

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

MARCH/APRIL 2021

Upping your security game

Dealers' ideas on how to beat the thieves

Deutz-Fahr

Manufacturer targets key tractor sector

MORE LIKE MATES

That's how the head greenkeeper at Point of Polzeath Golf Club on the Camel Estuary views his relationship with his local dealership

Commercial robotics

Changing the professional game?

HONDA'S ACTIONS ANGER & DISAPPOINT DEALERS

Controversy plays out over retailers cut from network



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CONTENTS

4 NEWS

14 OBITUARY

Agricultural machinery pioneer
Helmut Claas

15 DEALER DIGITAL TOOLKIT

Service Dealer launches Module 2,
designed to help protect revenue

16 COMMERCIAL ROBOTICS

Husqvarna says it is changing
the professional game

20 DEUTZ-FAHR

Manufacturer targets key
tractor sector

24 HONDA

Dealers' anger and disappointment
at company's actions

28 UPPING YOUR SECURITY GAME

Dealers' ideas on how to beat
the thieves

32 PROFILE

Charles Bedforth, Sales Director
at Opico Ltd

34 MORE LIKE MATES

Key relationship between
pro greenkeeper and local dealer

38 DEVELOPMENTS AT JCB

Martin Rickatson reports on
updates across handler ranges

42 VIEW FROM ACROSS THE POND

43 DIARY OF A SEASON

44 BUSINESS MONITOR

46 SME DIGEST

50 NEW PRODUCTS

56 IN MY VIEW

57 EVENTS

58 JIM GREEN

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to March/April 2021's edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

I think it's fair to describe the start of the year so far as bumpy! However, one constant is that *Service Dealer* will keep reporting on the issues that affect your business – and from this issue, in a more environmentally sustainable way! The mag you're holding in your hands today has been produced in line with our printer's 'Forests For All Forever' policy, meaning that at every step along the paper production process, companies have been audited against best practice standards. This means we can be sure it has been made with material from responsible sources. Regarding the social aspect of production, it aims to protect the rights of workers, communities, and indigenous peoples while respecting the economic viability of forest management operations.

In addition to this we've switched to vegetable-based inks, the printing process is free of mineral oil and based on renewable raw materials, the cover is produced with a bio laminate and from next issue the polybag the mag arrives in will be made of compostable starch. We think it's a responsible investment.

Speaking to dealers, we know there is plenty to contend with right now. There's the Covid-secure guideline compliance to stay on top of, plus the related HSE audits. There's the usual levels of winter servicing, made all the more difficult by staff shortages and social distancing measures. And crucially there's the issues surrounding stock levels – both on parts and wholegoods. There's a myriad of reasons floating around as to why certain areas of showrooms are looking emptier than ever (Covid, Brexit, logistics crisis, shipping container prices etc), but whatever the cause, it's the end-user facing dealer who's feeling the brunt of it.

It seems likely that there will be different pinch-points for different sectors and different companies throughout the year. What will be important for dealers is how these are managed by their suppliers and what support they can offer their network during the periods of increased difficulties.



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NEWS

LATEST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

INDUSTRY

KUBOTA SHUFFLES TEAM

Personnel rejig and new appointments

Kubota (UK) Ltd says it has strengthened its agricultural and ground care sales team, which is now headed up by Sales Manager Tim Yates.

Tim, who joined the business in 1999 as a sales administrator and until recently was Business Development and Product Manager for Ground Care Equipment, also takes over the role previously held by Rob Edwards.

Rob Edwards has taken up his new position as Agricultural and Ground Care Marketing Manager for the company's recently formed Tractor Business Unit (TBU). The TBU brings together Kubota's agricultural and ground care divisions into one entity, aligning the company's UK and Ireland operations with the Japanese manufacturer's European commercial structure.

Expansion of the TBU has also seen Phil Catley join the marketing department as Product Manager for Compact and Ground Care Equipment. The company says Phil comes from a professional ground care equipment business background, and brings with him a wealth of knowledge and considerable experience from his many years in the sector.

As part of the re-alignment, all Kubota TBU dealer managers have adopted a change of focus with a portfolio that now combines



Tim Yates



L-R: Simon Chadbone and Martin Tyler

agricultural and ground care machinery ranges. This sees agricultural sales team members Phill Brooks and Jonathan Rook add ground care equipment to their recently expanded Dealer Manager roles. Phill continues to cover the western region, while Jonathan looks after the eastern region.

In addition, Sam Thompson takes up his new position as TBU Dealer Manager in Ireland, where he was previously responsible for Kubota construction equipment, and Michael Warden joins Kubota as TBU Dealer Manager for Scotland and the North of England. Michael's previous role was one of territory support on sales and service with another manufacturer, and brings with him 20 years of engineering and customer support experience.

Commenting on the changes, Agricultural and Ground Care Sales Manager Tim Yates said: "This is a great opportunity to continue building on the growth already achieved in both agricultural and ground care markets.

"With recent expansion of our dealer network, and many new products coming to market to enhance a very modern equipment portfolio, we're in a great position to deliver growth for Kubota and our partners."

Aftermarket team

The company has announced two new appointments to its aftermarket team.

The first is Martin Tyler, who has been appointed Business Development Manager for Service. Martin has been with the company for seven years, formerly as Field Service Manager, and this new role will see him heading up the aftermarket service team.

His responsibilities include working closely with the dealer network resolving technical queries and warranty claims, and to further develop Kubota's front-line support through technical training.

The second appointment is that of Simon Chadbone, who takes up the position of Business Development Manager for Parts. Simon joins Kubota after 25 years at the Turney Group, where he joined as an apprentice technician and latterly held the position of Group Service Manager with responsibility for agricultural and ground care equipment.

