

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021



GOING LIVE!

Hayes Machinery have found success marketing their dealership via YouTube – culminating in a product launch, broadcast live

Conference & Awards 2021

Service Dealer's event returns in November

Pricing pains

Dealing with mid-season rises

Cereals '21

Agricultural machinery show welcomes back visitors

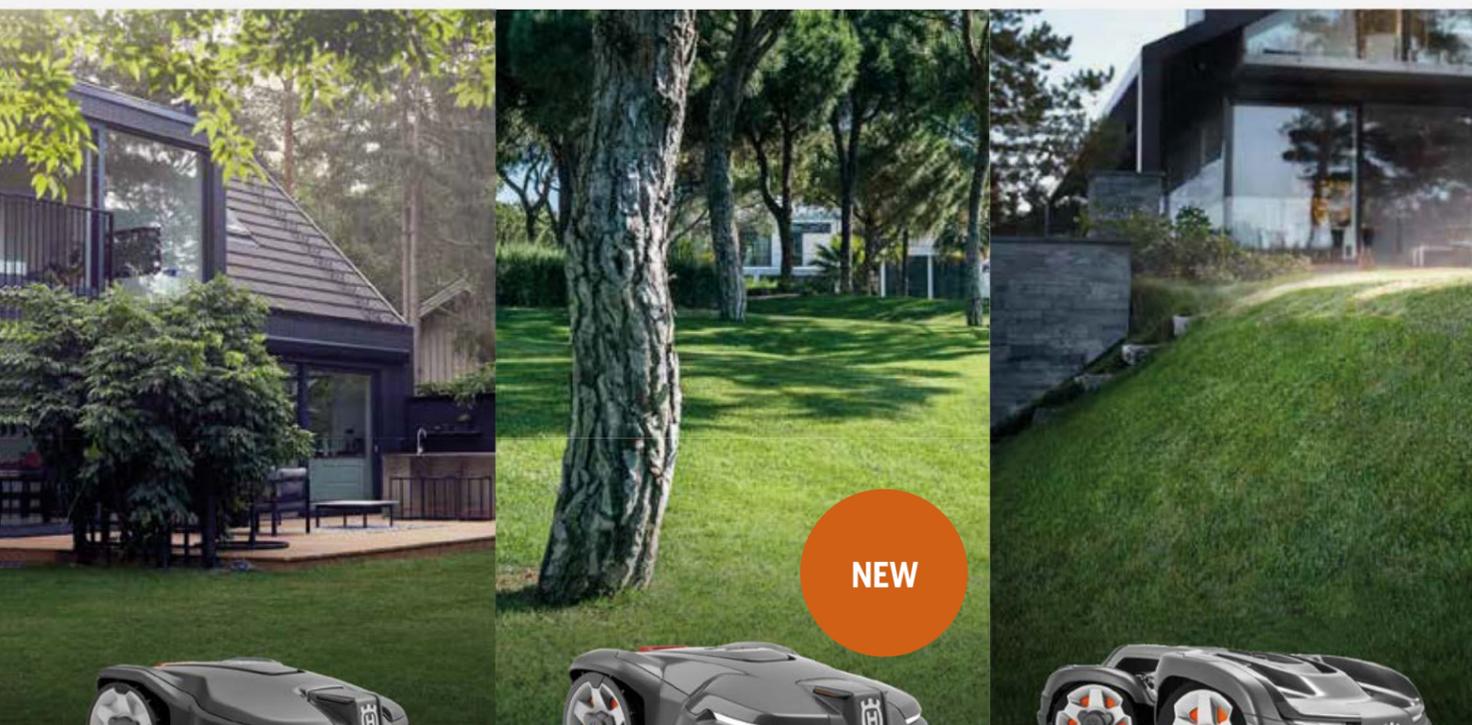
NEVER STANDING STILL

Jim Clarke Fine Turf Machinery has established a loyal following of professional customers



UPGRADE YOUR EVERYDAY.

No matter what size or shape of lawn.



AUTOMOWER® 305

Compact robotic mower for efficient mowing of more open grass areas. Suitable for smaller lawns up to 600 m².

AUTOMOWER® 415X

Advanced ultra-quiet X-Line robotic mower for more complex lawns up to 1500 m².

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Steep slopes, big, small or complex? Every lawn is unique, that's why we at Husqvarna have developed a wide range of smart robotic lawn mowers to fit any lawns every need, whatever they may be. Always developed with the outstanding reliability of Swedish engineering and the latest user-friendly technology. And to make things even easier, we've developed our own robotic buying guide to help you find your perfect match, at [HUSQVARNA.COM/AUTOMOWER](https://www.husqvarna.com/automower)

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to September/October 2021's edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

Now we're into that late-summer/early-autumn period, it's that time of year when traditionally the dealer network finds themselves invited to many industry events and open days by their suppliers. Last year, of course, these all fell by the wayside – but at the time of writing, I'm aware of plenty of manufacturers who have dates in the diary for September for their dealers to come along and view their latest machines.

It will be interesting to see the level of support these events receive this year. My inclination is that because most are roadshow events happening at multiple venues around the country, meaning travel should be cut down for attendees, they could well prove popular. Also, crucially, these are targeted events specifically for dealers, who are coming off the back of 18 months of virtual conferencing. Unlike the recent, poorly attended Festival Of Turf, these events should click with their audience as there will be compelling reasons to attend, directly of interest to individual businesses.

Dealers who responded to our recent Business Confidence survey, the results of which you can read on page 44, told us they are looking forward to the rest of the year

and beyond with a cautious optimism. Finding out what new products their suppliers will be bringing to market will play into that. Of course, they will also be looking for reassurance that they will be able to take prompt delivery of any new kit on display, at the times promised.

Whether manufacturers will be able to make guarantees such as this, is another matter.



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NEWS

LATEST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

INDUSTRY

AEA BUYS BAGMA

From Bira

The British Independent Retailers Association (Bira) transferred the ownership of BAGMA, the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association, to the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) on 1 July 2021.

A statement released jointly by the associations said, "After a long relationship between Bira and BAGMA, this has been a difficult decision. However, it is in the best interests of both BAGMA and Bira. The AEA is more aligned to the industry sector BAGMA operates in and this will enable BAGMA to offer more support relevant to its members' business needs."

Bira confirmed it will maintain a working relationship with BAGMA and the AEA for at least the next 12 months, with members of BAGMA still having access to the services available from Bira, including legal advice and Bira Direct.

BAGMA Director Keith Christian and his team, Kari Hearn and Richard Jenkins, will be transferring with BAGMA, ensuring continuity in the running and operations of BAGMA.

Andrew Goodacre, CEO of Bira, said, "I, and my colleagues in Bira, are very proud to have worked closely with the BAGMA team and BAGMA members over the past 25 years. There is a strong identity among BAGMA members that is to be admired."

Ruth Bailey, CEO of the AEA, said, "The AEA is absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to be working with BAGMA and feel extremely positive about future developments and advantages that could be brought by the two organisations joining forces."

"For many years, there has been a clear working relationship between the two associations but in more recent times the links and directional cooperation have become closer and closer, and more aligned. As a collaborative voice to government and business, there is huge potential in adding impact and in bringing a difference to the sector."

"While the AEA sees a great amount of synergy between the two organisations, it fully respects the need, however, for the continuity of membership services from BAGMA to



Read more about BAGMA's place in the industry starting page 14

Keith Christian and Ruth Bailey at Cereals on completion of the deal

its members and to recognise the inherent strength that the BAGMA membership brings. It is for this reason that it is very important that the highly valued and distinct identity of BAGMA is maintained and supported independently.

"We look forward to providing a clear voice to industry yet maintaining the rich heritage of each of the associations and the value of services to their respective members."

Securing a future

Peter Arrand, BAGMA President, said, "The BAGMA Council of Representatives unanimously supported the purchase of BAGMA by the AEA. The acquisition will secure a future home within industry and allow the heritage and strong brand built up over 100 years as a dealer trade association to continue. There are many synergies between the two organisations which will enable a stronger representation for the industry we operate in whilst not losing sight of the individual needs of BAGMA members."

"The advantages of being a BAGMA member have been retained and we can look forward to a bright and collaborative future."

Keith Christian, Director of BAGMA, added, "Having been a part of the former British Hardware Federation (BHF) now the British Independent Retailers Association (Bira) for the past 25 years, it may be a surprise to some for BAGMA to be moving to a new home."

"BAGMA's 103-year history has always been intertwined with the AEA and whilst we represent different factions within the industry, we share a common goal in supporting the industry through both dealerships, suppliers and manufacturers."

"Whilst BAGMA will remain as an independent dealer's association within its new home, it is expected that there will be new working relationships that will benefit BAGMA members in the future to come."

INDUSTRY



Sales and Marketing Manager, Craig Hoare

HAYTER LTD CHANGES NAME

To Toro UK Limited

Hayter Ltd, which is part of The Toro Company, changed its name to Toro UK Limited on 3 August 2021.

In a statement the company said the name change to Toro UK Limited will align the UK operation with the rest of Toro's subsidiaries outside of the United States, and the strategic focus to grow the Toro brand in the consumer, light construction, landscape contractor and arboricultural markets.

The statement continued, "Toro UK Limited remains committed to the Hayter brand, which this year celebrates its 75th anniversary. The brand will continue to be a significant part of the Toro UK Limited portfolio with manufacturing and selling of the Hayter range of premium quality lawn care products continuing from its Spellbrook factory in the UK."

"The Hayter brand will retain the Royal Warrant, with which it has been proudly associated since the 1960s and Toro UK Limited will

continue to invest and develop new Hayter products, including the new 60v Hawk range, which comes to market this autumn."

The Toro Company acquired Hayter Ltd in 2005 and said it will continue to invest in the UK manufacturing plant. It said the new company name will not change the nature of the business, nor will it have any effect on relations with customers, partners, suppliers, contracts or personnel.

Craig Hoare, Sales and Marketing Manager Toro UK Limited commented, "The change is in name only and everything else is business as usual."

"The new name will help us to lay out our strategy for the Toro & Hayter brands in the UK market and grow with our existing retailers."

The business said it is keen to invite anyone who has any questions about the change in name to contact their territory manager.

Quick Q&A with Craig Hoare

SERVICE DEALER: Is the Hayter name disappearing?

Craig Hoare: The Hayter brand will remain and we will continue to invest in and develop the brand. New Hayter machines will still carry the Hayter name and remain in the classic Hayter green.

SD: Will dealers see any significant changes in store?

CH: Dealers will see no change in store. As there is no change to Hayter as a brand, all signage and point of sales remain valid and will continue to be used.

SD: Can you expand on how the new strategy might affect dealers?

CH: Our strategy for the UK market is to grow the Toro brand alongside the Hayter brand. This will involve our dealer network and we look forward to our Dealer Days where we will be sharing the opportunities available to Dealers in the Toro brand.

SD: Was the company concerned that confusion could arise regarding the Toro products distributed in the UK by Reesink?

CH: By changing the company name we are bringing the UK operation in line with the rest of the Toro organisation. As per the press release, we will be focusing on growing the Toro brand within the Consumer, Landscape Contractor, Arboricultural and Light Construction Markets. We are confident that there will not be any confusion about the change as we continue to work with Reesink, which distributes our Toro Grounds and Golf equipment.

DEALERS

COBRA ANNOUNCES *BREAST CANCER NOW* PARTNERSHIP

For the third consecutive year



The Cobra pink mower

Following a successful partnership over the past two years, Cobra has announced its continued support of research and care charity, Breast Cancer Now, throughout 2021.

The garden machinery manufacturer has raised £10,000 for the charity over the course of the partnership and hopes to raise more this year than ever before, with the machines now available at dealerships across the country.

Money will continue to be raised through the sale of its limited-edition pink GTRM38P mower, with £25

from every purchase of the model going to Breast Cancer Now to help make world-class research and life-changing support happen.

The electric mower comes equipped with a range of features, including a 15" cutting width and provides seven cutting heights.

Support for people affected by breast cancer has never been needed more, due to the devastating impact of COVID-19, said Cobra. At the same time, the pandemic has significantly impacted Breast Cancer Now and the charity urgently needs support so that it can continue to be there for people affected by breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Now is steered by world-class research and powered by life-changing care. The charity works with hospitals and patients to improve breast cancer services and makes sure anyone affected receives

the best possible treatment and care. It is there for anyone affected by breast cancer, the whole way through, providing support for today and hope for the future.

Lisa Gilmour, Head of Regional Community Fundraising at Breast Cancer Now, said: "We're incredibly grateful to Cobra for their wonderful support over the past two years and are excited to work with them once again this year.

"Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the UK, and the impacts of the pandemic mean that people affected by this devastating disease need us now more than ever. As such, support from businesses like Cobra has never been more needed and we are so grateful to them and their customers for their unwavering support – **together we can help change the future of breast cancer.**"

DEALERS



Tom and Keith Bigwood

BIGWOOD AGRI CLOSES ITS DOORS

Taunton dealership shuts for good

Following 39 years of trading at Walford Cross Garage in Taunton, Somerset, dealer Bigwoods Agri Ltd finally closed its doors on 18 June 2021.

Keith Bigwood started the business in 1976 and over the years has held franchises with Deutz-Fahr, Massey Ferguson and Valtra. Recently, however, Keith and his son Tom decided to continue without a tractor franchise or wholegoods sales.

In a statement posted to its website, Bigwoods said, "After closing the workshop and full line sale facilities last year it has become no longer viable to run from our current premises."

Keith commented on the BAGMA website saying Tom will go back

into the motor trade as a parts and service manager and he will hang up his boots.

BAGMA quote him as saying, "We both have loved the trade and enjoyed what we have done, but now have let out both properties and look forward to the future in a different way."

The report also states that one of the reasons for closing is that Bigwoods was finding it increasingly difficult to hire technicians to continue providing the level of service they wanted to offer their customers.

On its website Bigwoods signed off, saying, "**We wish to thank every customer past and present for your custom over the many years and wish you a prosperous future in farming.**"



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

PEOPLE



REESINK APPOINTS MANAGER FOR NEW BRANCH

Industry stalwart Trevor Chard

Reesink Turfcare's new East Anglian branch in Burwell between Cambridge and Newmarket, which will open this autumn, has appointed its Branch Manager.

The successful applicant for the role is Trevor Chard, an industry and Reesink stalwart.

Trevor Chard is a name well-known by those in the golf and fine turf industry, having been National Accounts Manager for Reesink Turfcare for 25 years. The move to Branch Manager is, he said, one that will give him a new experience and challenge, along with the opportunity to share his knowledge from years in one of the company's key customer-relationship roles.

Trevor said, "The opening of the East Anglian branch is widely-anticipated for customers in the area, and I'm really excited to be heading up the branch. I've worked for Reesink for years and loved it, but it was time for a new challenge in a role with fewer miles travelling the country. The new branch will focus on dealing directly with customers, adding value and building relationships, and that takes the part of my role that I've loved so much up until now and continues it in a new and fresh way.

"The branch has an extensive catchment of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and includes some key Toro customers. Our role will be to provide those customers,

and new ones, with dependable maintenance and genuine parts after-sales service. There will be a demo fleet to use for new business and a range of other services available such as NSTS testing and on-site servicing."

Similar to the other Reesink branches, the East Anglian one will be an independently-run business, about which Trevor said: "Removing the element of being centrally-controlled and being more local to our customers will allow us to react quickly. We'll be focussed on fast, easily accessible, friendly help and support."

The East Anglia branch will follow the same business model applied by Reesink Turfcare to the Sheffield Park branch in the South-East and the Livingston branch in Scotland.

David Cole, Reesink Turfcare's Managing Director, said, "When investing in a new location, the leadership of that branch is of paramount importance to ensure that each individual shares and understands the Reesink passion for machinery and a down-to-earth approach to providing solutions.

"We look forward to our Burwell location opening in the early autumn, and know that Trevor, Liam Pindred, the Service Manager and the rest of the team are excited and ambitious about making a difference to our customers across the region the branch will serve."

INDUSTRY

STIGA ANNOUNCES ROADSHOW DATES

In place of its conference

Instead of its regular, well-attended three-day conference, Stiga is this year taking its new products on the road. Taking place between Monday 13 September and the end of the month, the dealer roadshow events will be making 10 stops around the country.

Stiga UK MD, Gary Whitney said of the days, "We're bringing theE-POWER to our customers with many outstanding and unique new battery powered products."

