- 28-29 **Herts County Show**
www.hertsshow.com
- 31-1/06 **Suffolk County Show**
www.suffolkshow.co.uk

JUNE 2022

- 1-2 **Staffordshire County Show**
www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show
- 2-4 **Royal Bath & West Show**
www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show
- 4 **Rutland Show**
www.rutlandcountyshow.com
- 8-9 **Cereals 2022, Duxford**
www.cerealsevent.co.uk
- 9-11 **Royal Cornwall Show**
www.royalcornwallshow.org
- 17-19 **Three Counties Show, Malvern**
www.royalthreecounties.co.uk
- 19-21 **spoga-gafa 2022, Cologne**
www.spogagafa.com
- 18-21 **BBC Gardeners' World Live, Birmingham NEC**
www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com
- 18-21 **Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh**
www.royalhighlandshow.org
- 21-22 **Royal Cheshire County Show**
www.royalcheshireshow.org
- 22-23 **Lincolnshire Show**
www.lincolnshireshow.co.uk
- 26 **Derbyshire County Show**
www.derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 28-30 **Glee 2022**
www.gleebirmingham.com
- 30-2/07 **Devon County Show**
www.devoncountyshow.co.uk



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LOOKING FOR CHEER



SPRAY IT LOUD

Gold standard story stands out in the news cycle

L-R: Carl Goff, RW Crawford Agricultural Machinery Ltd Fendt brand specialist; Kate French, Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Gold Medal winner; Fred French, farmer and contractor

Hands up who thought 2020 was as rubbish as it could get?! To be fair I'm not saying this year quite reached those heights (depths?) of ridiculousness, but goodness me it gave it a run for its money!

Trying to find a good news story this year has been like trying to manoeuvre a massive oil tanker into performing a three-point turn in the Suez – tricky! All year it feels like we've mainly been discussing ever-lengthening delays, skyrocketing logistics costs, desperate fuel shortages, frustrating pingdemics and tightening restrictions! And guess what? Industry experts are telling us that it'll be 2023 before the market evens itself out and matters approach some sort of normality again!

Trying to remain positive and looking on the bright side though is one of my contracted duties here at *Service Dealer Towers* (remote-working division). Finding those stories that offer cheer and raise a smile have been few and far between in 2021 – but thankfully there has been the odd one or two.

A story that I very much enjoyed recently involved a Kent farmer and contractor who named his new Fendt Rogator 665 sprayer Tokyo to commemorate a Gold Medal win by his daughter at this year's Olympics.

The self-propelled sprayer was supplied by main dealer RW Crawford Agricultural Machinery Ltd and is apparently the fourth Rogator to be operated by farmers and contractors M & M F French, based at Meopham, near Gravesend.

The new sprayer's delivery coincided with Fred's daughter, Kate French's fantastic Gold Medal in the Modern Pentathlon at this summer's wonderful Olympic Games.

"Due to Covid-19 restrictions we couldn't be in Japan to support Kate, so we watched at home," Fred explained. "The sprayer arrived within an hour of Kate's win. It's the most important machine on our farm and a significant investment, so it seemed appropriate to name it Tokyo, after the Olympics' host city on such a momentous day."

Gold medalist Kate said, "I was very lucky. Growing up on the farm meant I spent a lot of time outside. We had horses, and I was always horse riding and running around the fields. I live in Bath now with my husband Leo as the training base is there, but love coming back to the farm."

Asked about having the sprayer named to commemorate her win, Kate said that she was pleased when her dad told her his idea. "It's typical of him to do something like that – I like the name plate, he will have to keep that sprayer now. I enjoy riding the horses and running when I am back on the farm, but in future I will want to drive the Rogator too!"

Carl Goff, Fendt brand specialist from Crawford's Ashford depot, said that he was excited to be asked to add the name plate and Olympic rings.

He said, "We get on very well with Fred and he is a good customer, so we were delighted when he asked us to help him celebrate Kate's Gold Medal win in this way."

If next year does turn out to be 2021-mark 2, we're going to need plenty more news items like this to help us raise the odd smile and remember we're in the business of customer satisfaction. If you come across any quirky stories at your dealership, please do make sure to send them on to the team here at *Service Dealer*. More than ever, we want to hear them.

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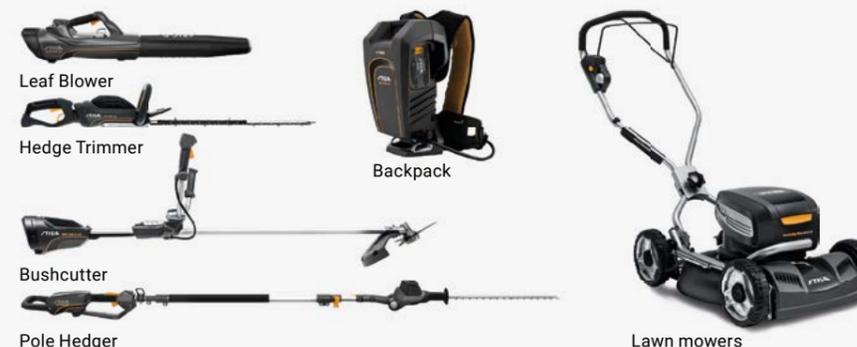
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