Overseeing the aftermarket parts team, Simon is responsible for working in partnership with Kubota's dealer and distributor network to deliver competitive and cost-effective solutions with original parts.

DEALERS



T H White's Stockbridge site

T H WHITE GROUND CARE ON THE MOVE

Reading branch relocating to Stockbridge

T H White has announced that its Groundcare Division is changing the way it serves its customers in the Reading and Berkshire area.

From 1 March 2021, the company's Reading branch will be fully relocated to its Stockbridge site.

In a statement the company explained that its branch at Arborfield had reached the stage where it would have required significant investment to maintain and develop the quality of service customers have come to expect, so rather than commit resources to a leased site, the decision was made to concentrate investment at the freehold site in Stockbridge.

In December 2020 work was started on a new 3,500 sq ft facility at Stockbridge where the majority of T H White's Arborfield staff will be relocated by the end of March.

An official spokesperson said: "This change is part of a strategy in which the company's Groundcare Division is being integrated with

our Agricultural Division to deliver greater efficiencies and customer benefits.

"T H White's investment in property, people and processes is being made to assist ground care businesses as the sector adapts its working practices to achieve the best outcomes in these challenging times."

Whites said that key parts of the Stockbridge development are a modern, fully-equipped workshop and state-of-the-art parts facility.

The company's Reading area representatives will continue to be based and operate locally to ensure continuity and Reading customers will continue to be able to access all services with a phone call. When machinery needs servicing, it will be collected and delivered back to customers.

By making this change, T H White said it plans to enhance its service standard and secure a firm basis for future developments.

DEALERS

LISTER WILDER IN SALSCO ROLLERS AGREEMENT

Becomes sole importer and supplier

Lister Wilder has announced that it is now the sole importer and supplier of Salsco greens rollers.

The company added that it will be supplying spare parts and after-sales services for existing machines in the UK.

Salsco was first established in 1979, supplying a portfolio of products including golf course and turf maintenance equipment. All machines are designed and manufactured at its facility in Cheshire, Connecticut, USA and the products are distributed worldwide, with over 200 dealers and sales representatives globally.

Lister Wilder said it has grown relationships with golf clients for over 25 years and believes this addition will strengthen its offering.

The most popular models are currently said to be the HP11-III, therefore Lister will first concentrate on stocking these to ensure efficient supply. Other models of greens rollers will be available for customers to specially order.

Lister Wilder said it will also be looking at sub-dealer opportunities for the right businesses.



DEALERS



Colin Catley at Catley Engineering

TWO MORE CORVUS DEALERS APPOINTED

In Leicestershire and North-East Scotland

"Two more significant pieces in the Corvus UK 4x4 utility dealer network jigsaw are complete," says Phil Everett, MD of Boss ORV, the UK distributor of the Corvus Terrain range.

Colin Catley and his team at Catley Engineering in Leicestershire, and RHS in the North-East of Scotland will both now be selling, supporting and servicing the Corvus Terrain range of utility Side-by-Side vehicles.

Based in the Leicestershire village of Peckleton, Catley Engineering has been supporting the local agricultural industry for almost a decade, offering a range of services in the sale, repair and servicing of tractors and agricultural machinery. "Our passion is providing the highest quality engineering and machinery sales at great value for money," said Colin Catley.

"It's great to have such a professional and customer

service-orientated company join the future of UTVs," said Phil.

North of the border, RHS is a family-run company established in 1995 with a depot and 24-hour on-site service specialising in hoses and hydraulic systems together with a specialist ATV centre.

"I'm absolutely delighted to announce that RHS Ltd is the latest member of the Corvus family," said Phil. "I've known and worked (on and off) with Neil, Heather and Iain for over 25 years so I fully understand the exceptional levels of customer support and service levels they will bring to our dealer network. If ever the old adage of 'you could eat your dinner off the workshop floor' applies to anywhere, it's here. It's great that they are now embracing the future with Corvus UTVs and by bringing in Fraser Reid (in photo) to fully secure the future of RHS."



Fraser Reid at RHS

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TRADE SHOWS



BIGGA PLANNING NEW OUTDOOR TURFCARE SHOW

Scheduled for June

The British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association has unveiled a brand new outdoor festival and exhibition, scheduled to take place in June this year.

BIGGA says the event, called the Festival of Turf, is intended to bring together the greenkeeping and turf management industry for two days of innovation, exhibition and entertainment.

Taking place at the Warwickshire Event Centre on 8 & 9 June, the Festival of Turf will feature two full exhibition days with a wide range of trade stalls. BIGGA says this will be the first opportunity to interact with vendors and meet face-to-face with industry peers since before the coronavirus pandemic took hold.

The Warwickshire Event Centre is located on the outskirts of Leamington Spa, close to Coventry. Centrally-located, the Association believes the venue enjoys good access to all transport networks, along with 2,000 free parking spaces.

The Warwickshire Event Centre can

accommodate up to 200 exhibitors and is capable of welcoming 3,000 visitors a day through its doors. It is set in a 30-acre site with both indoor and outdoor exhibition areas.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, BIGGA says it has been in regular conversation with regulators, golf's governing bodies and central government, and it is confident that a successful event can take place in June.

BIGGA also believes there is a keen desire among commercial partners and industry professionals to provide an event that enables the industry to move forward and begin the process of rebuilding so many key relationships that have been eroded through the distance imposed by the coronavirus pandemic.

BTME, BIGGA's annual trade exhibition that takes place each January in Harrogate, was cancelled for this year back in mid-2020.