The dates and venues are

Monday 13 Sept
Cornwall, St Mellion Golf & Resort

Tuesday 14 Sept
Somerset, Wincanton Racecourse

Wednesday 15 Sept
Gloucestershire, Cheltenham Racecourse

Thursday 16 Sept
Kent, Brands Hatch Circuit

Tuesday 21 Sept
Cheshire, Oulton Park Circuit

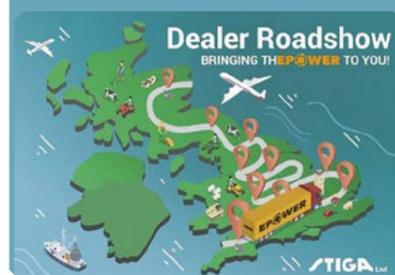
Wednesday 22 Sept
Leicestershire, Donnington Park Circuit

Thursday 23 Sept
Norfolk, Fakenham Racecourse

Tuesday 28 Sept
West Yorkshire, Pontefract Racecourse

Wednesday 29 Sept
Cumbria, Carlisle Racecourse

Thursday 30 Sept
Perth, Leonardo Boutique Hotel



INDUSTRY

BOSS APPOINTED SOLE UK & IRELAND DISTRIBUTOR OF AIR-ROPS

Rollover safety for quads

BOSS ORV has announced it has been appointed as the sole UK and Ireland distributor for all Air-Rops products.

The company said Air-Rops offer a range of rollover solutions for the outdoor power equipment industry. In a statement the company explained, "ROPS on ATVs has always been a contentious issue but BOSS believes that in certain applications, and after a thorough risk assessment, they do offer additional protection for the operator. Air-Rops have the advantage over traditional ROPS of not raising the centre of gravity of the machine as it sits lower than the operator when not deployed."

The first Air-Rops product BOSS ORV has introduced is the AR Quad safety bar, for ATVs and agricultural machinery.

The company said this product uses Air-Rops technology in a fully automatic Roll Over Protection System. It bases the technology on what it describes as "state-of-the-art automotive components, including safety electronics and proven and reliable airbag gas inflators".

The electronic control unit continuously monitors the behaviour of the quad and warns the rider with acoustic and visual signals when the vehicle is about to reach a state where stability is compromised. The system automatically evaluates the rollover condition until a tilting state is reached and, only when the tilt takes place, activates the rollover bar. The electronic control unit operates the inflator, and the gas is fully released, extending the bar and the mechanism locks. The system only operates when the rider enters and cannot avoid the full tilt. The final position after deployment of the ROPS is limited to a maximum 90°, preventing full rollover, which BOSS said helps minimise personal injury and reduces damage to the quad.

Air-Rops will only be available through specialist approved dealers and regional distributors and will not be available by mail order or directly online. This, said BOSS, is to ensure that every unit is correctly installed and able to be monitored by the supplying dealer.

INDUSTRY



BRIGGS & STRATTON BUY INTO ELECTRIFICATION COMPANY

Ownership stake in Accelerated Systems, Inc

Briggs & Stratton has announced that it has acquired a minority stake in Accelerated Systems, Inc (ASI) which develops complete traction and control systems for vehicles and has in-house design capabilities for electric motors, controllers and battery systems.

The agreement includes the option for Briggs & Stratton to acquire additional equity in ASI over the next five years.

In a statement Briggs & Stratton said the advanced electric drive systems that ASI develops complement its own strategic focus of being power

application experts for its customers, which includes internal combustion engines, electrified products and technologies and hybrid solutions.

"This is an important technology investment for Briggs & Stratton as we continue to expand our capabilities as a power application company," said Steve Andrews, Briggs & Stratton's President and CEO. **"This acquisition provides meaningful capabilities that will significantly accelerate our electrification strategy."**

DEALERS



L-R: Dylan, Mansel and Marc Rees

JE REES EXPANDS INTO GROUND CARE

Increases its Kubota offering

Kubota (UK) Ltd has announced that its machinery dealer J E Rees & Sons is to add its ground care equipment range to its Kubota tractor business, with immediate effect.

The Carmarthenshire-based dealer now receives an extended product portfolio that includes a full range of compact tractors, plus commercial and domestic ride-on mowers to sit alongside its tractor and RTV business.

The move will facilitate the family-run business to expand into new markets from its two depots – one at Velindre,

west Wales, and the other in Llandoverly, mid-Wales.

“We’re extremely pleased to be able to support J E Rees & Sons with the opportunity for further growth in these important sectors,” explains Tim Yates, Agricultural and Ground Care Sales Manager, Kubota (UK). “This expansion will help Kubota to further strengthen its position in these key markets with the ability to provide sales, service and aftercare support across the amenity sector, schools and holiday park operators.”

J E Rees & Sons has been established for over 50 years and is run by brothers Marc, Dylan, Geraint and Mansel. Having been a Kubota tractor dealer for over four years, J E Rees believes the introduction of an expanded machinery range will enable them to better meet the needs of its customers.

“It’s an exciting opportunity for us and our customers,” said Dealer Principal Marc Rees. “There are some fantastic machines in Kubota’s range that will also appeal to a whole new customer base in addition to many existing customers.”

DEALERS



ETESIA ANNOUNCES AWARD WINNERS

Dealers receive outstanding achievement honours

Following what has been a challenging past 18 months, Etesia UK has announced the winners of four outstanding achievement awards.

The awards commend outstanding performances in sales, service, parts and customer service.

The winners are: Peter Bagguley of Russells Groundcare and Allan Wright of Agrovista Amenity for outstanding individual achievement,

while R D Mechanical and Sharrocks were awarded outstanding company achievement awards.

The awards were handed out at the recent E T Lander electric utility vehicle and Pellenc new product launches held in May at Etesia UK’s offices in Oxfordshire.

Les Malin, Managing Director of Etesia UK said: “We heavily rely on our dealer network and the efforts

of their sales teams in promoting both Etesia and Pellenc in the UK and Ireland.

“We’re delighted to be able to recognise the winners, which not only provide a snapshot of each dealers’ performance with us, but also our support to all of our dealers in what has been a very challenging time for everyone in the sector.”

INDUSTRY



CHARTERHOUSE TURF MACHINERY CHANGES NAME TO REDEXIM

Corporate rebrand



Charterhouse Turf Machinery has officially rebranded to become Redexim.

The company said the product portfolio, premises and personnel will be unaffected, with the change of name bringing the UK into line with the Redexim corporate strategy adopted throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

The relationship between Charterhouse and Redexim has been ongoing for more than 35 years, when Charterhouse was appointed to distribute the Redexim Verti-Drain. The success of this partnership saw Charterhouse become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Redexim bv in 1997.

The product portfolio has expanded significantly over the years to incorporate overseeders, topdressers, scarifiers and renovation equipment for natural surfaces, as well as a range of machinery options for artificial playing surfaces.

Commenting on the rebrand in the UK, Redexim Chief Operating Officer Herman de Bree said, “The team at Charterhouse has done a fantastic job over the years at cementing the place of the Redexim natural and artificial ranges with leading turf managers throughout the UK. The time is now right to unify the approach with that adopted throughout the world by delivering sales, service and support under the Redexim banner.

“This will help to strengthen our brand awareness and global corporate identity, and streamline our communication with customers around the world.”

DEALERS

T H WHITE COMPLETES ACQUISITION OF MURLEY

In Warwick and Stourport

T H White Group has announced it has completed the acquisition of Murley Agricultural Supplies Ltd, including its agriculture, construction, garden machinery, smallholders and estates operations at Warwick and Stourport.

Murley’s vehicle business is not part of this acquisition.

T H White said the combination would “facilitate ever-increasing levels of customer service and support” while for staff and customers “it’s really business as usual, with just a name change above the door”.

At the Warwick branch, Murley’s agricultural operations now trades as T H White Agriculture and the garden machinery side of the business will continue under the T H White Country Store & Garden Machinery brand.



Team Warwick

At the Stourport branch Murley’s construction operations now trade as T H White Construction and the agricultural business now trades as T H White Agriculture, as at Warwick.

The deal means that T H Whites’ trading territory for New Holland, Manitou and other agricultural brands has now been expanded to embrace Warwickshire and Worcestershire, while the Doosan construction machinery franchise at Stourport has been added to T H White’s construction offering from Manitou, New Holland and Mecalac.



Team Stourport

DEALERS



Iain Bryant and Robin Bryant, joint Managing Directors of The Scot JCB Group

DEALERS COMBINE TO FORM NEW AGRICULTURAL BRAND

Within The Scot JCB Group

The Scot JCB Group has launched a new division to spearhead its machinery and parts sales and service operations for agricultural customers.

The company is combining Kelso & Lothian Harvesters and A M Phillip Agritech, and forming ScotAgri, a new agricultural brand within The Scot JCB Group.

It has been announced that Scot Agri will provide machinery sales, service and parts from JCB, Massey Ferguson, Valtra, HORSCH, Ktwo and Vicon across its six depots in the North-East of Scotland and two depots in the Scottish Borders.

Current Scot JCB agricultural depots will be dual-branded with Scot Agri for agricultural products and Scot JCB for construction products.

Robin Bryant, Joint Managing Director at The Scot JCB

Group, said: "The rebranding of Kelso & Lothian Harvesters and A M Phillip Agritech to Scot Agri unifies our agricultural companies under one brand while maintaining the same industry-leading service we have always provided."

The Scot JCB Group companies Stewart Plant Sales (SPS) and Scot Industrial Air (SIA), which specialises in compressor and generator sales in Scotland, will also be getting a fresh new look with updated logos to fit in with the new Scot JCB Group master brand.

The Scot JCB Group is made up of Scot JCB, Scot Agri, SPS and Scot Industrial Air (SIA). Operating from a network of 20 depots from Carnforth in the North-West of England to Fraserburgh in the North-East of Scotland, the company has over 120 service engineers working to deliver products and service.



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.

- Increase your business and bottom line profits.
- Exclusive special offers on selected products.
- Extensive local & national Cobra marketing support.
- An evolving range of over 150 gardening products.
- No unreasonable Cobra stocking commitment.



Cordless Mowers

From Just £128.99*



Petrol Mowers

From Just £95.58*



Blower Vacs

From Just £87.20*



Brushcutters

From Just £82.38*



Cultivators

From Just £106.98*





Alan Titchmarsh presents Awards at the BAGMA conference



Jonathan Swift with Nairn Brown and Peter Baker (Stihl) at the BAGMA conference



Ian Jones (right) was appointed BAGMA Director General after the BHF takeover

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BAGMA



Now that BAGMA has come under the wing of the AEA, the dealer organisation has probably found its natural home, says CHRIS BIDDLE

The scene, a swish London hotel. The year, 1983. The occasion, a Council meeting to consider the future of BAGMA.

The proposal was (in effect) "Let's abolish BAGMA. It's run for the elite, it's remote, boring and only attracts those with time or inclination to sit on committees".

At the time, I had taken on chairmanship of the pompous-sounding BAGMA Long Term Planning Committee, charged with looking into the crystal ball – and if necessary, 'think the unthinkable'.

There was a growing number of dealers questioning the value of their BAGMA membership. "What's in it for me?" was an oft heard cry.

One regional BAGMA Committee in Somerset had surveyed their

members, every one of whom said that they did not get value for money out of their subscription.

But, and here's the crunch, if BAGMA closed, how would the dealer trade be represented? Where's its forum, advice shop, meeting place? More than likely a new association or grouping would be in place within weeks.

I imagine that those current members of the BAGMA Council in 2021 would have also considered that the decision they were about to take for AEA to buy out BAGMA would also have been considered 'thinking the unthinkable'.

In reality, the idea of AEA and BAGMA being as one was not new – far from it.

Over 50 years earlier, in the latter half of the 1960s, the General

Committee of AMTDA (Agricultural Machinery and Tractor Dealers Association before it changed its name to BAGMA) considered a proposal for a merger with the AEA.

The meeting minute said, "The manufacture (on one hand) and distribution (on the other) of agricultural machinery are one industry, and although the interests of these two sectors are not identical, neither can make solid or abiding progress without the help and goodwill of the other."

The committee, however, decided that it would not be beneficial to form a single association for the whole industry at that time, but it does show that a coming-together of AEA and BAGMA has been on the cards for many years.

That proposal was, of course, for a

merger, but the present-day Council was faced with a different decision: not a merger, but whether BAGMA should be taken over by the AEA representing manufacturers and suppliers – so often, the very 'opponents' that dealers would tangle with over industry matters such as warranty, dealer contracts, trading terms etc, where a collective voice would have more influence than single voices.

Cooperation

AEA and BAGMA had worked closely together over many years, behind the scenes, in committee rooms with those in the corridors of power, particularly in recent times as the impact of the pandemic on industry grew. What businesses would be classed as essential? What were the rulings that would allow trading?

There have been many other occasions in the past when the industry has needed to state its case, to fight its corner.

In 1966, the Wilson Government brought in the Selective Employment Tax (SET) which was levied on every employee in the service sector at 25 shillings per employee per week (£1.25 then, or nearly £18 now)! Money that was passed back to manufacturers who

also received an additional bounty per employee.

Yes, dealers were subsidising manufacturers! AEA supported BAGMA to oppose this illogical tax which was dropped by the Heath government in 1974 and replaced by VAT.

In 1976, lawnmowers were placed in the higher rate of VAT (25%) rather than standard rate of 12.5%. BAGMA's Parliamentary committee gained support from a number of MPs as well as the AEA – and the ruling was reversed.

Government needs trade associations, and industries can only be effectively represented through trade associations.

For a small industry that flies under the radar of public or media coverage, making your voice heard can only be achieved by turning up the volume through the inclusion of as many voices as you can muster. So, in that respect, the coming together of the AEA and BAGMA makes perfect sense.

What surprised was the news that AEA had bought BAGMA. Okay, it would not be on the same scale as the CBI buying the TUC, but you get the drift. It was not a simple merger, but there is no getting away from the fact that the manufacturers' representative organisation now

owns the association representing the interests of dealers.

Restrictive practices

Both associations have a long and proud history. The AEA was founded in 1875, BAGMA's roots date back to 1917.

My first encounter with BAGMA (then AMTDA) was in the early 1960s. I was new into the family-owned dealership and attended the AMTDA Smithfield dinner, held in the chandeliered splendour of the Café Royal in Regent Street.

Next, to the Bell Hotel in Warminster, where Wiltshire AMTDA dealers met together to 'fix' (discuss) combine trade-in prices for the following season in a kind of Glass's Guide. Great idea, the trade working as one. Problem was, once the benchmark figure had been agreed for say, a Massey 726 combine, it was immediately breached 'to keep the deal'.

During the 1960s the Association encountered one of its most fractious periods. Farmers were complaining of the cost of new equipment and in response a number of buying groups were set up, which was followed by the formation of a national buying group, Agricultural Central Trading (ACT). It approached manufacturers and suppliers to source tractors and

machinery. The implication was that it wanted to by-pass the dealer network and one or two smaller suppliers jumped on board. The ACT, however, never cracked the supply of prime movers and heavy equipment, and its focus switched to consumables and accessories.

BAGMA itself was to later spot an opportunity to harness the buying power of its members by setting up a trading company, AMCO, which at one time sold over £1 million worth of baler twine through its members.

Another issue that seriously challenged the ideals of BAGMA was the Restrictive Trade Practices Act, which severely limited the Association's 'right' to refuse membership or indeed sanction members who traded in a manner that the Association deemed unethical or discriminated against others 'in the same trade'. This could refer to excessive price-cutting, or members selling outside their territories.

In effect, BAGMA could not 'black-ball' any company that sold machinery and offered a service if

it did not like the way it went about its business.

Shows

There always seemed to be issues. Business was tough in the 1970s. Inflation peaked at 24.2% in 1975 and remained in double digits for five or six years, while interest rates hovered around 17%.

BAGMA, however, was entering a transitional phase under the stewardship of Jonathan Swift, who had been appointed to head up the Association in 1973.

By coincidence, or maybe even by design, Jonathan's father, Dean Swift, was Director General of the AEA at the time his son was running BAGMA. It would have been inevitable that Sunday lunch would once again have included 'unofficial' chats about AEA and BAGMA getting together.

Based in London initially, then in rented offices at Penn Place, Rickmansworth, in 1976 BAGMA was able to buy its own premises in Church Street, Rickmansworth with

courtyard parking, a range of offices, board room, a lofty lair where Norman Stuckey and Linda Palmer produced the *BAGMA Bugle* aka *AGM Service*, a

president's flat for the overnight stays – and an old forge which was later converted into a splendid conference and meeting room.

Issues about warranty seemed to dominate most BAGMA meetings, and those who sat through endless discussions about the long-winded handling of warranty claims would be amazed how seamless the process is today (mostly) with electronic communications.

There had long been a debate about producing a Code of Practice which would define manufacturers' commitment to dealers, and dealers' obligations to consumers. The production of such a document was always a challenge, given the differences between the agricultural machinery and the garden machinery sectors.

In 1987, however, after years of being regarded, at least in their eyes, as 'second-class citizens' to the dominance of farm machinery interests within BAGMA, the Garden Machinery Association (GMA) was formed as a separate division of BAGMA. The GMA took it on itself to produce a Code of Practice in 1991, specifically for the garden and turfcare machinery sector.