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton said, "I'm excited that BIGGA is finally able to launch the Festival of Turf to the

industry and bring some much needed hope for a brighter future. The Festival of Turf is a hugely welcome opportunity to reunite our industry, which will have been forcibly separated by the global pandemic for nearly 18 months by the time this event takes place.

"The industry has survived brilliantly despite all the challenges it has faced, due in no small part to the resilience and adaptability of BIGGA members and the network of commercial partners who have supported us all throughout the pandemic.

"There has been a clear groundswell of opinion that members, other turf professionals and commercial supporters want the opportunity to celebrate our achievements and put this whole terrible ordeal behind us – and that's where the Festival of Turf comes in. The event will be an opportunity to reconnect at a time when personal connections have never been more vital."

PEOPLE



Shaun Groom

SHAUN GROOM BECOMES MERLO'S GENERAL MANAGER

Following 15 years with Pöttinger

Merlo UK Limited has appointed Shaun Groom to the position of General Manager.

Shaun joins Merlo UK from having previously spent 15 years with Austrian agricultural machinery manufacturer Pöttinger, the last eight years as the Director and General Manager of Pöttinger UK.

"It's a real privilege for me to be joining the established and well-respected Merlo UK team," said Shaun. "As a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Italian family-owned Merlo Group we can offer our dealers and customers a stable, dependable partnership for the long term.

"Ongoing investment in people and facilities at Merlo UK ensures we have local support available for the full range of Merlo products. A fully stocked UK parts warehouse, nationwide field-based service and sales support is now further enhanced by extensive development of the offices, parts warehouse and training facilities at our Ringwood based headquarters."

Shaun continued, "We stand ready to support our dealers and customers across the nation to ensure they can operate efficiently and effectively, even during the continuing difficult times as we face the current COVID-19 pandemic."

PEOPLE

NEW GENERAL MANAGER TAKES UP ROLE AT PÖTTINGER

Melanie Jane Gardner is appointed

Melanie Jane Gardner has become General Manager of Pöttinger UK, with her long-term predecessor, Shaun Groom, leaving the company at the start of the year.

Sven Niels, Pöttinger's Director Sales Western Europe, Africa said the company was grateful to Shaun Groom, who is moving on to a new role after many successful years. "We wish Shaun success in his future endeavours," said Sven.

In its search for a successor, Pöttinger says it looked for a manager who combines a willingness to change and a high level of commitment. "With Melanie Jane Gardner we were able to inspire a personality who will develop sales partners and employees with skill in order to achieve ambitious growth targets in the UK," said Sven.

Melanie has been in contact with agriculture since early childhood. As an HR professional and business development manager, Pöttinger said she has acquired a lot of knowledge and skills in dealing with people.

"I am very much looking forward to my new role," said Melanie. "I will focus with my team – as my predecessor did – on a good partnership with the dealers and my colleagues. I see great potential in our country."



Melanie Jane Gardner

TRADE SHOWS

CEREALS AIMS TO WELCOME VISITORS IN JUNE

Return to Lincolnshire scheduled

The organisers of Cereals 2021 say they are on target to open their doors to physical visitors on 9-10 June this year, following a series of meetings with farmers, exhibitors and health and safety advisers.

After a year of online-only events due to COVID-19, Cereals is set to become Comexposium's first physical European event of 2021, when it returns to Lincolnshire in June.

"All of our farmers and exhibitors are so keen to get back out into the field and meet real people again," says Event Director Alli McEntyre.

"The site is drilled up and growing nicely, and with our new farmer advisory board we are now formulating the seminar programmes and live action exhibits."

Organisers say the safety of visitors and exhibitors remains paramount, so the team is following the latest health and safety advice, with

COVID-19 measures likely to include social distancing, hand sanitisers, open air theatres, and more entry points to reduce queues.

"We will update exhibitors about our biosecurity plans in early March and early June," said Alli. "Although navigating the site might feel a little different, we're extremely positive about our ability to deliver a vibrant and bio-secure outdoor event."

New features at the event this year are planned to include the Market and Farm Diversification theatre – dedicated to grain marketing topics and diversification advice – and the Sustainable Solutions theatre in association with the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs. This will focus on sustainability in all of its guises, from financially strong family farm structures to environmentally-friendly practices.

Other new features will include the

Innovation and Tech demo ring – which will have working demonstrations of the latest novel equipment – and a practical drainage area.

The Syngenta Sprays & Sprayers Arena will be back with a more challenging track to reflect real farm conditions, while the NIAB Soil Pit, crop plots and working machinery demonstrations will offer plenty to see and discuss. "We've even got a new 4x4 driving track, where visitors can get behind the wheel of the latest off-road vehicles and put them through their paces," Alli added.

"Of course, if national health measures change, we will deliver the event online again, which we did with such success in June and November 2020. But we're very hopeful and looking forward to getting back out in the field and meeting everyone face-to-face again."

PEOPLE

PSP APPOINTS MALCOLM MULLENDER TO DEVELOP NETWORK

For Guarany sprayer range

The Professional Sprayers People (PSP) have appointed Malcolm Mullender as Business Development Manager for the UK, Ireland and Europe.

PSP signed a long-term distribution agreement with Guarany Industries, the South American manufacturer of professional backpack and manual spraying equipment, at the end of 2019.

Malcolm's appointment comes as the company looks to establish a network of specialist garden machinery dealers for the Guarany range.

Malcolm brings a wealth of experience to PSP, having held senior sales roles with leading brands.

"I'm looking forward to further developing the PSP brand and product awareness of the robust and extremely effective Guarany range," said Malcom.

Ivan Zytynski, Director of PSP's parent company The Spray People Group added, "We're delighted to welcome Malcolm on board. His knowledge of the market gained over the past 30 years will be invaluable as we seek to grow PSP.

"Guarany products provide many clever solutions for manual application of agrochemicals which should be interesting to turfcare and other professionals in industries such as horticulture, groundscape and pest control.

"In addition, we offer dealers good margins, friendly and intelligent technical support, prompt delivery and the highest levels of customer care."

PSP has an exclusive agreement to distribute the Guarany products across the UK, Ireland and Europe.



OBITUARY

DAVID BRIGGS

Campey Turf Care Systems announces sad passing

Campey Turf Care Systems has announced with deepest regret the passing, just before Christmas, of David Briggs, who had been suffering from Parkinson's disease.

David joined Campey Turf Care Systems in 2000 and retired in 2017.

Richard Campey, Chairman of Campey Turf Care Systems, said of David: "He was a successful product specialist for Southern England. He made a subtle but significant impact on industry methods of creating



dealership networks and direct customer contact, both in the UK and abroad. David was instrumental in establishing a highly effective dealer network for Campey machinery in Southern Europe. He was always a popular and much respected member

of the team. David was also highly regarded and well respected amongst his colleagues and customers alike.

"We offer our sincerest condolences to Diane and all the family at this incredibly sad time."

INDUSTRY



The Jacobsen factory team with Matt Pipe

JACOBSEN PRODUCTION BEGUN IN UK

With the first ever HR800 wide-area rotary mower

Production of the first-ever HR800 was completed at the Ransomes Jacobsen Centre of Excellence in Ipswich at the end of 2020.

The completion of the first fully built Jacobsen HR800 mower was a seminal moment for the brand. Production had been moved to the factory in Ipswich, UK so that investments in skills and developments in mower production could be focused on a single facility.

Jacobsen Key Account Manager Andre Andrade, who hails from Augusta, Georgia, has observed the progress of the mower throughout the build.

"It has been great to start production of the HR800, and to see the first fully-assembled machine is exciting," Andre said. "Bringing all Jacobsen production to England is an important step for us, and everyone at the factory has been eager to get it underway. The situation with coronavirus has caused challenges all over the world, but

for us, it has solidified our relationship with our colleagues in America who have assisted our Production Team Leader, Matt Pipe, during construction.

"Matt has worked almost singlehandedly, producing this mower, and as a result we now have someone who is an expert. When it comes to customer support, that will be a huge asset because in Matt we have someone who can offer in-depth advice because he has an insight into that machine that no one else has. Over time that knowledge will be shared with the engineers in the factory and the sales team, so we will all have a strong understanding of the product as we do with the others we produce here."

Completing this project has taken over two months, from picking parts from pallets to the finished mower. It has been Matt's biggest challenge in his eight years at Ransomes Jacobsen and one he has taken great pride in.

He explains: "I've been here for eight years, and I was around for the BETA build of the MP, so to be able to do this is quite something for me. I'm really proud of what we produce here at the factory, and I'm proud to be able to say that I was the first to build the HR800 in the UK.

"It's been a unique opportunity to learn everything about this mower because we started with technical drawings and parts on pallets through to the finished product. Doing that means I've been able to use what I already knew and work with the production engineers on certain areas, and Antans Lukisis on the hydraulic system, so I've constantly been learning throughout the process. I think that's what has made it so enjoyable."



COBRA

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HELMUT CLAAS

Agricultural machinery pioneer dies

Helmut Claas, the long-time Managing Director, Chairman of the Supervisory Board and Chairman of the Shareholders' Committee of the Claas group, and one of agricultural engineering's most significant businessmen, died on 5 January at the age of 94.

In an official statement, the Claas Group said: "His death has come as a great shock. Along with the family and all of the relatives, not only are well over 11,000 employees around the world mourning, but so too is an entire industry which, in Helmut Claas, has lost a significant European business personality."

Helmut was born in 1926 in Harsewinkel. His parents, August and Paula Claas, managed a small agricultural machinery firm. He completed an apprenticeship as a machine fitter after graduating from school. After a complementary study of agriculture in Paris, he took over the planning and establishment of a Claas distributor in France, which now operates as Claas France SAS. He joined his parents' family firm in Harsewinkel in 1958. Here he applied himself initially to his particular area of expertise, which was engineering.

In 1962 he was made Managing Director and in 1996, as part of the restructuring of the firm into a joint-stock company, he changed from that role to the position of Chairman of both the Supervisory Board and the Shareholders' Committee.

The company said his special focus was always on developing pioneering products and mass-producing them economically. During his era, following the success of the combine harvester model the Dominator, came the completely new combine harvester construction, the Lexion. The Jaguar forage harvester and the large tractor model, the Xerion, were

also developed under him.

In 2003 he succeeded in taking an important step towards the company's future: Claas took over the complete tractor business from Renault Agriculture in France.

In other respects, too, internationalisation continued to progress with the establishment and expansion of production sites in Russia, the USA and China.

Four internationally-renowned universities in the UK, Hungary, Bulgaria and Germany awarded honorary doctorates (Dr h c) to Helmut Claas.

In June 2009 the Goryachkin University in Moscow bestowed an honorary professorship upon him. Also in 2009, Helmut was made a Knight of the French Legion of Honour in recognition of his efforts as a pioneer of Franco-German cooperation.

In November 2013, he was finally inducted into the Hall of Fame of American Equipment Manufacturers.