In the late 1980s, BAGMA's relationship with the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) turned fractious over the future of SALTEX when it was announced that the show was relocating from Windsor to Peterborough.

BAGMA also had an uneasy relationship with the organisers of GLEE, over the costs involved exhibiting at the National Exhibition Centre. One year, there was a sterile display with every single exhibitor confined to a single shell-scheme layout which eliminated all individuality.

BAGMA, therefore, via its GMA Division, decided to stage its own GMA Show at Kempton Park in September 1990. Strangely it was planned as an outdoor event, but largely staged indoors (in a huge,

tented village). Costs were enormous and visitor numbers average as it clashed directly with the IOG show.

In the event it proved to be a one-off. Despite optimistic post-show announcements that 75% of the exhibitors had committed to the 1991 show, some of the key names such as Hayter and Ransomes Consumer pulled out and re-committed themselves to SALTEX.

It all came at a fragile time in BAGMA's finances which were already showing a substantial deficit. This was largely also connected to a serious issue with someone within the accounting team – and the show only added to the problems. The Editor of the Association's magazine later described the decision to stage the show as 'an unmitigated debacle'.

As an aside, it is somewhat ironic that the 'new' SALTEX now staged at the NEC is also the GMA Show (with IOG having changed its name to the Grounds Management Association).

New home

Prior to that, in 1986, Jonathan Swift had announced that he was leaving BAGMA after being appointed as the new Director General of the British Hardware Federation.

A succession of Director Generals were appointed but there followed a very challenging period for BAGMA, both financially and in membership numbers. The 'what's in it for me?' question had not gone away.

'Trouble at t'mill' hardly does justice to the turmoil experienced at BAGMA in the early part of the 1990s as it grappled with losses and constant staff turnover. Indeed, could a trade association the size of BAGMA survive as a stand-alone organisation?

Seeing the problems from afar, and with extensive knowledge of what BAGMA and its members needed, its former Director General Jonathan Swift made an approach to bring

BAGMA under the wing of the BHF.

Seeing little alternative, the denouement came at the BAGMA AGM in Perth in 1994 when members agreed to transfer all BAGMA assets and liabilities to the British Hardware Federation. In many ways, it was the salvation of BAGMA.

The BHF had developed an impressive range of services and benefits for its members spread across several retail sectors. Almost at a

those holding the major franchises was not a good fit with the mainstream bira membership of independent High Street retailers.

Despite the warm words from both sides following the move to the AEA, it is unclear whether BAGMA decided that bira was no longer a relevant owner – or that bira felt that BAGMA did not fit in with future plans.

It doesn't really matter. The fact is that BAGMA now resides within an organisation that is wholly dedicated to the industry it serves.

It's been a long-time coming after many previous discussions about joining forces, and in hindsight this is probably a better time for the union than might have been the case years earlier.

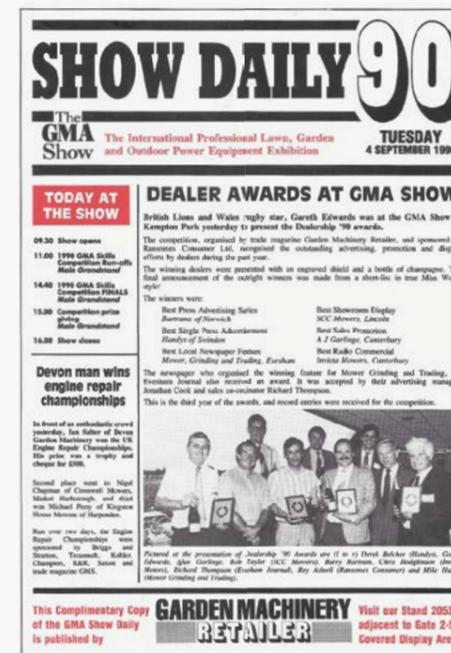
Methods of working and methods of communication have changed so much during the pandemic as companies and organisations have sought alternative ways of keep those who mattered in the loop.

It has long been a challenge for small business owners to give time to trade associations and outside bodies, hence the committee became somewhat elitist and unrepresentative.

Today, with Zoom and the rest, there is less need to travel, so saving time and money. This will make it much easier for BAGMA and the AEA to connect more regularly with a cross-section of members, meaning that all voices can be heard.

The ink is hardly dry on the AEA's agreement to buy BAGMA. There will be questions about independence, organisation and yes, how thorny issues between the two are resolved.

But this industry has some of the most enterprising, forward-thinking and pragmatic individuals that you will find anywhere in business – and if they are all sitting around the same table, then I have confidence that they will find solutions and agree on the direction of travel for the years ahead.



The one and only GMA Show at Kempton Park in 1990

stroke, BAGMA was able to offer its members tangible and economically beneficial services that often more than covered their subscription.

Under BHF, costs were rationalised, committees shrunk and a new, young fresh face, Ian Jones, was appointed as Director General.

And there, BAGMA resided as part of the BHF for over 25 years. The British Hardware Federation decided to broaden the scope of membership in 2011, changing its name to British Independent Retailers Association (bira, all lower case strangely).

There was always a feeling that BAGMA was somewhat a square peg in a round hole at bira. The interests of farm machinery dealers, particularly



ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR SERVICE DEALER CONFERENCE & AWARDS 2021



Service Dealer has announced that it's all systems go for the 2021 Conference & Awards – which will take place as an in-person event. We hope to be near to full capacity, but the event will take place within regulations and, of course, we will do what is right and appropriate at the time.

The theme for the Conference this year, that takes place on 25 November, will be *Smart Working* – a subject that was all set to be tackled last year before the event, like so many others in 2020, was forced to cancel.



Duncan Murray-Clarke, owner of Service Dealer says, "We are delighted to be announcing the return of our Conference and Awards, which will be returning to its home at the Double Tree by Hilton Oxford Belfry. I want to stress we have been very careful with all our decisions, and we will stage a safe and welcoming event."



"For all of us, these past 18 months have been unlike anything ever experienced. We have all had to adapt and find new ways of working. We've had to be smarter with our time, juggling home life and our businesses. We've also had to find alternative ways for communicating with our teams and our customers to ensure business continuity. Technology has played an important part in allowing us to continue to operate and to keep in touch."

"All of these things encapsulate the theme of the 2021 Service Dealer Conference and Awards – *Smart*

Working. Our superb line-up of expert speakers will focus on how technology and communication tools can help us work more efficiently and ultimately more profitably."

Lexi Gilders, UK and Ireland Marketing Manager of principal sponsor Kramp, adds, "The Service Dealer Conference has always been invaluable in providing the most up-to-date insights for businesses, and this year promises to be the best yet, with the theme of *Smart Working* being more relevant than ever."

Dealer Awards

The always-popular Dealer Awards will also return this November – albeit in a slightly modified format. Service Dealer will be introducing some new categories this year to reflect the incredible dedication, creative thinking and community spirit that dealers have displayed over the past 18 months.

Keep watching the Service Dealer Weekly Update every Friday at noon

The Speakers



Teresa Heath-Wareing

International social media & marketing speaker & trainer



Ed Gillespie

Environmental entrepreneur, author & futurist



Sam Watson-Jones

Co-Founder and President, Small Robot Company

The Sponsors

We would like to thank all our sponsors this year who have helped with their input and, of course, their commercial support which helps us to put on this popular event.



Sponsorship correct at the time of print



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12"

STRAIGHT SAW



600138 - 12" Straight Saw (includes Scabbard)

13"

CURVED SAW



600136 - 13" Curved Saw (includes Scabbard)

PRICING PAINS

In recent months dealers have spoken about the issues caused by manufacturers raising their prices, both in terms of the general mid-season disruption faced, but perhaps more importantly, in regard to machines already sold to customers on back order. Service Dealer Editor STEVE GIBBS reports

It's no exaggeration to describe the first half of 2021 as an extraordinary moment in time – both for society as a whole and for the unique set of circumstances which has beset the outdoor powered machinery sector. Amongst everything, there has been a specific issue that has come to the fore in recent months via discussions that *Service Dealer* has held with dealers, which has been highlighted to us as especially problematic.

To summarise, we have heard concern voiced by dealers regarding price rises they have seen from manufacturers – specifically on machines that they had on back order.

Dealers have described to us scenarios where they have a customer who has bought a machine from them – a machine that then faces a delay on delivery. During that delay what has happened in some cases, is that certain manufacturers have imposed price increases on the machine on order.

This means that the dealer then must either take the hit to their margin by absorbing that price rise, or must try to pass on that increase in cost to the customer – which as you might imagine, is an awkward conversation!

This is clearly a far from ideal situation and one which has concerned several specialists.



Dealer views

We have spoken to several dealers who have articulated their frustrations at these price rises that they had seen on back-ordered machines.

One dealer, who requested to remain anonymous, said, "The thing that's really catching us out is the retrospective price increases. We have machines on back order that now have an inflated price. I understand why they're doing it, but it doesn't sit well with me when you have things on back order, that you sold to a customer at a particular price, and now some of those machines have substantial price increases. It's difficult.

The dealer continued, "I do understand why they're doing it, but it's harsh. It makes it very difficult for us to go back to a customer on Westwood for example and say, 'actually, can I have another £200 please?'"

Anthony Deacon of MKM Agri said, "We've got ATVs on back orders that may take six to 10 months to come in. We understand our suppliers are facing huge cost increases on shipping etc, so we know that price rises will be inevitable. We also appreciate that it's a hard call to make.

"However, the manufacturers just need to work as best they can with the dealers and be as transparent as they can with us, to see how we can make it work together. I think that's the best they can do."

Chris Gibson of GGM Groundscare in Colne, Lancashire said, "I'm a bit taken aback by hearing about manufacturers putting up prices on back orders to be honest. It's almost bordering on immoral."

Director of BAGMA Keith Christian said he has been speaking to dealers himself, who are concerned about the practice.

Keith said, "We are, of course, in a very exceptional set of circumstances at the moment. I've spoken to a number of dealers about price increases and whether suppliers are allowed to do what they're doing – and generally, within their contracts they are. I'm sure some of them don't want to do it and I think everyone appreciates that they're in a difficult position.

"But it seems absolutely crazy to be increasing prices on

back orders that probably should have already been delivered. And whilst one can sympathise with the suppliers' situation, when they pass that on to a dealer who is customer-facing, it becomes even more difficult for the dealer to deal with.

"It's certainly an incredibly frustrating situation. It's something that needs to be looked at more carefully to maybe avoid something like it happening in the future."

Keith added that he has heard that some suppliers are holding prices on back-ordered product where the dealer can demonstrate that it is already sold to a customer. But I must stress, this wasn't a practice that we are hearing is happening with all suppliers.

In conversations *Service Dealer* has held however, there were a couple of manufacturers whose names cropped up more than once, those being Stiga and Ariens. I reached out to both companies, to see if they had any comment on the situation.

Stiga's response

Gary Whitney, MD of Stiga UK, told me there were a couple of factors at play here from his company's point of view. Essentially, he explained, these are the mammoth increases in shipping costs that all companies will be experiencing – plus an invoicing mistake they have pinpointed.

Gary told me, "Every container that we've bought over from China since November in order to supply our dealers – we've been taking a bath on that shipping cost. We've been wearing that cost. However, it gets to the point where we have to share this burden.

"Until now we've been bringing over those containers at considerable cost to ourselves but giving our dealers the opportunity to sell the machinery and make money – that was the choice that we had made since November.

"However, it's now got to the point where we need dealers to make a contribution. Not a contribution that takes out all of their margin, but a contribution that takes out a manageable proportion of their margin, if they choose not to pass this cost on."



Anthony Deacon of MKM Agri



GGM's Chris Gibson



Keith Christian of BAGMA

Gary said that to help mitigate any loss of margin Stiga has removed all discount pricing from machines displayed on its website – a pricing structure that he said dealers tend to follow. “By doing this, it will allow them to sell our stock that they have in their stores, that they haven’t sold yet, for a higher price and greater margin.”

However, alongside these shipping cost increases, Gary said Stiga has also discovered a mistake where some of its dealers have received invoices where the price of the product listed wasn’t the price at which they had ordered the product.

“We discovered a mistake,” Gary explained. “When the freight surcharge was added to orders placed before the 1 May, the process also updated the product price to that date. This meant that a new higher price was invoiced along with the surcharge.

“We’re unpicking this mistake that we apologise for. We were addressing this issue on a case-by-case basis, as each individual dealer identified it to us, but we’re now getting in front of it for all affected dealers.” Gary said any dealers concerned by this are invited to contact him directly.

He went on to explain this freight surcharge will unfortunately be part of their business until freight normalises – which presumably will be common across any manufacturer who must import anything?

Ariens’ response

Ariens meanwhile also cited shipping costs as well as increased prices for raw materials.

Darren Spencer, Vice President AriensCo EMEA told me, “AriensCo is committed to designing and manufacturing products specifically for the UK market. During the first six months of 2021, manufacturers in the UK (and globally), experienced unprecedented increases in cost. Commodities, such as steel and rubber, rose in price by over 70%, whilst the cost of inbound sea-freight multiplied by a factor of six. Furthermore, delivery from suppliers is taking around four times longer than we would normally expect – compounding the issues and increasing manufacturing costs further.”

Darren asserted that AriensCo has taken what he described as “all possible steps to mitigate the impact that these higher costs could have on dealers and to reduce the disruption in supply to the dealer network.”

He continued, “These actions included long-term commodity agreements, higher volume bulk purchasing (to lower freight cost), increased inventory holding of materials, and air freighting components from around the world. Since the first lockdown, AriensCo has continued production uninterrupted – absorbing all the additional costs incurred in manufacturing. However, with this exceptional situation, AriensCo (along with most other manufacturers) was forced to increase prices midseason. This unique set of circumstances meant that all production, from the date of the price rise, was required



Ariens Zenith

to absorb some of this cost increase.

“This is an unprecedented but necessary action from AriensCo. However, in doing so, we have been able to secure continued supply for our customers.”

Mid-season disruption

Another point related to this change in prices from manufacturers raised by dealers, is the huge task they are facing in their businesses, altering all their systems to reflect the new prices. This, we were told, is a long-winded, labour-intensive task, especially when the price changes are not uniform across the board.

Neale Hopley of Buxtons in Teddesley, Staffordshire told us, “I’m really struggling with the price rises we’re getting. With all the rises on all the machines – and on all the parts – it’s almost impossible to keep our systems updated.

“We normally make these changes in the winter when things are a bit quieter, but all these price rises in the busy part of the season are a real drain on our resources and the delay in updating prices means we’re selling at the wrong price. It’s a massive administrative burden for us and all dealers.”

Neale said he would like to find out if there was a software package that would allow them to update



Neale Hopley from Buxtons



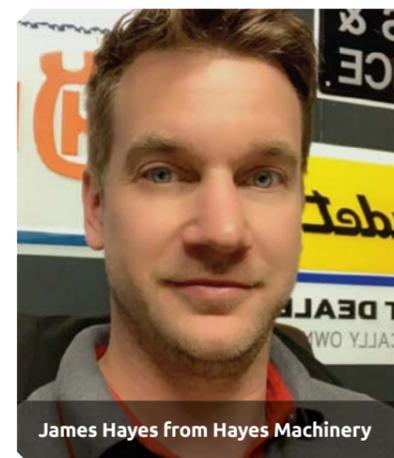
Stiga Park

prices in their system by uploading a spreadsheet to mass amend all of the prices from a single supplier in one go.

“It’s an ongoing issue for us which is just a lot worse this year,” he explained. “I wonder, does anyone have a better solution, rather than just throwing extra manhours at it like we do?”

These feelings were also reflected by the same dealer who preferred to not be named, who agreed that the hard part for their business is trying to keep up with all the incoming price changes. They said, “It’s a case of having to drop everything and deal with it – and that’s less than ideal. The main problem for me is the lack of notice that we receive. The more notice you get, the more you can plan to deal with it.”

As mentioned, a problem dealers have been finding is that the price rises from a specific brand are not universal. James Hayes from Hayes Machinery in South Molton, Devon, explained, “I think the biggest problem with the manufacturers putting the prices up – and I understand they’ve got to do it – is when it’s all varying prices. If they



James Hayes from Hayes Machinery

just said ‘3% on the whole range’ it would make life much easier, because then we can go on to our system, pull up everything from that brand, and put up everything by 3% quite quickly.

“When everything is separately

changed, that’s a mammoth task to go through the lot and price it all individually. It changes from a 10-minute task to a two-day job.”

Due to the nature of these price alterations that are required, we have been told that the specialist dealership software systems that dealers have in place are not of much help in making the job any easier or quicker either.