Personal awards, such as honorary citizenship of his home town of Harsewinkel, Germany; the Medal of Merit of the German state of Baden-Württemberg; as well as the Order of Merit of the French Agriculture Minister, round off his life's work.

Helmut was first and foremost a farmer. He ran a farm in East Anglia



Helmut Claas

and often stayed there with his wife, Erika. He enjoyed keeping in touch with farmers in the neighbourhood and took a keen interest in issues concerning agricultural firms.

Helmut had long since taken care of the ongoing development of the family business, as the next generation has already taken over the running of the Claas Group. Today, his daughter, Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser, manages the decision-making and development of the group of companies.

The official statement concluded, "The death of Helmut Claas leaves behind a space in the world of agricultural technology that cannot be filled. His family, all the shareholders, the Group Executive Board, and the staff are mourning the passing of a great personality and will continue to develop the Claas Group as he would have wished."



In 2014 Helmut Claas was involved in the restoration of a 75-year-old mower-thresher-binder. The task force from left: Ernst Reineke, Helmut Claas, Ludger Weber, Bernhard Laumann and Martin Beckmann

DEALER TOOLKIT



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PROTECTING REVENUE

Service Dealer launches Module 2 of the free Dealer Digital Toolkit

In 2020 *Service Dealer* launched the Digital Toolkit, a free resource for dealers wanting to improve their digital communications and online presence. Over 200 dealers signed up and have been making use of the tips.

Following its success, *Service Dealer* has now launched Module 2, providing inspiration and ideas for protecting your revenue and securing your business for the future.

Duncan Murray-Clarke, owner of *Service Dealer* says, "Revenues have been eroded for many reasons over the past few years and some dealers have been hit hard. It's in everyone's interests that we have a strong and vibrant dealer presence in the UK, and that's why we wanted to tackle this subject in our second toolkit module.

"Our Dealer Toolkit aims to give the tools needed to adapt businesses and futureproof them. We have covered subjects like diversification and merchandising, all with the aim of improving profitability."

The toolkit has been created by content, social and web specialists The Ad Plain (TAP) and kindly supported by Kramp.

Des Boyd, Commercial Director at Kramp says, "Following the success of the first stage of the toolkit we wanted to get involved in order to support the industry. We believe strongly in the UK dealer network and the expertise and level of service it bring to its customers. However, as with many areas of retail, it too has been affected by the

increase in online and direct sales, as well as changing technology towards lower maintenance products. It's important for dealers to look at other ways of protecting revenue so that they can survive in the long term, and that's why the toolkit is such a useful resource.

"Our own Retail Consultant, Leo Copping, has been involved in the discussions around merchandising and upselling, and you'll be able to see a video with him, offering some insights within the Toolkit."

Once again, *Service Dealer* has taken a steer on this subject from dealers themselves and has been joined by a panel of dealers to discuss the various topics. Several dealers have supported the Toolkit with videos too, to help bring it to life.

James Hayes, owner of Hayes Garden Machinery says, "It's not every day you get asked to be part of an industry-leading panel to create a very worthy hub of information for other like-minded individuals, to use as a resource for their own businesses. Please remember, Baz Luhrmann once said: 'Advice is a form of nostalgia,' so please take all of our advice, dispose of all the ugly bits and twist and turn it into your own story."

Each week in the *Service Dealer Weekly Update* we will be releasing a different chapter so that you can take in the information in bitesize pieces. The Toolkit covers:

- Diversification
- Creating lifelong relationships with customers
- Merchandising
- Making a sale

Some of the topics will require some thinking time and research.

Duncan adds, "The topics in this module are designed to get you thinking about what your business will look like in the next 5-10 years and to get you questioning whether it is time to adapt to the changing environment you now find yourself in. Even the most successful businesses could learn a thing or two."

You can access the toolkit for free at: servicedealer.co.uk/dealer-toolkit If you have already signed up for the Digital Toolkit use the password you were emailed or, if you have forgotten your password, we can reset it for you. Please email kate@theadplain.com if you are having any problems logging in.



James Hayes of Hayes Garden Machinery and Anthony Deacon of MKM Agriculture are two of the dealers who have been involved in the dealer panel, helping to shape the Toolkit



The new Ceora commercial robot from Husqvarna will be fully revealed this year

CHANGING THE PROFESSIONAL GAME?

At a special online event, Husqvarna teased a commercial robotic mower capable of covering 50,000m² as well as discussing the future of sustainable turfcare. Editor Steve Gibbs attended

At the back end of 2020 I attended an interesting presentation, looking at the potential future for our urban green spaces and how they could be maintained – and because we're in the midst of a global pandemic I didn't have to leave my desk to participate.

The event was the latest in Husqvarna's Living City series of conferences. In years gone by I've travelled to places including Edinburgh, Stockholm and Hamburg to report on these presentations. But with current circumstances, it all took place online.