It is the timing of the changes that Chris Gibson finds frustrating. He said, “I think one of the main things that people were not expecting was that these price increases came through mid-season. If it’s an emergency situation, why not keep it simple for everybody and have a blanket increase across the board? There must have been a better way?” Chris also believes that dealers are most likely preparing themselves for more increases for next year’s prices too.

The dealers we have spoken to feel there must have been a better way to have brought these price increases in. There is an acceptance that changes were always going to be necessary this year, but imposing them mid-season? Dealers we have heard from feel this certainly wasn’t the most helpful way forward right now.

Matters haven’t been helped in some circumstances either due to the current state of communications received by dealers from suppliers.

We have been talking about the need for clarity between suppliers and dealers throughout this pandemic. We hear that some are across this well, really getting their messaging to dealers right. Others, it must be said, sound like they need to up their game.

Manufacturers need to be aware of these frustrations because dealers can, of course, choose to drop suppliers, just as easily as the other way round.

NEVER STANDING STILL

Nestled on the outskirts of Shrewsbury Town, Shropshire, owner Jim Clarke of Fine Turf Machinery has been busy building up a mower repair and sales business to serve customers in the West Midlands. Service Dealer's LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR, learns how the company has established a loyal following of professional customers – ahead of its 21st anniversary this November



Recently Jim has set up a trailer sales and service side to the business

SERVICE DEALER: When did you start the company?

Jim Clarke: I began my career as a car salesman and then moved to a company called Walker Engineering, which sold and repaired mowers. After spending two years with the company I decided to go it alone. I could see the potential of selling some fine turf mowers to schools, bowling clubs and cricket clubs,

so in the November of 2000 I set up Jim Clarke Fine Turf Machinery.

SD: What is your role with the company?

JC: I am the owner, MD, mechanic, delivery driver – every possible job title you can call me! It is basically an all hands-on role. However, in recent years, due to an upsurge in demand

for our services I've taken on some additional staff, one full-time and two part-timers to help cope with the constant demand.

SD: What products do you stock and sell?

JC: I'm the main dealer for Dennis and SISIS for Shropshire and the West Midlands area. I was awarded the dealership back in 2000 and have not looked back since. I also sell Wessex, Hayter, Honda and D W Tomlin products. We also tend to handle a lot of other makes of mowers and equipment that come in for repairs.

In recent years I've also moved into selling and hiring out trailers, creating a new division trading under the name of Shropshire Trailers. This side of the business is becoming very popular.

SD: What's the most popular kit you sell?

JC: Without doubt our Dennis and SISIS products are our main sellers, mainly because they have a range of products that suit most of my customers. Both the Dennis FT 510 and 610 mowers are extremely popular. The ability to do a range of tasks using their interchangeable cassette system is a real winner amongst our commercial customers. We sell a lot of brush, verticutter and scarifier cassettes.

The Dennis Pro 34R rotary mower is also becoming a very popular product. We're now also starting to see an interest in battery-driven products.

I have a very close working relationship with Dennis/Sisis and probably speak to them on a daily basis and receive regular visits from Area Sales Representative, Ben Lloyd. I also try to visit the factory on a regular basis to keep up to date with everything.

SD: What area do you cover?

JC: It varies on the product itself but generally the West Midlands

area, Shropshire and some parts of Mid Wales.

SD: Who are your customers?

JC: We have a wide range of customers, that include, domestic, professional and volunteers who need mowers for their lawns and sports facilities.

Our core business, however, is centred on the professional end users – groundsmen, greenkeepers, parks professionals and contractors – who maintain areas such as local authority territories, schools, football and rugby clubs, cricket grounds and golf courses.

Over the years I've built up a good client relationship with many of our customers that include the likes of Shrewsbury School, Birchfield School, Concord School, Wolverhampton Wanderers, several local authorities and many golf clubs.

SD: What methods do you use to market and promote your business?

JC: Most, if not all, is done via word of mouth, firmly based on the level of service and standards we deliver. We go out of our way to deliver a professional service to all our customers. We thoroughly ensure their mower and

machinery is maintained correctly and go out of our way to keep the customers happy. We also have a web presence through our company website.

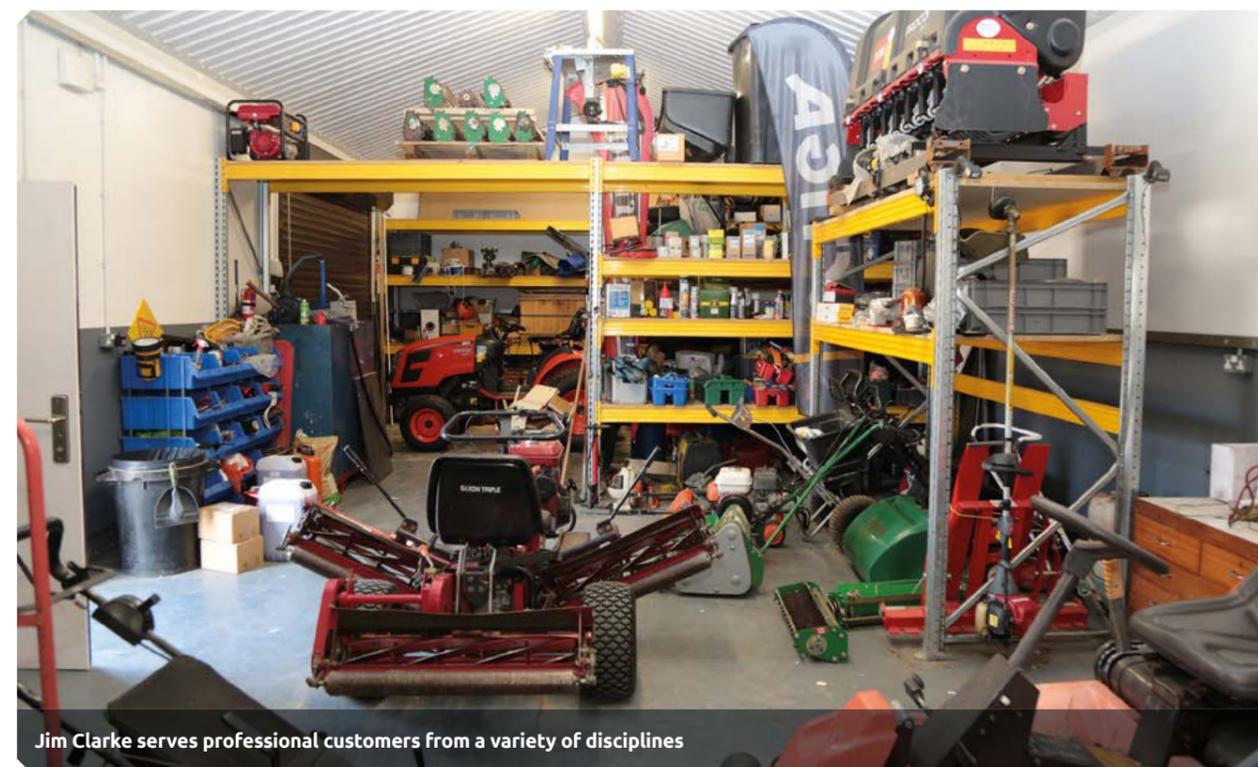
SD: Has the way you trade and operate changed in the past 10 years?

JC: Yes, it's a very different company now from what it was 10 years ago. You can't afford to stand still in anything to do with running a business. High levels of customer service are the absolute minimum you require to succeed.

Customers expect so much more nowadays and want value for money. Everything you do and communicate has to be so much more professional as the company image and your clients' perception of you are everything.

We've seen a trend towards selling more products to professional customers rather than our traditional domestic customers.

Our ratio of selling to repairs and maintenance is about 50:50. It keeps us busy on both fronts. Traditionally repairs and servicing was a winter period operation, but it's now all year round, driven by the ever-changing sporting calendar.



Jim Clarke serves professional customers from a variety of disciplines



Inside the workshop

Also, setting up the trailer hire and sales side of the business has brought along a new set of customers.

SD: Do you still see the value in attending trade shows etc?

JC: Yes, I try to attend the turf industry's main shows, such as Saltek and BTME. If time allows, we also attend local trade shows.

SD: Are you happy to demo machinery for customers?

JC: Yes, we're always happy to demonstrate machines to our customers. In general the products I tend to sell, sell themselves. However, doing a demo is important because it helps to build up a relationship with customers and they learn a lot from the demonstrations, and at the end of the day it helps secure a sale.

SD: What training do you offer your staff to help them in their roles?

JC: I along with my staff try to keep abreast of any relevant training needs and attend the manufacturers' training days.

SD: Are you seeing a demand for robotic and battery-driven products?

JC: Yes, we're starting to see a shift in

the interest in battery-driven products, especially in the range of hand tools such as trimmers, hedge trimmers and chainsaws.

On the mower front, Dennis is now selling three new E-Series range of battery-powered mowers: the ES-860, a 34" battery-powered cylinder mower; the ES-34R rotary mower; and a battery version of the Dennis Premier mower, the ES-36.

Without doubt, this technology is only going to improve and within the next 10 years we'll see many other new battery-powered professional mowers on the market. As for Robotic mowers, I don't go out of my way to sell any main brands at present, so I don't have much to do with them.

SD: What are your thoughts regarding online selling?

JC: It's a trend that's growing. Consumer confidence is driving more companies to sell products online. We now see a lot of new and secondhand trading on social media websites as there are a lot of groundsmen, especially from grassroots sports clubs, seeking a bargain. However, whatever they buy, there will be a point that it needs repairing and servicing, so as a local dealer our repairs and servicing side of the business continues to grow.



Jim Clarke

SD: How have you coped with the COVID pandemic and how has it affected your business?

JC: For a small local business, COVID has not affected us like it has the larger companies. In fact we've been busier than ever – nothing stopped really. We were able to socially distance and developed a rotor for working, collecting and delivering machines to our customers.

SD: How do you see the future for your business?

JC: Hopefully it continues to grow and we sell a range of products that meet the needs and demands of my customer base. We've invested in new facilities and upgraded our working environment to become more efficient.

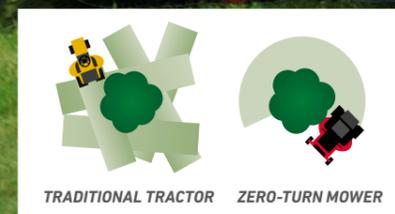
SD: Thank you.

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[^] Time savings based on survey of consumers who purchased TimeCutters from 1/1/18 - 30/9/19. Time savings will vary.



Count on it.

SHOWS RETURN TO THE AG SECTOR

Back at the end of June, Lincolnshire was the scene of one of the first farm equipment exhibitions post-lockdown. MARTIN RICKATSON selects some of the highlights of the launches from the manufacturers and importers among the machinery lines at Cereals 2021

As one of the first shows in the agricultural calendar since March 2020, the staging of Cereals 2021 marked a considerable commitment by the organisers, exhibitors and visitors to put on and attend an exhibition in the post-restriction coronavirus environment. Indeed, the dates of the event had been shifted from their usual mid-June slot to the end of the month to adapt to the Government's original date for the full lifting of restrictions on 21 June. Attendances over the two days certainly wouldn't have broken any records, but many manufacturers present commented that those visitors who came yielded serious enquiries and sales prospects.

Deere X series makes its debut

Although many of the major tractor players stayed away – the likes of AGCO and Case IH were represented by local dealers, while makers such as Claas and New Holland were absent – others, including John Deere and ARGO's McCormick brand, had a significant presence at Cereals. Unveiled to the press last spring and last summer respectively, Cereals 2021 marked the full UK show debut for two major new machines from John Deere: the 8RX four-tracked conventional tractors and the X-series combines.

With a claimed potential workrate of 100t/hr at losses of 1.0%, the X9 1100 model has a smaller brother, the X9 1000, with the key difference being horsepower and grain tank

capacity (14,800 vs 16,200 litres), with unloading rates of up to 186 litres/sec.

The machines are said to feature the widest elevator on the market, while key internals include a new dual rotary separator and what is claimed to be the industry's largest cleaning shoe, a 7.0m² unit offering 36% more cleaning area and, thanks to a new fan system, 45% more cleaning capacity than on S-series combines.

A chevron-design feed accelerator moves the crop towards the combine's 3.51m-long X-series Dual Separator (XDS) rotors, putting it through nine revolutions. The separation area utilises a finger design to tease the last grains from the crop mat.

Power comes from an all-new John Deere PowerTech 13.6-litre six-cylinder diesel engine delivering up to 700hp. Similar to that on the 9000 series self-propelled forage harvesters, the X9 also features HarvestMotion belt-drive, said to deliver 20% lower fuel consumption and 30% more torque. The 1,250-litre fuel tank can be filled in under 2.5 minutes via a new Fast Fuel System, providing filling speeds of up to 550 litres/min.

A new ProDrive XL transmission provides 30% more torque than the previous ProDrive, a 40kph top speed, and engine speed management to 1,700rpm. It uses double-pump technology, engaging both pumps immediately on starting, to ensure maximum torque is available. As the forward speed increases and the torque demand decreases the second pump output is reduced, decreasing power and fuel requirements.

All sorts of launches from Amazone

Amazone displayed a range of products making their UK debut, including drills, catch crop seeders, self-propelled sprayers, cultivators, power harrows and spreader upgrades. The largest machine on show was the new Pantera 4504 self-propelled sprayer, featuring a new in-house operating system, modified spray agent liquid circuit and revised cab.

External valve controls are operated via a new SmartCenter and complete operator station under an access cover on the machine's left side, alongside a new 60-litre induction bowl. The new pressure-stable and liquid fertiliser-proof AR piston diaphragm twin pumps, with a total output capacity of 520 l/min, have been repositioned over to the right-hand side resulting in a considerable noise reduction during the filling process. Filling capacity is up to 700 l/min.

The SmartCenter is available in specifications from Comfort-Pack with TwinTerminal 3.0 to Comfort-Pack Plus with TwinTerminal 7.0. On the latter, valve operation is via a pressure-sensitive touchscreen rather than operating taps, the operator selecting the desired function and adjustments then being made automatically, with functions such as the spray agent tank and the fresh water tank being filled to the required level and an automatic cleaning sequence programmed to start at the touch of a button.

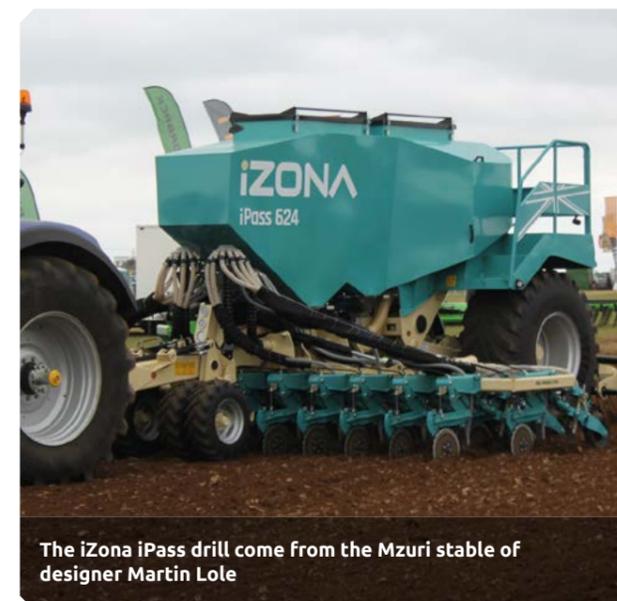
A new AmaDrive 7.0 seven-inch touchscreen colour terminal is now integrated in the armrest, with new in-house operating system software displayed on either the 8" AmaTron 4



John Deere's X9 combine made its public UK debut at Cereals 2021



As well as trailed sprayers, Amazone showed its new Pantera 4504 self-propelled



The iZona iPass drill come from the Mzuri stable of designer Martin Lole



Cereals' first inter-row weeding demonstration was supported by Garford and Lemken/Steketee



Exhibits from Opico included He-Va's Top-Cutter and the largest version yet of the Sky Easydrill



Spread-a-Bale's Re-Bale enables reprocessing of round and square bales into 20kg bales

terminal or the 12.1" AmaPad 2 ISOBUS terminals.

Also new from Amazone was the 3.0/3.5/4.0m Cenio 3000 mulch cultivator. Aimed at smaller tractors of around 150hp, it has three rows of 30cm tines and 25cm maximum working depth. Rear levelling discs or paddles back-fill the tine action to create a level finish before being consolidated by the following roller, with options including cage, soil-on-soil UW/DUW, wedge ring and disc types. There are shear-bolt or sprung break-back leg protection alternatives.

Amazone also showed its mounted, high-speed Precea precision drill with over-pressure singling system, shown in 4.5m variable sowing width form, equipped with rear fertiliser hopper for under-root fertiliser application. In addition, Amazone announced that ZA-TS mounted and ZG-TS 01 trailed fertiliser spreaders are now available with its new 'intelligent' ProfisPro weighing system.