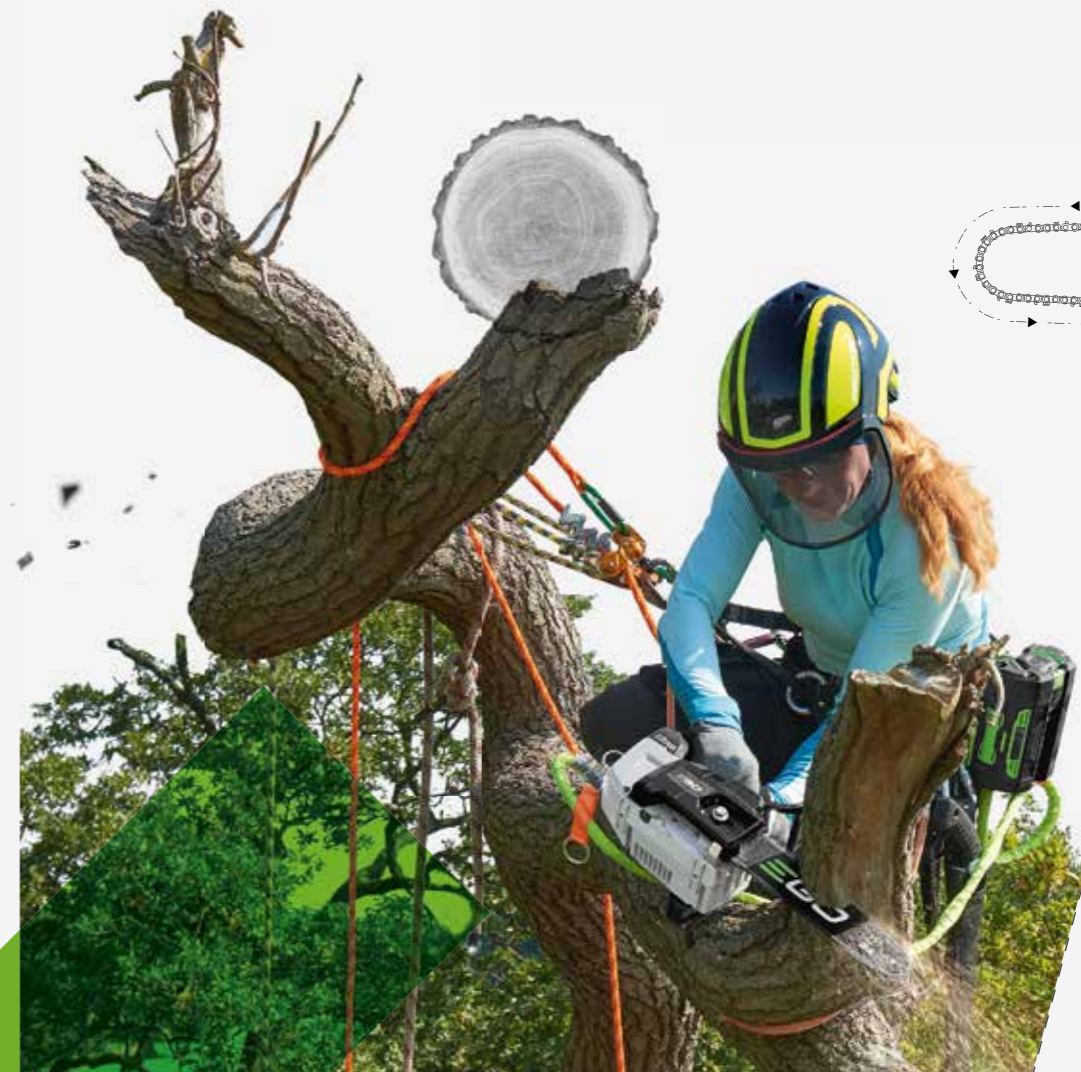
Usually the days are attended by a mixture of turfcare professionals from many countries, representing various specialisms, plus members of the trade press from around the world. By not encouraging these people to travel this time around, I suppose the company was at least adding to the green credentials that the event was promoting.

The big reveal during the presentation was a new robotic mowing development from the manufacturer for the commercial turf sector, that the company is hyping as "game changing".

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Sustainable urban green maintenance

Before we got to the big announcement though, attendees watched a series of presentations, discussing ideas that could impact on the future of sustainable urban landscaping.

First up was architect Winy Maas, of MVRD, who was talking about the concept of ‘Green Dip’ in cities. This vision was pretty much as it sounds – dipping our urban centres in as much green as possible. We were shown concept drawings of urban sprawls, bursting with buildings covered in plants and greenery flowing from their roofs and walls. It was all about a future vision of filling our streets and skylines with as much bio-diversity as possible. He also talked about real-world examples in places such as Seoul and Rotterdam where these concepts are starting to come to fruition.

If these visions of cities full of greenery contributing to the world’s environmental betterment come to pass, it would follow that the kit that is used to maintain them would need to meet stringent environmentally-friendly criteria.

Also invited by Husqvarna to speak was Dan Mabe, CEO and founder of the American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA). This group’s mission is to transition the grounds maintenance industry to a greener, more sustainable way of working.

Dan spoke with a passion about the amount of solid and toxic waste streams that could be generated by turf professionals using petrol-powered equipment. His organisation was working with companies and local authorities in the States to designate green zones in towns, where only battery or robotic grounds care solutions could be operated.

They also saw it as their duty to inform private homeowners of tools they could use to maintain their green areas which created less noise,

emissions and vibrations.

Dan’s central thesis was that as turfed areas will play an ever more central role in our future towns and cities, it’s important for everybody that the carbon footprint related to the maintenance of these areas is brought down.

Both these presentations presented visions of future urban environments, that while somewhat different from what we are perhaps used to seeing now, placed green spaces at their very heart. The spaces may seem unusual, but they will still need trained professionals to

maintain them – and indeed specialist dealers to provide them with the modern tools to do their jobs efficiently and safely.

Increased sustainability

Husqvarna also had a couple of their own people speaking before the sneak peak at the new robotic system. Erik Swan, their Digital Ecosystem Strategist, talked about the company’s HUGSI project, which is a computer system for measuring, analysing and quantifying the greenness of cities around the globe.

There is a website for the project at www.hugsi.green which ranks cities in terms of the size of their greened areas and follows the yearly

developments of individual cities.