Tools to break down cover crops ahead of drilling the next cash crop were another theme relating to innovation areas surrounding soil health. Imported by Opico, He-Va's Top-Cutter is a new take on cover crop destruction tools, with two smaller-diameter (400mm) rotors set one behind the other, each equipped with six Hardox blades. The machine can be front or rear mounted.

Drills and cover crop kit

Opico also showed the largest version yet of the Easydrill direct drills it markets from French firm Sky. The new 8m Easydrill HD features Sky's single-disc openers and a 5,100-litre 60:40 split hopper incorporating a rotary non-return valve that means tank pressurisation is not necessary. Power requirement is approx 280-300hp (35hp/m).

Other new drills capable of direct and strip seeding included the iPass, from British maker iZona, an offshoot of Mzuri. It features interchangeable front points and coulters, allowing conversion from no-till to strip till or conventional drilling simply by removing roll pins. There is a choice of 50mm single-shoot and 75mm or 125mm double-shoot coulters to achieve different row spacings to suit different seeding techniques. Auto-reset leading tines and front discs clear crop residue from the seeding zone, and seedbed fertiliser can then be band-placed. IZona also showed a 4/6m subsoiler featuring 8/12 legs. The legs are spaced at 500mm and staggered at 750mm.

KRM's 2512 has been replaced in its line of mounted tine drills with the new 3/4/6m Neu-P, from long-term partner Sola. Featuring a 2,500-litre sealed hopper with twin external distribution heads, it is equipped with ISOBUS-controlled metering and can be specified with Elite tine or double-disc coulters. The 4m and 6m versions are toolbar types with a front-mounted tank.

Robots and camera guidance

Elsewhere, there was a dedicated area displaying the latest in robotics, where a number of drone and autonomous vehicle developments were demonstrated, including those being developed for spot spraying.

Manufacturers included Agointelli, recently featured in

Service Dealer following the sale of its first Robotti autonomous tractor sale to a Suffolk vegetable growing business. Meanwhile, AgXeed, a Dutch firm in which Claas has recently invested, showed its AgBot tracked machine. Its 6t gross weight is carried by rubber track units from 300 to 910mm wide, while track width is adjustable. Implement connections include load-sensing hydraulics, 8t capacity linkage and electrically-driven PTO.

Driven by increased herbicide resistance and re-registration pressures, plus doubts over glyphosate's future, Cereals also hosted its first inter-row weeding demonstration. Supported by manufacturers including Garford and Lemken/Steketee, it illustrated the latest technology in the sector, including camera guidance.

Garford's stand also showed parent firm Zurn's Top Cut Collect weed harvester. Designed to remove the heads of weed plants and collect the seeds in a machine-mounted bin, conveyor belts transport the weed seeds into a hopper with high-dump system. The implement features a double-cut knife and special helical reel. Available in 9m and 12m working widths, the boom can be folded hydraulically for road transport.

Innovative ideas

Away from core arable machinery, Spread-a-Bale introduced the Re-Bale, designed to enable reprocessing of round and square bales into 20kg bales to meet demand from the equine, smallholding and pet marketplace. The firm claims one bale can be de-baled and reprocessed into 12 small bales within one minute. Designed to operate in conjunction with a tractor and pickup baler, it features a base unit with regulated bidirectional conveyor, powered from a tractor alongside the baler using a hydraulic spool valve. The bidirectional valve controls the conveyor's direction and speed.

The base unit is suited to use in conjunction with Spread-a-Bale's M range machines fitted with the Feed-a-Bale deflector, which directs the de-baled material in to the re-bale hopper. The combination can process a large rectangular bale within one minute. Re-Bale is also available in modular form providing the opportunity to grow the facility into a static plant capable of reprocessing up to 100t of straw or hay per day.

Among other British manufacturers, Yorks-based Ryetec showed the Restorer Ald. Available in 3m fixed or 4m hydraulic folding variants, it features six or eight low disturbance legs equipped with tungsten-tipped points. Designed to relieve soil compaction and ground damage caused by previous operations, and restoring ground prior to cultivation or drilling, it can be front or rear mounted. Key elements are low disturbance cutting discs and following legs, said to create minimal surface ground disturbance. The firm suggests it can be used in conjunction with rear-mounted drilling rig or rear mounted as a single-pass machine, with option of rear packer and/or seeding equipment. When rear mounted, an optional drawbar allows other cultivation equipment or a drill to be towed.



KRM's 2512 has been replaced in its line of mounted tine drills with the new 3/4/6m Neu-P



Garford's stand displayed parent firm Zurn's Top Cut Collect weed harvester



Ryetec showed the Restorer Ald, featuring six or eight low disturbance legs with tungsten points



The new CEORA

LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL ROBOTIC MOWING ON THE WAY

Dealers are promised delivery of Husqvarna's new CEORA by spring 2022

Husqvarna has officially launched a new robot mower that the company says can independently mow an area the equivalent of up to eight football pitches a day or night.

Known as the CEORA, the machine had its official public UK launch at an event at the Headland Amenity Turf Research Centre in Cambridge in June, following a global online press launch two weeks previously. It was subsequently seen by visitors to BIGGA's Festival Of Turf at the end of July.

Speaking to *Service Dealer*, Andrew Lees, Pro Robotic Project Leader at the manufacturer, said UK dealers should expect to see the machine in their showrooms in spring 2022 for the sales start date.

Asked whether the industry-wide delays on all goods experienced so far this year could in anyway impact on this, Andrew told the magazine: "At the minute we've had no indication that that will slip. The product was supposed to be launched this year, so it's actually been delayed a year. However, at the moment, there's nothing I'm aware of that indicates that the 2022 date will slip in any way."

Valentin Dahlhaus, Vice President

of Husqvarna said, "Commercial turf care is about to be revolutionised thanks to CEORA. I'm confident that it will be a much-appreciated addition to any team of landscape professionals – a quiet, smart and autonomous colleague that will happily perform the most tedious tasks whenever needed. Not only is the pitch always ready for play, professionals free up their time for other tasks."

The company says the robots can navigate with a precision of 2-3 cm, due to their satellite navigation system, EPOS.

It also claims it is possible to select individually defined areas on demand, with different schedules as well as height-settings. The user keeps control of all mowers in the fleet through the Husqvarna Fleet Services application.

CEORA is backed by Husqvarna's maintenance and support program, UpCare, which provides repair and replacement services.

The manufacturer says CEORA is designed to avoid obstacles. With the ultrasonic remote object avoidance system, the mower slows down as soon as it senses an approaching object. As a positive side effect, Husqvarna claims this increases uptime by eliminating interruptions

and undesired stops. Also of benefit to professional users is the fact that the machines do not produce any direct emissions during use.

At launch two models will be available – the 544 EPOS and 546 EPOS – in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Poland.

As part of a first-year introductory offer, the 544 EPOS has an RRP of 24,900 EUR and the 546 has an RRP of 28,900 EUR. It is also available as a lease option in selected markets.

The robots are designed to be multi-purpose units, with future accessories to be available to allow turf professionals to carry out other tasks besides mowing.



On show at the Festival Of Turf

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▲ James Hayes (centre) and his fellow presenters Ryan Lewis (Operations Director, left) and Josh Smith (Sales Director, right) on the Hayes Machinery YouTube channel

GOING LIVE!

When dealer Hayes Machinery wanted to launch its diversification into power tools with the Milwaukee franchise, there was only one way it was ever going to do it – live on its popular YouTube channel. Service Dealer Editor, STEVE GIBBS, spoke to owner James Hayes about the company's favoured method of dealership marketing

In mid-July, a few days before the lifting of the final COVID-19 restrictions, Hayes Machinery of South Molton, Devon chose to hold a launch event for a completely new product category for its business. Promoting the newly taken on Milwaukee line of high-end power tools, whilst at the same time raising funds for mental health charity CALM, this event was slightly unusual. Rather than holding an in-store open day, Hayes chose for the event to take place live on its YouTube channel.

Owner James Hayes says this was a deliberate decision and not one that was in any way dictated by the restrictions on sizes of gatherings imposed at the time. The dealership has been building up its YouTube channel

and followers over the past 12 months, concentrating on the platform as its preferred means for marketing the dealership.

James told me, "We started our YouTube channel last July, so it was 12 months old almost to the day that we held our live launch – and it's continuing to grow. I'm delighted with how well it's doing."

"It normally takes a new YouTuber 22 months to get to a thousand subscribers and we got to 2,200 in less than 12 months," he explained, "so statistically we're doing quite well. Sure, it's not huge numbers, but for what we're doing we think it's going great at this stage."

In terms of the content that James and his co-presenters, Ryan Lewis, Operations Director and Josh Smith, Sales

Director, choose to upload, James told me, "We're not just doing product reviews, we're getting viewers interested by doing plenty of project videos. We're also creating more team content to make it more fun. The most successful videos are not just dry product reviews. Viewers like it when personality is injected into what you upload."

"We link all our videos to the products they feature on our website – that's where we're seeing the advantage. The videos are held both on YouTube itself and embedded to our website. We find people viewing the videos on our site are generating good sales."

He continued, "Manufacturers have got behind us now too, wanting us to do videos for them – and I like to think that's because we're doing a good job."

"YouTube is a real growth area for us, so that was why we were keen to do the launch live on the channel."

Did James at no point consider waiting and holding an in-person event instead, I ask?

"Perhaps if we'd scheduled it for after 19 July we could have had a few more in store – but did I want that? Not really. Or we could have just put a post on our social media and sent an email out – but we wanted to do something more."

"I always try to look a bit outside of the box," James said, "and think 'what can we do a bit differently from everyone else?' I always tend to zig when other people zag."

Diversification

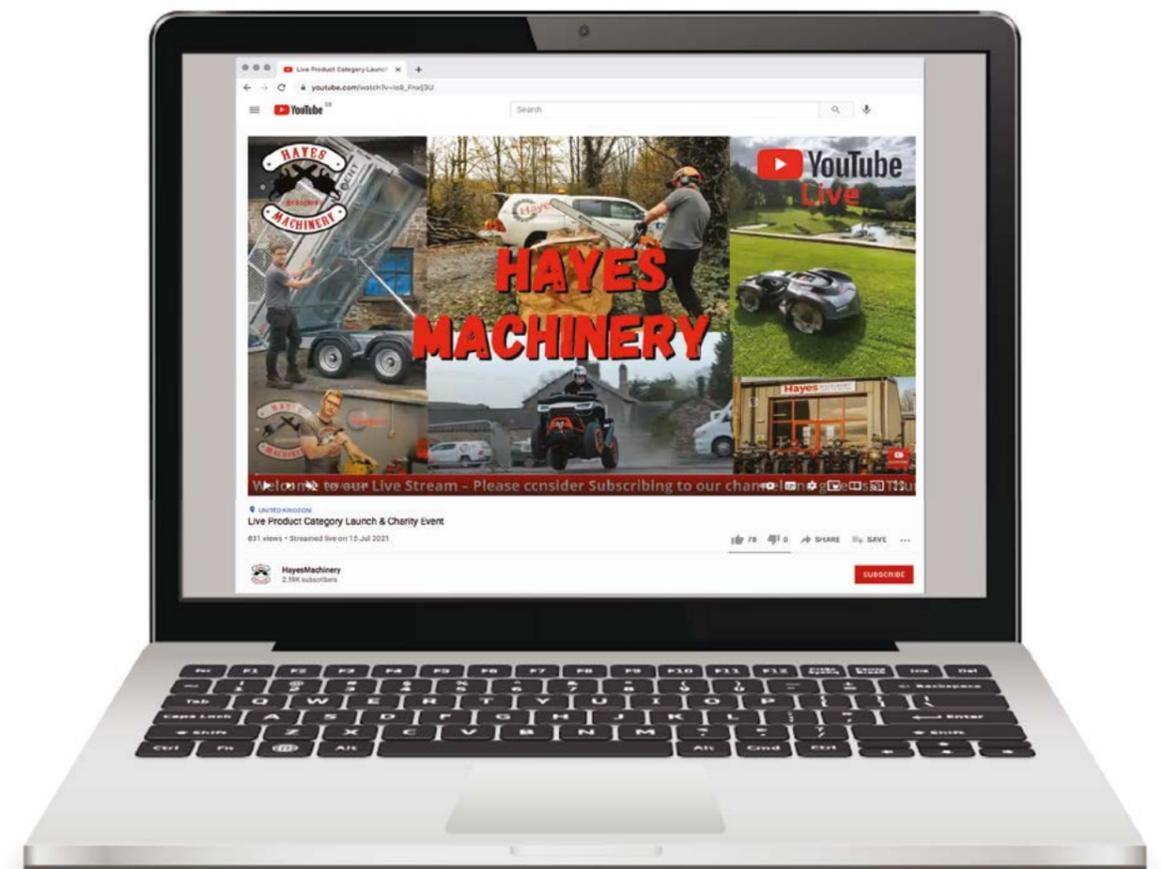
James kept it top secret before the live launch, what exactly the new product category that they would be promoting was. As it turned out, they have chosen to enter the higher end of the power tools sector, with the Milwaukee brand of equipment.

James said of his decision to diversify the dealership's offering in this way, "We've gone into it very, very heavily. It helps that I'm a massive Milwaukee fan and so is my son, so that was definitely part of our decision-making process."

"At the same time though, it's genuinely a product that sells well online. I guess I'm going against what I said in the *Service Dealer Digital Toolkit* somewhat here, but the products will be fantastic for our website sales. We'll also feature it prominently in-store, of course."

James is a big believer in dealerships doing their research locally when choosing to diversify into a new range. If the product under consideration can be purchased easily nearby, James's view is it's probably not worth taking on. With the Milwaukee tools, James says customers would have to go all the way to the south coast to find another stockist near them. "Therefore it should have some good legs locally as well as online," he hopes.

They have a significant display of the tools in their showroom now, 10 metres in fact. "It's actually the biggest single display of any brand within the showroom,



so that's quite a difference for us.

"The trouble is with it being such a discounted product online, you've got to achieve significant sales to make it work. We need to get the marketing behind it right – hence the big push via YouTube."

New customers

Perhaps more so than selling the Milwaukee tools primarily to their current customers, James believes the range and how they are marketing it should pull in brand new customers.

"The range will be on our website so we can sell nationwide," he confirms. "Like everyone, our website sales have been growing these past 18 months. Now though, we're entering genuinely new territory and a new market."

"Importantly also, I've got staff who want to get behind the range as much as me. If I didn't have that, I wouldn't see it as such an opportunity for the dealership."

Launching the new products on YouTube when they did was the right timing for Hayes Machinery as they believe they have built up a good community of followers – a community of mostly new people. "We're delighted that we've gained 2,200 followers from a standing start in the 12 months that we've been active on the platform – and we're looking to keep building on that momentum," says James. "We've made sales to

people who first discovered us via our channel and the plan is to keep growing that marketing side further."

Are people also coming into the store after seeing them on YouTube or are they mostly buying online, I ask?

"It's not huge numbers that are coming into the store at this stage," admits James, "it's mainly via our site. But because we've invested so much time and effort into YouTube over these past 12 months, we're determined to see those efforts pay off."

"When I consider it in terms of raising our profile and getting our name out there, it's almost intangible how much benefit it has afforded us."

"Our social media is quite big anyway, so we promoted the live launch through that with targeted messaging in the run-up to the event – including a Facebook event group and an email campaign to all our customers."

"We're hoping other dealers checked out the



launch and our channel just from a marketing point of view for their own dealerships. I like to hope other businesses might see something we've done and be inspired to start their own thing."

Good cause

One element of the live launch that James was particularly proud of was combining the promotion with fundraising for CALM, the Campaign Against Living Miserably.

"CALM works tirelessly to help in the battle against male suicide," explains James. "I therefore thought it's an industry-relevant charity to have supported because our sector is a male-dominated one. I thought it would make sense to support something that matters to the people who might be potentially buying from us in the future. We wanted to make it meaningful – and I don't care what people say, all of us on occasion suffer from stress or anxiety."