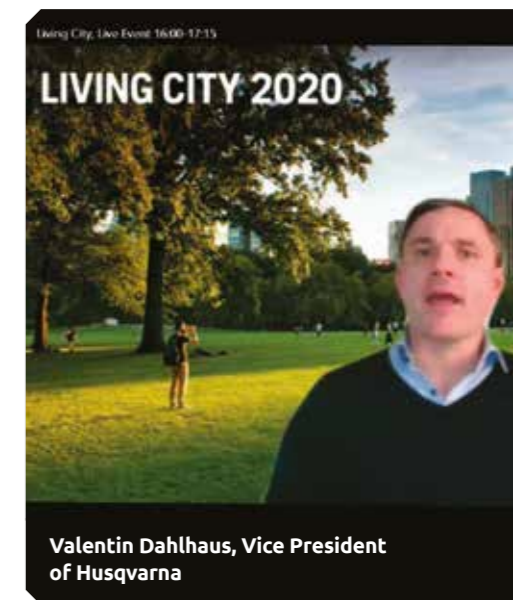
Jonas Willaredt, the manufacturer’s Head of Environment and Sustainability, gave a presentation on the carbon footprint in lawncare. He talked about how Husqvarna as a company has policies in place to reduce its own carbon footprint in line with the Paris agreement. The company would be making strides towards this, he said, through increased electrification and digitalisation across all that it does.

A commitment was stated to cut carbon emission from equipment production processes and from the professional usage of their machines. This would be supported, Jonas said, by production innovation.

**“THIS IS AN
INDUSTRY
GAME CHANGER
MARKING THE
START OF A
NEW ERA IN
COMMERCIAL
TURF CARE
MANAGEMENT”**



Husqvarna’s Jonas Willaredt said the key to sustainability was electrification and digitalization



Valentin Dahlhaus, Vice President of Husqvarna

Robotic “game changer”

Which brought us on to the big sneak peak of the event. Never one to undersell a product launch, Husqvarna unveiled what it described as a “pivotal moment” in the history of professional turf care.

Its latest development in robotic mowing solutions was revealed for the first time. Known as the Ceora, this autonomous mower, we were told, can mow huge areas, up to 50,000m², within virtual boundaries.

Intended for public and commercial landowners, sports field managers and golf course owners, Husqvarna said the new machine can automate professional lawnmowing as never before, allowing staff to be redeployed to focus on more value-adding tasks.

“This is an industry game changer marking the start of a new era in commercial turf care management,” enthused Valentin Dahlhaus, Vice President of Husqvarna.

The size of the area which the robot can cover, combined with the lack of requirement of an installed boundary wire to control its cutting area, are the fundamental differences of this development over established Automowers. The company said it utilises EPOS technology with a high-precision satellite navigation system, to deliver an accuracy of 2-3cm.

By allowing operation without physical wires, quick digital redefinitions of the work area can take place. Husqvarna believes that this will offer professional users lower costs, a safer working environment and more sustainable working practices.

Interestingly, the company stressed how the system is a future-proof, scalable platform. In the future, it said, the system can be further tailored to specific needs. By adding accessories such as, for example, a lawn striper, fairway deck or a line painter, it can be used to undertake other tasks required by the turf professional. It can also be paired with other robotic mowers, allowing the operator instant and continuous digital



Winy Maas introduced the ‘Green Dip’ concept

monitoring and control of multiple units.

For a sense of the scale of the area these Ceora robots could cover, Valentin Dahlhaus claimed the entire 55-acre Great Lawn in Central Park, NYC, can be managed by five of the units, working 24/7.

“Everything is digitally monitored and controlled at your fingertips,” he said.

The company promised that more details about the machines will be presented during summer 2021 and mowers will start shipping to customers from early 2022.

It was certainly a fascinating presentation by Husqvarna. Massively scaling up the area that a robotic mower can cover and, crucially, removing the need for a guide wire, are the barriers that needed to be broken, I’m sure, to get more commercial users to consider their usage.

Also, they seem to tick the boxes for contractors who can drop the machines off at a commercial site, let them do their work, and then come back and take them on to the next site. We are told that the sharing economy will grow exponentially, so innovations such as this could very much play into that.

It will be interesting to see and hear more as we move through 2021. Perhaps, if things go well, even a demonstration in person next time?

DEUTZ-FAHR TARGETS KEY TRACTOR SECTOR

The 250-300hp tractor bracket is increasingly competitive, driven by makers developing compact, light, yet easily-weighted machines for greater versatility.

MARTIN RICKATSON visited SDF UK to learn more about Deutz-Fahr's recent introduction to the sector, the 8280 TTV, and about its latest dealer news

While it retails its SAME brand through a select number of dealers in western, predominantly livestock areas of Britain where the red make has traditionally had a faithful following, SDF UK – and its Italy-based parent – has placed increasing focus on its Deutz-Fahr marque since the 1995 acquisition of what was formerly the Deutz-Fahr agricultural equipment business of German firm KHD.

Although the SAME brand – and SDF's Lamborghini and Hürlimann marques – are focused on four-cylinder tractors below 150hp, the Deutz-Fahr tractor range has grown to encompass models up to 340hp. Until recently, though, it hasn't

had a contender in the rapidly growing sector for light, nimble 250-300hp tractors that can be ballasted for heavier draft work.

That all changed at Agritechnica 2019, where SDF introduced the Deutz-Fahr Agrottron 8 series. Currently consisting of a single 8280 TTV 287hp machine, but likely to be expanded, the range fills the gap between the largest Agrottron 7 series model, the 246hp 7250, and the smallest tractor in the more heavyweight 9 series, the 295hp 9290, from the range launched back in 2014-15.