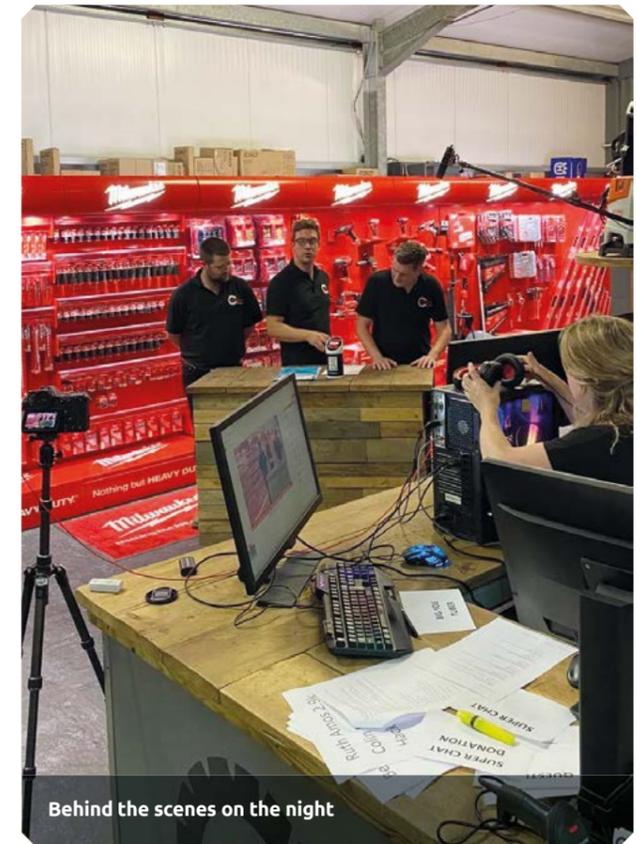
On the night of the live event, visitors to the channel were able to interact and chat with James, the presenters and other attendees. It was this chat facility that facilitated cash to be raised as users could pay via YouTube's Superchat function to have their comment or question posted at the top of the page.

"I didn't want people just paying money to us to do that," James explained, "so I thought we could use that payment function for good. It seemed the perfect way to utilise a function on YouTube that's already monetised, but for a good cause."

"During the launch we raised over £600 for CALM, which I was delighted with. We not only had donations come in from viewers in the UK, but from abroad from places such as the US Canada and Denmark."

The potential for greater numbers to attend on the night, both to raise funds and view the new products, was boosted by James lining up some major YouTubers with hefty followings to come along too, including the well-known Steve's Small Engine Saloon.

"These big name YouTubers I pulled in are people I've



Behind the scenes on the night

struck up a relationship with because of the channel," James says. "I've always been a networker I guess, and I've built up a good community of my own."

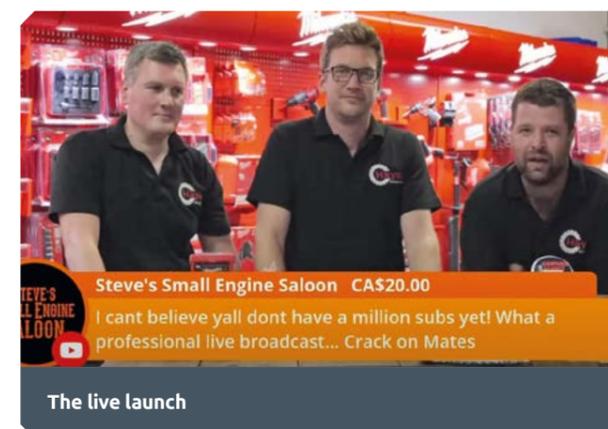
James sums up his feelings regarding YouTube as a valuable marketing tool for his dealership saying, "As a dealer, I believe we're fairly at the forefront of the YouTube scene for our sector in the UK. There doesn't appear to many other dealers investing in it right now, whereas I've heavily invested in it to put our products and our brand out there."

"Alongside our Facebook and Instagram channels, it's a very important marketing outlet for us and I genuinely believe it could work for other dealers too."

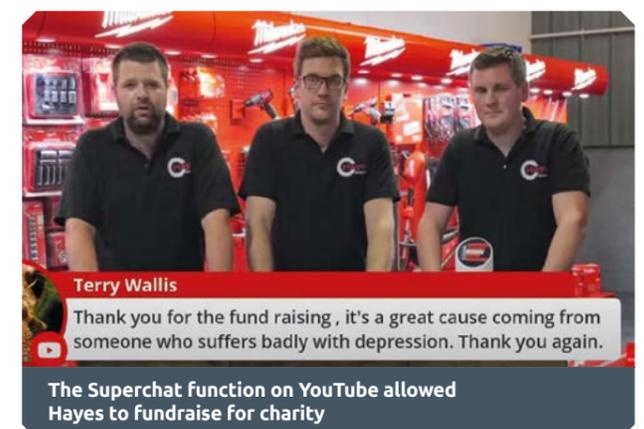
"I certainly think it's going to have legs for the future."



The Milwaukee products are now the biggest single display of any brand within the showroom



The live launch



The Superchat function on YouTube allowed Hayes to fundraise for charity

NEW HOLLAND UPGRADES BASILDON FLAGSHIPS

The biggest of its tractors built in Britain, New Holland recently conducted an online launch of its revised 250-300hp T7 HD models. But while it sees an increasing role for internet/digital marketing and communication, NH also declared its commitment to live shows and events, reports MARTIN RICKATSON



Sean Lennon, New Holland Europe Commercial Vice President, suggested the business was enjoying strong sales growth in hay and forage equipment, particularly big square balers

Labelling its latest online event under the *Intelligent Farming All_Ways* banner, New Holland's most recent digital launch for new products came with a commitment that the business remains firmly behind supporting real-world exhibitions as they start to slowly return to the calendar.

According to Sean Lennon, Europe Commercial Vice President, digital and online communication has helped to keep in touch with dealers and customers when it wasn't safe to have physical meetings, and has

been judged a success, with over 100,000 visitors to its Youiverse digital fair earlier this year.

"That's given us a lot of good ideas of how we can develop this platform in future, but New Holland still believes strongly in the value of shows. Physical events reinforce the customer relationships and the one-to-one interaction where the customers can touch and experience the product. As soon as the situation allows, we want to return to this. There is a full calendar of trade fairs planned across Europe in

2022 and we plan to be at many of them. I can see a role for a hybrid model, using digital product experiences for those who can't attend."

Mr Lennon praised the contribution of dealers to the strong first half of 2021 New Holland has reported, with double-digit tractor sales growth month-over-month and year-to-date, as well as over the pre-pandemic 2019 season. As well as France and Spain, he singled out the UK as particularly strong in both tractor and combine sales growth,



New Holland has replaced its three-model T7 HD range, the largest tractors built at Basildon, with a newly-cabbed line



New Holland has taken a radical step in tractor data displays, with its CentreView display placed in the centre of the steering wheel

with the latter attributable largely to the combine 'attack plan' the business detailed earlier this year.

He suggested New Holland was enjoying strong sales growth in hay and forage equipment, particularly big square balers. He also, though, acknowledged the issues faced by dealers and customers caused by component supply issues, emphasising that the business is doing all it can to mitigate this, including working with its dealers to minimise the impact on customers.

Basildon's biggest at centre of event

The online event was centred on the launch of the new flagship T7 Heavy Duty (HD) PLM (Precision Land Management) tractor to the European trade press. Launched in 2015, this is the first major upgrade for the T7 HD range, and introduces a new Horizon Ultra cab and next-generation PLM Intelligence features.

"We asked our customers what they expected from their future tractor and developed the new generation T7 HD based on their

demands," said Mr Lennon.

"The Horizon Ultra cab development focused on space, comfort and a quality finish, plus quietness. In addition, next-generation PLM Intelligence makes it easier for users to access our intelligent farming solutions, aiding decision making and accurate execution, to boost efficiency and profitability."

The three T7 HD (250/270/300 rated hp) tractors appear relatively unchanged externally, but New Holland says just 2% of parts are carried over from the previous range. The cab has been lengthened to provide additional room for the passenger and more floor space, while noise levels have been cut to 66 decibels. A 30-litre covered storage space behind the seat is complemented by a 12-litre capacity cooled compartment and covered storage behind the passenger seat, with a USB charging point and a mains voltage socket. The redesign is said to have further improved visibility to the front and down to the rear hitch and implement, and a number of camera options are available.

A new work light package consists of up to 24 LED units, while internally a new SideWinder Ultra armrest incorporates a new 12-inch IntelliView display. Armrest controls can be configured to suit operator preferences, such as matching each remote valve toggle switch to each valve at the rear. Meanwhile, New Holland has taken a radical step in tractor data displays, with its CentreView display placed in the centre of the steering wheel. The new automatic climate control system with zone selection is said to offer 35% more capacity than the previous model, while an Auto Comfort seat features lateral suspension and a climate control system that extracts moisture on hot days or warms on cold mornings. Mobile devices such as smartphones connect automatically to the screen and can be operated with a button on the armrest.



Cab structure and internal changes mean more length from front to rear pillars and greater internal volume, while noise levels have been cut to 66 decibels

Next generation connectivity

The T7 HD introduces New Holland's next-generation PLM Intelligence package, as already established on the T8 Genesis tractors. According to Carlo Lambro, New Holland Agriculture Brand President, its connectivity and data management abilities mark the shift from traditional farming practices to agriculture 4.0, harnessing the power of precision and interconnected practices to aid planning, as well as managing in real time the behaviour

and performance of each machine, to maximise precision and efficiency.

"These new developments are the result of New Holland's strategy to be more and more connected to our customers," said Mr Lambro.

"Servitization and digitalization have made it possible to integrate the physical presence of the operator at the wheel with an array of digital services that mean we can always be at our customer's side, helping them to get the job done."

The next-generation PLM

Intelligence electronic architecture will be adopted in all New Holland next-generation equipment, Mr Lambro explained, with customers finding the same logic when switching machines, and easing the process of accessing data to complete tasks more efficiently.

"This is part of New Holland's strategy to integrate digital technologies for smart and connected agriculture, with easy-to-use solutions. They include the traditional precision farming applications aimed at making the operator's life easier while optimising yield and input costs, plus solutions based on connectivity and monitoring focused on improving the machine's productivity, and cloud-based solutions based on data analysis and planning to facilitate farm management decisions."

Through the MyNewHolland app, customers can register their machine, retrieve its technical information, and access the MyPLMConnect portal, where they can manage their fleet and farm data in a single environment. The MyPLMConnect system enables information to be received in real time from individual machines at work in the field, and analysis of the data to help users make informed decisions.



A new work light package on the revised New Holland T7 HD tractor consists of up to 24 LED units

OLIVERS

ADVERTORIAL - IBCOS DEALER STORIES

SUPPLIER INTEGRATIONS AND INITIATIVES DRIVE BUSINESS GROWTH AT OLIVER AGRICULTURE LTD.

We sat down with David Jarman, Director of Oliver Agriculture Ltd, to discuss how this 90-year-old business expanded geographically by three depots, bringing this established business to new heights

Oliver Agriculture Ltd is a family business that started in 1823, and the seventh generation of the Oliver family that founded it continues to be involved today. After the Second World War, Oliver Agriculture Ltd took on the CLAAS franchise, so the business has been selling CLAAS equipment for well over 70 years. The company continued to evolve, and it got to the stage where it needed to specialise and focus on some of the key manufacturers. Thus, in 2008, it split the trading part of the business into two, creating Oliver Agriculture and Oliver Landpower.



Can you tell us about the business as it stands today?

David ▶ "We sell CLAAS, Horsch and several other franchises. The business has also expanded in terms of the area that we cover. In 2015, Oliver Agriculture took on three more depots to the south of us, making us a five-depot dealership. In the last 12 months, we've more than doubled our turnover."

How have the related businesses been operating?

David ▶ "The sister company, Oliver Landpower, has also continued to grow. Whilst still having roots in agriculture, it also has done other diversifications and is the mechanism for them to provide groundcare equipment. They're specialised in professional groundcare, including golf courses and local authorities, and have a utility hire side to the business."

How would you describe the business in terms of growth?

David ▶ "In size of turnover, Oliver Agriculture has gone from £16 million last year to £33 million this year, total. Landpower has also seen significant growth. In all, the group is in excess of £50 million turnover."

How is the business structured?

David ▶ "We have quite a diverse portfolio within the group, and have grown to a size of 135 employees. We have services that are provided centrally, such as shared accounting and administrative resources, which helps with overhead management."

When did you implement Ibcos Gold, and what was the initial reason for it?

David ▶ "We implemented it in late 2001. The system that we had before was a combination of manual systems for parts stock control and an electronic ledger. It was quite antiquated and difficult to operate, so having something that joined up all the different parts of the business, which Ibcos could offer, was the obvious move."

How would you say Ibcos Gold compares to what you had before?

David ▶ "It was a massive leap forwards at the time. It enabled us to process invoices more easily. On the workshop side, everything is linked together. This ranges from the sort of machines that we're selling, to the whole goods, to having the record of all the workshop jobs that stemmed from that machine."

"Everything became joined up, which made administration of the operation so much easier and transparent. Things couldn't be hidden away; we've got better visibility today."

How has the system evolved?

David ▶ "Ibcos has moved forwards perfectly over the last 20 years and it keeps progressing. There is no way that you could stay with the old systems and expand the business. With the administrative burden, it would be too much."

What would you say are some of the must-have features of a system like Ibcos Gold?

David ▶ "In the current way of working, having good integration with our suppliers' systems is key to operating. This is something that we worked out with CLAAS within Ibcos. Recently, we're partnering with some initiatives in the UK, trying to integrate interfaces among the dealers', suppliers' and manufacturers' systems."

How would you describe implementing Ibcos across three further depots?

David ▶ "With good liaising between teams at both Ibcos and the manufacturer, we were able to have quite a smooth transition."

"It has been a very big plus point for us in terms of being able to expand the business. At the same time, we had to train new employees who had no experience with Ibcos in the past. With the support from Ibcos, we were able to achieve implementation, without it being too traumatic."

What's your opinion on the support that Ibcos provides?

David ▶ "The support team has been very proactive in terms of dealing with any of the issues we've had. The speed of developing any fixes has been quite pleasing."

How much has Ibcos contributed to the overall success of your dealership?

David ▶ "Without a good dealer management system, it would be impossible to deal with the volume of business that we currently have. I don't know how many more people you'd have to employ to do what Ibcos does for us. It's an essential contributor to the operation."



To learn more about Ibcos visit: www.ibcos.co.uk or call +44 (0) 1202 7142 00

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EXPANDING YOUR MARKETING LIST



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, how to increase your marketing reach

I was recently visiting with a dealer about how to expand his marketing list. He was excited to start putting more time and energy into marketing his dealership, but he didn't know where to start.

Your customers

If we're looking for an easy place to start, that costs us nothing, let's focus on growing our marketing list by utilising our own customers. This is the easiest, least expensive, and most ethical way to grow your list. It also allows us to market to people who already like and trust us.

When a customer comes into your dealership, after we get their name, we want to ask for their email and mobile phone number. This is important information to get regardless of what we're doing with the customer, but even more important since we're looking at how to reach them with new products and specials that we're doing.

After you receive their phone number and email address, you need to ask them "Would you be interested in getting updates on new products and specials as we have them?" Hopefully your customers will be interested in hearing from you in the future and say 'Yes' to opt into your marketing.

Analytics

Another important area to focus on, as we're thinking about utilising our current customers and turning them into repeat sales through marketing, is through analytics.

Sure, I know what you're thinking, you're running a business and the idea of diving into another set of numbers can seem overwhelming. But here's the thing: if we're going to put money into our marketing, we have to make sure it's working. Your money is too valuable to throw at marketing and hope that it works. By using some very basic functions of Google Analytics on your website or analytics through your social media streams, you can continue to expand your marketing list and make sure that you're focusing on the right items with your marketing.

For example, let's say that your

Google Analytics are telling you that when people are coming to your website, they're coming from Facebook Marketplace and they're searching for used equipment on your site.

There are two questions you should ask: "Do I already have these customers on my list?" and "Is my used equipment easy to find on the site?"

We would make sure that we have these customers on our list by adding a pop-up on our site to collect their email. Typically, you would ask for their email in return for something. It might be a hat, a discount, or even an exclusive piece of content that explains how to make the best decision when buying used equipment.

Complying with regulations

The last thing that needs to be said is there are constantly changing rules and regulations on what needs to be done in order to market legally

to your customers. But, if we can get the consent we need on the front end and have a process to show the consent, we will be moving in the direction of keeping our customers engaged and buying from us for years into the future.



Chris Gibson

HIGHLIGHTING WHAT WE DO WELL AND PINPOINTING WHERE WE COULD IMPROVE

Chris Gibson, MD of GGM Groundscare, says it's important to understand your customers' needs in order to improve performance

Summer started to see a return to normal and I'm sure we all enjoyed seeing crowds returning to football stadiums and the passion and excitement of the fans for all the home nations – although one bit of normality I could have done without was England losing yet another penalty shootout! The contradictions of the long-awaited Freedom Day at a time of rising infection rates and the managing of 'pings' still means we're going to have to continue to adjust our business practices as we learn to live with COVID-19.

With many people deciding to holiday in the UK this year, it's certainly meant all the camping and caravan sites have had a busy summer – and in this market and others the level of interest both in equipment and after-sales has remained very strong, meaning we continue to see good levels of growth across the business.

Regarding new machinery however, the ongoing supply chain problems for manufacturers have meant we've been looking at how we can improve our forecasting and ordering to ensure we continue to have machinery available for our customers when required, as it seems likely that supply will continue to be challenging for some time to come.

The issues within the supply chain, whether due to manufacturing, component supply or transportation, have all resulted in increased costs which ultimately must be reflected in

the RRP. Unfortunately, this summer has seen many manufacturers implement mid-season price increases, all of which creates an additional workload we could all have done without. Updating IT systems and websites in the middle of a busy summer season is far from ideal, let alone having to explain these increases to customers.

While some factors are out of our control, customer service is certainly not and the importance of this to any dealership is paramount. Many manufacturers attempt to measure this and benchmark their networks using Customer Satisfaction Surveys. We always take time to study our results to determine how we can improve, however sometimes we find that the questions asked don't provide the answers we require to adapt our service, so this summer, we decided to produce our own.

In our survey we wanted to try to understand our customers' actual needs, rather than what we perceived them to be. We decided the best way to do this was to undertake an online survey that we'd leave open for a 2-3-week period, so giving customers time to respond. We wanted to ensure we covered all aspects of our dealership: new machinery, used machinery, parts, service and hire, providing a true picture across all departments and ensuring the benefits of the survey were maximised.

We're still analysing the results of this exercise, but the initial findings are very pleasing as it has helped us

highlight what, in the eyes of our customer, we do well, and a couple of areas we need to work on. These have now hopefully been addressed, but without the survey they may have gone unnoticed. An Annual Customer Survey is certainly something we will be repeating as good customer satisfaction is undoubtedly a key factor in the long-term financial performance of the business.

One key element of customer service is having the right people with the right training to do the job and we're currently working through an IT training program across the business. Our aim is to improve the skills already in place so our team can fully understand and manipulate the wealth of data that we hold on our server. It's surprising how these small steps soon make a big difference to performance.

Finally, I must say how pleased I was to see BAGMA being acquired by the AEA. I think it will help all our industry speak as one voice to policy makers and it further strengthens my belief that a relationship between a dealer and a manufacturer should be a partnership. Both associations are clearly much better aligned than with Retail Hardware (BIRA). Saltex will soon be upon us and what a great opportunity that will be for the industry to finally get back together again and to show our customers all the innovation that has been taking place over the past two years. See you there.

BUSINESS MONITOR

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CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE PREVAILS

Dealers who responded to our Business Confidence survey showed a quiet optimism, but stock issues are still a worry

The results of our most recent dealer survey, which canvassed readers on their business confidence for the remainder of this year, revealed similar results to when we asked readers how they felt at the time same in 2020.

The key phrase reflected back to us was one of cautious optimism. An overwhelming majority of 92% of dealers who responded said this was their primary feeling looking forward.

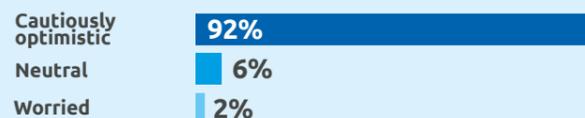
When asked if this opinion differed to last year most (78%) said they felt the same, with 22% saying their confidence levels had increased during the past 12 months. Tellingly, no one who responded said they felt less confidence than they did in summer 2020.

Unsurprisingly most dealers who answered the survey were not planning to increase their staffing levels in any significant way during the rest of the year – nor were the majority planning on taking on any new apprentices. Staff training levels were also expected to remain at the same levels, according to the majority of respondents.

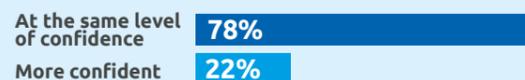
While most dealers we heard from are planning to keep the number of franchises they hold the same, we did hear from 11% who were planning on decreasing the brands in their showrooms. None were planning an increase.

Finally, as last year, we were told by a majority that the most effective way to promote their business is through word of mouth.

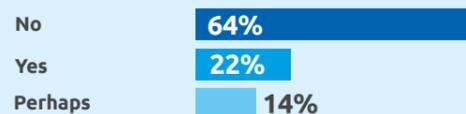
How confident are you for your business's prospects for the rest of the year?



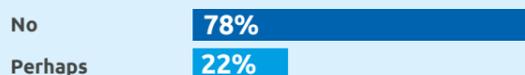
In terms of any change in business confidence this year, would you say you are ...



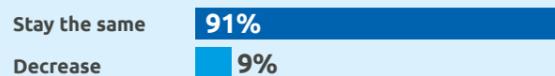
Are you considering employing staff in the next 12 months?



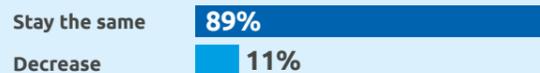
Are you planning on taking on any new apprentices this year?



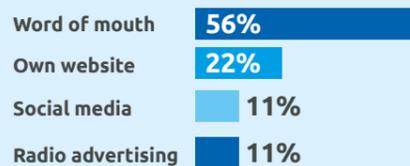
In terms of the training of your current staff, are you planning to...



Do you plan to change the number of franchises you hold over the next 12 months?



What method have you found the most effective for picking up new customers this year?



YOUR SAY...

What current industry issues are having the most significant impact on your ability to plan ahead for your business?

- The supply of components affecting repairs and new product is a major issue. Also lack of staff makes planning difficult. Until worldwide production and delivery of goods increases, planning ahead is going to be nearly impossible for business expansion. Until then it is a case of remaining busy and attempting to increase efficiency.
- Stock shortages are having the most significant impact on our ability to plan ahead.
- It was a government's desire for a different type of education and destroying technical colleges all over the country that has put us where we are and until things change we are where we are, and until engineering skills are appreciated and well paid, young people will have no desire to join us.
- The educational system is letting young people and the country down. In the early years of our business, from 1966, we were able to recruit from Technical Colleges. Candidates had a grounding in basic skills such as welding, soldering, filing shaping and general competencies. An earlier government's aim of 50% of our learners having a university education and a subsequent retreat from vocational training has left us with our current predicament. I wholly concur with the premise that reduced margins and profitability prevent our sector from paying an attractive remuneration to our employees. We are generally a low wage sector and young people are well aware of this.
- This industry doesn't recognise the skills it needs and when it does, they want to pay peanuts. It's no good offering a technician 20k a year and expecting a 43-hour week from them. This is dark ages stuff. I do understand why these measly offers are made because we are afraid to charge what we are worth for repairing items and the margins on new sales are stupidly low. One good thing of late is the constant increase of prices of parts and machinery – at least if the margins stay the same. We will earn some more actual money from each sale.
- Continuity in stock availability with pricing variations being a little erratic does not help.
- Availability of stock is an ongoing problem.
- No bloody stock!



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Edited by Adam Bernstein

PROTECTION



PREVENTING CARD FRAUD

According to UK Finance, the official body for the banking and finance industry, in *Fraud – The Facts 2020*, while advanced security systems put in place by the financial world prevented £1.8bn of “unauthorised fraud” in 2019, criminals nevertheless managed to steal more than £1.2bn through various frauds and scams, writes SME Digest Editor, Adam Bernstein

Romance scams, investment frauds, auction fraud, social media-related fraud and the use of money mules are just some of the threats that we all face. But there’s another that retailers who trade at a distance from their customers encounter day in and day out – cardholder not present (CNP) fraud.

Committed through the abuse of credit and debit cards where a cardholder is generally not physically present when a purchase is put through, whether by phone, mail order, web, email or fax, the risk is very apparent.

The problem is compounded – passed back to retailers – because CNP transactions aren’t protected by Chip and PIN so retailers can’t check if a card is genuine and that a cardholder’s identity hasn’t been abused.

UK Finance puts the value of losses from fraud losses on UK-issued cards at £620.6m in 2019, an 8% decrease from £671.4m in 2018.

Data entry

When making a sale, there are several ways for a card payment to be taken: either electronically using Chip and PIN, a card swipe or contactless such as a card tap, via a keyed entry made by the retailer or remote entry by the customer. CNP payments are also known as ‘keyed entry’ – even where a retailer physically has the card in front of them.

The likes of Google Pay, Apple Pay, and Samsung Pay are all made using mobile wallets and are considered as card-present transactions when contactless card terminals are used. However, they are classed as CNP where there is no contactless transaction.

What should retailers look out for?

There are some clear tell-tale signs of potential fraud that retailers can and should look out for.

The first is to look for orders that appear out of the ordinary. Goods, or

combinations thereof, which don’t fit together, or values that are higher than normal, especially if they are easily resalable. In situations such as these, the fraudster is looking to mine the card before it is reported and blocked.

Next, has the ‘customer’ tried a number of cards that have been declined before one is accepted? If so, they may be cycling through a number of stolen cards until one works.

Then consider if the fraudster has asked for another to collect the goods – in person or via courier. Here the fraudster is clearly aiming to stay anonymous and in the shadows. Similarly, it’s important to look also at where the card is registered to and where the goods are to be shipped to. Those in doubt should contact the customer for a suitable explanation – and if necessary, cancel the sale.

Protection?

The banks and card issuers are fighting back and stopped £999.2m

of suspicious activity in 2019. New systems are being put in place including real-time analysis of transactions against a customer’s habits and checking their history looking for trends. Also, a new process, Strong Customer Authentication, will finally be in place from September 2021. This will send customers a text or email to a phone or other device to verify the transaction before letting the sale go through.

But central to retailers’ defences are technical methods of protection which require deploying the systems that the banks and card issuers have put in place.

Looking at each in turn, and starting with Verified by Visa, Mastercard SecureCode and SafeKey, these are gateway systems that remove the need for the retailer to collect, handle and store sensitive card information. Each is similar in that they engage a customer making a transaction online with a window that demands that they authenticate themselves with a password created when the account was first opened. It’s rather like putting a card into an ATM where a PIN number

authenticates the user.

These systems require software applied to the retailer’s site or connection to a payment gateway to recognise the card.

As UK Finance, notes, “use of these authentication services by a merchant shifts the liability from the merchant to the card issuer in the event of a chargeback, under most conditions”. Chargebacks are no longer a threat for a retailer if the card is subsequently reported as stolen.

Another option is an Address Verification Service (AVS) where card processors aim to confirm the card holder’s address when a retailer enters the numeric parts of an address.

AVS is often used in tandem with the card security code – the three or four-digit security code printed on credit and debit cards. Each code is linked to an account and can be used to validate that the cardholder is making a transaction with a genuinely held card. The code also confirms that the card is current and not expired or replicated. Further, because it’s not on a magnetic strip it cannot be

swiped and stored illicitly.

American Express calls this the Card Identification Number (CID); Visa: Card Verification Value 2 (CVV2) and Mastercard: Card Validation Code (CVC2).

But to get the best protection from this method, retailers must always capture, at the time of purchase, even if they don’t store it (the gateways do this best) the name precisely as it appears on the card; the card number, security code and expiry date; the customer’s phone number and email address linked to the card; and their full billing address.

However, these systems aren’t as strong as the gateways above, there is always the risk of a chargeback.

To finish

All of this points to the one solution that retailers can use to prevent fraud-related chargebacks – only accepting purchases via an online store and entrenching gateways in the purchase process.

COMMERCIAL LEASES

LEASE BREAKS TOP TIPS (and traps for the unwary)

In times of economic uncertainty, many businesses look to rid themselves of surplus property to reduce rental liabilities. The pandemic, and the consequential surge in home- and flexible-working, has also demonstrated that many businesses can operate effectively with much less rented commercial space, says David Manda, Director in the Real Estate Litigation Team at law firm Walker Morris LLP

Context and key case law

Once a decision has been made to bring a commercial lease to an end, the failure to serve a valid break notice can have drastic consequences. The business may lose the opportunity to break the lease and may therefore remain liable and tied into the property with long-term, unwanted commitments.

The point was well made in the leading case on the subject, Mannai Investment v Eagle Star in 1997.

In the ruling, Lord Hoffmann famously said:

“If the [termination] clause had said that the notice had to be on blue paper, it would have been no good serving a notice on pink paper, however clear it might have been that the tenant

wanted to terminate.”

In doing so he vividly explained that strict compliance, with both contractual break conditions and any particular service provisions, is required for lease breaks to be effective.

Top tips and traps for the unwary

As a result, very careful consideration must always be given to the exercise of any break.

The starting point when serving a break notice must always be to examine the lease and the contractual provisions which set out the options; any conditions which must be complied with; and any particular requirements for service.

When?

The question of when a break notice can be served is very important, especially if the option is a one-off or 'once and for all' break (as opposed to a 'rolling break'). There are then three dates to determine: the break date; the date by which notice must be served; and the date by which the notice must actually be issued. If any of these are calculated incorrectly then there is a real risk that the break notice will not be valid and the lease will continue.

How?

It is essential to check whether the break clause contains a specific process for serving notice or whether the lease contains general 'service of notices' provisions elsewhere. Service must be made according to any contractually specified provision. For example, the lease may specify that service must be by fax or e-mail at a particular address; by first class or registered post; on an agent as well as, or instead of, on the party; or even that notice must be written on pink paper!

Who?

As indicated earlier, it must be understood exactly who must give the notice and on whom the notice must be served. However, determining the correct party/ies is often more difficult than first imagined. In most cases the landlord and tenant are no longer the original contracting parties; the land or tenancy may be unregistered; the landlord/tenant may not be based in the UK; and/or the lease may specify that the notice must be served on an agent.

What? Conditional break options

Conditional break options should be approached with real caution. If the lease requires absolute compliance with one or more conditions, then failure to do so, no matter how trivial, will render the break ineffective. For example, if a break option was conditional on making payment of all lease sums and just a penny remained outstanding at the break date or other prescribed time, that penny would make the whole break invalid.

The most common condition is the payment of all rent due as at the break



date. On the face of it, that seems straightforward and fair enough. However, is rent defined within the lease and does it include service charge and/or insurance rent? If it does, can these be properly calculated or established? Does rent (and potentially other sums) simply need to have fallen due under the lease, or do sums have to have been demanded? If sums need to have been demanded, can the tenant guarantee that the landlord will have demanded sums in time for the tenant to make payment?

Another common condition is for a tenant to comply with its repairing obligations – that is, putting the property back in the state it was when the lease started. However, a landlord is generally under no obligation to confirm exactly what work it expects to be carried out, nor to provide any certainty prior to the break date that any works carried out are satisfactory to discharge the tenant's obligations.

If conditions in a break option are not absolute, they are often drafted to say that the tenant must materially, substantially or reasonably comply with certain conditions. This is to try to protect the tenant from rendering the break invalid through minor and inconsequential breaches. The problem here is that

each of these terms can have a slightly different meaning and no guarantees can be given to provide absolute certainty of compliance. In these circumstances a tenant may be well advised to undertake the fullest possible compliance. Apart from the risk of a break being ineffective, a party will always face the risk of a damages claim for breach of covenant either during or after the end of a lease in any event. The fullest possible compliance has the dual effect of mitigating those risks.

In summary

Even where a tenant is not exercising a break option which is reliant upon compliance with conditions regarding the physical state of the premises at lease end, misunderstandings or mistakes as regards dilapidations liability can prove costly. Specialist legal advice, as well as advice from specialist building and valuation surveyors, will generally be required and should form part of a tenant's overall exit strategy on any commercial lease termination.

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COMMERCIAL



MOST POWERFUL STIHL POLE PRUNER LAUNCHED

The new HTA 135

STIHL has extended its range of lightweight, cordless pole pruners with the introduction of the new HTA 135, the manufacturer's most powerful model to date, designed for professional arborists, landscapers and commercial enterprises.

Described by the manufacturer as quiet in operation, the model comes fitted with a 3/8" PMM3 semi-chisel, anti kickback saw chain providing precision, high cutting performance and low-pinch tendencies. A branch hook offers stability for a more accurate cut and helps to remove caught up branches.

The HTA 135 also features a square telescopic shaft that can be adjusted between 285cm and 405cm using the new twist and click adjuster. A square shaft for increased rigidity prevents twisting and deflection, that STHL says delivers a precise cut even at full extension.

In addition, operators can manage the three speed selection levels via a control handle with an intuitive LED display. The unit can also be worn with an RTS harness to take the tools weight away from the arms, distributing it across the shoulders and waist.

When used in conjunction with STIHL's AP 300 S battery system, the HTA 135 has a run time of up to 45 minutes.

DOMESTIC

TORO TAKES THE PROLINE

Heavy-duty, battery-powered addition to range

The Toro Company has revealed a heavy-duty and battery-powered addition to its domestic line of lawnmowers.

The 60V HD Proline features a 6mm thick cast aluminium deck and is designed to withstand the kind of demands faced by professional gardeners and landscapers. The company says it is intended for users with slightly larger areas of land, where a standard consumer lawnmower would not be suitable, and a ride-on would be too large an investment.

The Recycler technology is designed to lift, suspend and recut grass clippings into a fine mulch, and redistribute it across the lawn.

The company also says the design of the deck works to reduce the chance of blockages and will more efficiently collect grass. While being designed to



withstand the extremes of commercial mowing, the HD Proline is lightweight for its purpose, allowing for extended daily use.

The machine uses a heavy-duty 60V lithium-ion battery to optimise its runtime and output. The battery is also interchangeable with the Flex-Force range of garden machinery. The range includes a leaf blower, hedge trimmer, chainsaw and string trimmer.

FORESTRY

LATEST GENERATION 90CC CHAINSAWS

Launched by Husqvarna

Husqvarna has introduced its latest generation of chainsaws within the professional 90cc segment: the 592 XP and 585.

The 592 XP is described by the manufacturer as a robustly-built chainsaw with high performance for tough conditions. It offers a combination of low weight and high-power output levels. It can handle 36" bars and is available with the new lightweight Husqvarna X-Tough Light bar.

The company says low-weight components combined with the X-Tough Light Bar makes it significantly lighter than its predecessors. The reduced weight, combined with optimised balance and improved handle shape make it possible to work in greater comfort, for longer it claims. Due to its X-Torq engine, emissions are reduced and the simpler start technology, made possible by AutoTune 3.0, ensures that the engine starts quickly.

The 592 XP also offers Bluetooth connectivity, meaning



that the chainsaws can be retrofitted with a Husqvarna connectivity device, paired with Fleet Services, which tracks the product for easier maintenance and management. The Connectivity Device will be available later this autumn.

The 585 is described by its maker as a durable chainsaw that performs in all conditions. It features a tough design and easily handles 36" bars and the new X-Tough series of Solid Bars. With a needle carburetor, combined with better balance and convenient features, it pairs traditional technology with modern development.

As with 592 XP, the X-Cut C85 and C83 chains bring out the cutting capacity in the 585. It also features the X-Torq engine, which the maker says reduces fuel consumption and emissions.

AGRICULTURAL

FIVE SERIES MEETS STAGE V LEGISLATION

Deutz-Fahr launches new tractor

DEUTZ-FAHR has launched its new 5-Series tractor that meets all Stage V emissions regulations.

There are five models in the 5-Series range with power outputs from 95 and 126hp and a choice of three transmission configurations, including hydraulic PowerShuttle with STOP&Go function and a comprehensive range of accessories.

The manufacturer says the new FARMotion 35 and 45 engines deliver power and torque over a generous range of engine speeds. The highly modular transmission contributes to the multi-role versatility of the 5-Series.

Depending on the transmission configuration, the 5-Series covers a range of working speeds from 300m/h (for ultra-slow tasks with supercreeper gear) up to 40km/h at economy engine speeds (for lower fuel consumption, noise and vibration when used for high speed road transport tasks).

With up to 60+60 gears and the newly available APS (Automatic PowerShift) function, the 5-Series selects the most appropriate powershift ratio automatically. The APS system also includes a dial that allows the operator to set the priority of how the APS function is managed in different working environments.

The PTO offers all four standard speeds (540/540E/1,000/1,000E) and is engaged via an electrohydraulically controlled multiplate wet clutch.

The 5-Series is also offered with the option of a groundspeed PTO with independent output shaft and a 1,000rpm front PTO.

The manufacturer says the tractors are agile due to the generous steering angle of the front axle, a power shuttle with adjustable response setting, the Stop&Go system and the SDD rapid steering function.

The hydraulic system has up to eight rear couplers and can be equipped with a 90 l/min version. A completely electronic rear lift is also available, featuring an oscillation damping system and automatic PTO engagement. In addition to the 5,400kg rear lift capacity, with the option of a 2,100kg front lift.

A state of the art data transmission device connects the tractor directly to the farm and enables the use of SDF Smart Farming Solutions – a new digital suite that simplifies tracking and data acquisition.

The TopVision cab design and layout offers greater levels of comfort and ergonomics. The four-pillar structure of the cab and generous glazing ensures unimpeded all-round view, while the Hydro Silent-Block cab suspension increases comfort.

When working at night, up to 12 LED work lights can be mounted on the cab roof, with additional work lights installed on the cab pillars and on the new grille of the cowl.



Deutz-Fahr-5 Series



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48" Rear Discharge Fabricated Deck packed with features

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makitauk.com/product/PDC1200A1

AGRICULTURAL/ COMMERCIAL

OK BOOMER

New Holland's Stage V compact tractors



New Holland Agriculture has launched the new Stage V-compliant Boomer tractor range.

The company says new features further improve the tractors' efficiency and operator comfort.

The range has been extended with two Class 3 models, the 47hp Boomer 45 and the 57hp Boomer 55, so that it covers the power segment close to 60hp.

All Class 2 and Class 3 models are now available with the high-comfort Boomer Suite, which offers improved visibility and ergonomic controls. The renewed dashboard features a new vehicle speed LCD readout shown on the instrument panel, which facilitates operation.

The manufacturer says the new range also enhances operator comfort and reduces fatigue with a host of features. On models with hydrostatic transmission, they include the standard Cruise Control. Class 3 cab models featuring this transmission also offer the new Servo Hydraulic Assist option, which reduces the effort required to operate the pedal to a minimum.

Models with hydrostatic transmission are now available with the EZ Speed function, which coordinates the forward hydrostatic pedal and engine speed. When the operator activates it and the hand

throttle is in the low position, the engine will speed up when the hydrostatic pedal is pushed. This ensures they have the right engine speed and the right ground speed available whenever they need it.

The function can also be deactivated, enabling the operator to manage independently the hand throttle lever and hydrostatic pedal in PTO applications where they need to maintain a specific engine speed to in order to ensure the required PTO speed.

A new Auto PTO feature, easy to activate with a switch, automatically turns off the PTO when the three-point hitch is raised and reengages when it is lowered. This not only enhances the operator's comfort but also reduces fatigue and speeds up work in applications where the rear lift needs to be raised and lowered frequently, resulting in higher productivity.

New Holland also says the new three-cylinder Turbocharged engines featuring Common Rail Direct Injection technology deliver a powerful performance, with outstanding torque back-up which reaches 188Nm at 1,600rpm in the Boomer 55 model at the top of the range. The larger radiator and cooling fan further enhance the engine's efficiency.

COMMERICAL



STIGA PLUGS IN NEW BATTERY

For professional range

Stiga says its new E-Power batteries for its professional range ensure extended high performance and are still going strong after 600 charges.

The company says the 900 Series of handheld equipment and lawnmowers, manufactured from lightweight and robust materials, combined with the new E-Power battery system, are designed to meet the highest expectations of professional users who have previously used petrol gardening tools.

The 48V Expert handheld range features a brush cutter, blower, hedger trimmer and long reach hedger, and can be used in conjunction with the battery backpack harness.

The waterproof backpack has fully adjustable straps and a connecting cable for left- or right-handed users. It holds two Stiga E-Power batteries of any amperage, lightening the load for uninterrupted and extended operating time.

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Chris Biddle is founder of *Service Dealer* and the current host of the *Inside Agri-Turf* podcast

TIME TO DUST OFF A CODE OF PRACTICE?

Opportunity to say who we are and what we do

I cannot think of a better way in which the new AEA/BAGMA liaison could use their combined strengths at the outset of their relationship than to produce a Code of Practice.

It's a phrase that may strike dread into some, indicating the production of a dry and wordy tome involving hours and hours in committee rooms, when there is so much else that needs attention.

But consider the appropriate definition of a Code of Practice as a *written guideline that is set out by a professional association in order to guide its members towards compliance with the appropriate ethical standards.*

There are, after all, laws being constantly updated on the time that manufacturers should supply parts after the production of current models cease, and of course, laws such as the Sales of Goods Act 1982 and the updated Consumer Rights Acts of 2015.

Why would our industry community need further guidelines when so much is set down in law?

I don't think there is a 'one size fits all' solution here. For a start there is a world of difference between the farm machinery dealers, many of whom are intrinsically linked to huge multi-national corporations that have to act globally, and the generally much smaller garden and turf machinery dealers with myriad franchises dealing with the general public.

The first tend to be B2B operations, the second dealing more with the general public. Both come under the scope of AEA/BAGMA, but both have different supplier and customer profiles.

No, I think we are talking about two separate sets of guidelines here.

Perception

First, given the unalterable fact that the AEA (representing the interests of manufacturers and suppliers) now owns BAGMA (the dealers' 'trade union'), it would seem sensible that the relationship between the two associations should be clearly defined – and set down on paper.

Since the coming together, there have been warm – and I believe genuine – words between the two, but perception is everything. The feeling will persist that the AEA (as the boss of BAGMA) would have the final word if and when 'push comes to shove'.

A Code of Practice – call it what you will – would be useful as a template for the way the two should work together, and individually, in the future. To my mind, those heading up the AEA and BAGMA probably have a good idea how the relationship should work in practice, it would be good that members of both associations are clear about those ideals.

Symbol of Service

Second, it might be worth revisiting the Code of Practice produced by the Garden Machinery Association (GMA) in 1990. A division of BAGMA, the GMA produced a document that took the Sales of Goods Act as its basis and then applied specific industry interpretations. It was produced with both the manufacturers and Consumers Association 'on board', so what better time now that the AEA and BAGMA are together?

In fact, I would prefer it to be a Customers' Charter. The marketing of consumer products is vastly different today. Customers have a greater choice on how, where and what to buy. Whilst they are better informed in some ways, they are ill-informed in others. They are more combative, less understanding – and have a shorter fuse.

Buying from a local independent specialist is a very different proposition from buying through other retail channels. Many consumers don't appreciate that. For instance, arguments are rife over carrying out warranty on machines bought elsewhere.

In many respects, many dealers don't explain well enough the principles of their 'contract' with the customer. Some do, simply and succinctly. If the customer knows right at the outset the terms on which machines are being supplied or serviced, many of the argumentative issues could be eliminated.

BAGMA's Symbol of Service should mean something. Many dealers have joined in the past just to be able to display the decal. Indeed, some dealers continued to use it long after they resigned from BAGMA!

Unfortunately, its meaning was never defined, and never monitored.

Maybe it's time for dealers and manufacturers to enhance its importance, to set out the meaning of the Symbol of Service. Make adherence to its detail a condition of membership – and above all, promote it clearly as a Customers' Charter.

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

SEPTEMBER 2021

- 4 **Alresford Show**
www.alresfordshow.co.uk
CANCELLED
- 5 **Cranleigh Show**
www.cranleighshow.co.uk
CANCELLED
- 5-8 **Autumn Fair, Birmingham NEC**
www.autumnfair.com
- 9-11 **Royal Cornwall Show**
www.royalcornwallshow.org
POSTPONED TO 2022
- 11 **Usk Show**
www.uskshow.co.uk
- 11 **Romsey Show**
www.romseyshow.co.uk
CANCELLED
- 14-16 **Glee 2021**
www.gleebirmingham.com
- 16 **Tillage-LIVE, Down Ampney**
www.tillage-live.com
- 21-26 **Chelsea Flower Show**
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/
- 22-25 **Balmoral Show, Belfast**
www.balmoralshow.co.uk
- 23-25 **APF Exhibition 2021, Ragely Estate**
www.apfexhibition.co.uk
POSTPONED TO 2022

OCTOBER 2021

- 6 **The Dairy Show, Bath & West Showground**
www.bathandwest.com/the-dairy-show
- 19-23 **EIMA International, Bologna**
www.eima.it/en
- 20-22 **Green Industry & Equipment Expo 2021, Louisville, USA**
www.gie-expo.com

NOVEMBER 2021

- 3-4 **GMA Saltex 2021, Birmingham NEC**
www.gmasaltex.co.uk
- 6-10 **SIMA, Paris**
www.en.simaonline.com/
POSTPONED TO 2022
- 9-10 **Midlands Machinery Show, Newark Showground**
www.midlandsmachineryshow.com
- 14-20 **Agritechnica, Hanover**
www.agritechnica.com/en
POSTPONED TO 2022
- 17 **AgriScot, The Royal Highland Ctr**
www.agriscot.co.uk
- 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



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SHOW TIME



GETTING BACK TOGETHER

Albeit gradually...

Over my many years as Dogsbody Without Portfolio for this esteemed journal, I have attended my fair share of trade shows.

Inside, outside, shake it all about, I've probably been to more than I've had hot dinners – or more usually at these things, curly sandwiches in plastic containers. But I suppose if there's one thing that makes a trade show successful, it's the people you meet there. Yes, you want to see some new machinery on display, yes, it needs to be at the right venue and yes, at the right time of the year. But I believe the principal reason that makes a show worth leaving your place of business for – maybe for a day or two – is the conversations held with industry peers and colleagues once there.

I know we can all communicate through the marvels of Zoom, Teams and whatnot these days, but seeing a human face-to-face without the worry that they are going to freeze and start speaking like Norman Collier (there's a reference for all the young people!), could still have a genuine value.

It was with this in mind that I was interested in one of the first steps on the road to getting the industry back together after this enforced separation, when BIGGA laid on the inaugural Festival Of Turf at the end of July.

Cards on the table, I have to

say the turnout of visitors was disappointing. Well done to BIGGA for simply getting something on and for getting a mix of exhibitors together, but in terms of punters through the gates for those all-important conversations, I'm afraid to say bodies were thin on ground.

There will have been a multitude of reasons for this. It was a busy time of year for professional greenkeepers and groundsman. There was some extreme weather that week, which bizarrely for the UK meant incredibly hot temperatures rather than downpours! The buzz phrase being bandied about at that point was 'pingdemic'. People were going on holiday as the schools were breaking up – plus people wouldn't have wanted to risk getting pinged because they were about to go on holiday. And indeed, some people were likely to still be nervous of mixing in groups.

Dissatisfaction

Whatever the reason, the showground was undeniably quiet. As such I sensed a dissatisfaction amongst the exhibitors regarding the number of dealers or end users they were seeing come on to their stands.

There has been so much talk during the past year that there are too many shows, that shows don't offer exhibitors a great enough return on their investment and indeed that shows simply amount to an industry

tax, that I must say, I don't think these couple of scorching hot days will have helped the pro-show lobby too much.

In fact, you know me, I'm not one for gossip, but I did hear mummings amongst some stand holders that they may need to get together with each other in the future, to present a united front to the exhibition organisers. Not as some formal trade union or anything as bolshy, but rather to simply put their case across that they cannot be expected to fund all these shows as frequently as they did in the past – and perhaps to all agree to only appear at certain shows, in certain years.

I suspect the bigger picture for BIGGA with the Festival Of Turf was the achievement in itself, of staging the first turfcare industry event for 18 months. However, on reflection it must be questioned whether there was any real desire for an event of its type to happen when it did? To see this event held in the same format a second time, would be a surprise.

A consequence that I could envisage resulting from this though, might be the revival of talk for an outdoors show for the sector?

It may sound like an old-fashioned view, from an old man from the past, but viewing these large pieces of turf care machinery on, you know, turf, does make sense!

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EPower

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Fingertip STIGA control pad: Conveniently positioned to control speed, mode selection, and display battery status.

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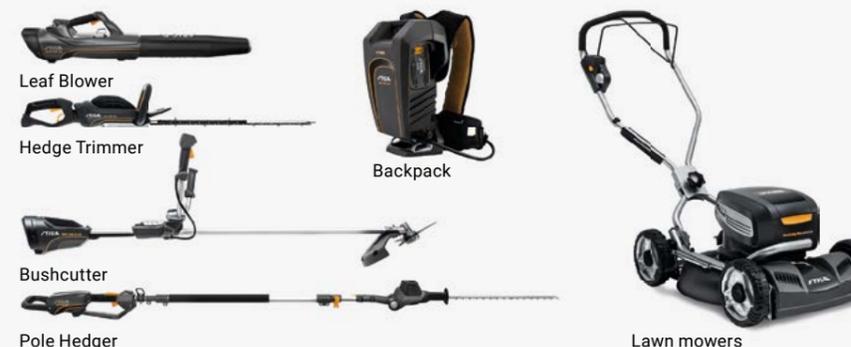
Patented STIGA One Motion system: Cutting height adjustment and grass bag removal are easily done with one hand.

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Better still, we'll give you your own dedicated sales manager to help you develop your business and drive STIHL sales forward. There are also regular product training sessions and access to unrivalled marketing and promotional support, including the kind of instore merchandising support that has helped Emily create a hugely impressive STIHL display wall to wow her customers.

Put simply, when you become a dealer for the world's best garden equipment, including our legendary chainsaws, we think it's only right you get the world's best service too.

To find out more about becoming a STIHL Approved Dealer, visit www.becomeastihldealer.co.uk