"With our dealer recruitment campaign continuing to grow, particularly in strong arable areas, this is a market where we needed to be," emphasises Dave Jefferson, SDF UK product and precision farming specialist.

"Across Europe, this sector represents an annual retail volume of around 4,100 units, so it's a key power bracket not just here, but across many important markets for Deutz-Fahr. There is, of course, a good deal of competition in this sector from other makers, with models such as the John Deere

6230/6250R and 7R 250/270, plus the Fendt 800 series, New Holland T7HD and Case IH Optum, Claas Axion 870 and Massey Ferguson's 8S.265. But as we continue to expand and enhance our dealer network, we're confident we now have the product to compete.

"Based on our research into the key demands made of this type of tractor, it was clear that buyers are seeking light and powerful models of around 15t gross vehicle weight, able to take rear tyres of up to 710/70 R42, with a rear lift capacity of 10t and a full hydraulic package for maximum versatility. With this in mind, the 8 series was designed around four main pillars: a dynamic engine-transmission powertrain, high levels of comfort, good connectivity and high levels of reliability."

Compact powerplant

Like other tractors in the six-cylinder Agrottron 6/7/9 series of 156hp and above, the 8 series is built at SDF's 'Deutz-Fahr Land' factory in Lauingen, Germany, one of Europe's newer tractor plants, opened in 2017. Unlike the flagship 9 series, which uses a 7.7-litre engine to produce 295/312/336hp across the three-model range, the 8 series adopts the Stage V 6.1-litre powerplant used in 7 series Agrottrons. There are, though, some significant differences. The new unit is labelled TTCD rather than TCD, because it includes a twin turbo arrangement to extract more power from the smaller displacement and produce more immediate and more responsive power delivery, plus a level torque line.

In the 8280 TTV the result is maximum power of 287hp, a maximum torque figure of 1,226Nm and 202g kw/h fuel consumption. Service improvements include a doubling of engine oil interval to 1,000 hours, while the compact passive DPF after-treatment system sits transversely across the width of the engine, with further emissions package improvements including a reduction in DEF usage calculated at 2-3%, with a reduced tank size as a

result. Diesel is contained in a new 505-litre tank design, with an integral DEF tank that incorporates a void to eliminate the risk of overfilling.

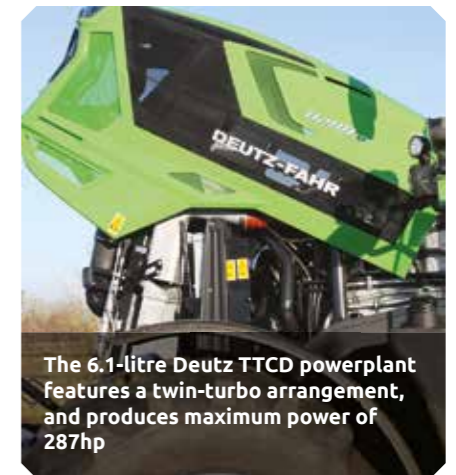
The engine also features a second cooling system, which looks after the additional turbocharger, plus the transmission and hydraulic oil circuits. Electric drive means its speed is variable, with warm coolant used to quickly increase the transmission and hydraulic oils to working temperature.

Further engine features include two engine speed memories, and an optional exhaust brake, which closes the valve in the exhaust and activates an electronic viscous fan, which operates independently of engine speed. The cooling pack can be opened for cleaning with a single lever, while further service features include a number of integrated steps and an external compressed air connection.

New CVT

The engine drives through the new SDF T7780 continuously-variable transmission, a 'compound' type which combines a multi-stage epicyclic gearbox mated with a clutch unit and two hydrostatic units, providing two automatically-shifted ratios. Assembled at the Lauingen factory, the new CVT helps the tractor achieve 40km/hr at 1,220rpm and a top speed of 60km/hr (37.5mph) at 1,830rpm. With a 9.5-10.2t base weight depending on configuration, and a 16t gross weight, the 8280 has a power to weight ratio of 33kg/hp. Tyre widths from 650 to 900mm can be fitted, with maximum height on 42in rims being 2.05m (710/70 R42). A PTG variable tyre pressure system is available.

Similar in many respects to the established Agrottron cab, there are nevertheless a few changes to the unit on the 8280. The MaxiVision 2 unit is separate from the all-new engine cowl to prevent the transfer of heat, vibration and noise. Galvanised zinc steps have been reintroduced over the painted alternatives, to prolong looks over



The 6.1-litre Deutz TTCD powerplant features a twin-turbo arrangement, and produces maximum power of 287hp



At the rear there are four/five remote valves, supplied by a 160 l/min pump with 210 l/min option. Rear lift capacity is 11.1t



A new LED working light package provides a brightness of 50,000 lumens, with road lighting working at 15% capacity during the day to act as running lights



Tyre widths from 650 to 900mm can be fitted, with max height on 42in rims being 2.05m (710/70 R42). A PTG variable tyre pressure system is available

The Deutz-Fahr Agrottron 8280 TTV takes the marque into the growing sector for compact 250-300hp tractors that can be ballasted for heavier draft work



The majority of tractor operating functions are managed via the iMonitor3 terminal, key elements of which can be monitored via smartphone/tablet using XTend capability

lifetime, and there is a new 50,000-lumen LED working light package, with road lighting working at 15% capacity during the day to act as running lights. An intelligent front axle suspension system offers auto, normal and soft settings, and has an 'anti-dive' system under braking. It is paired, on the driver comfort front, with pneumatic cab suspension.

At the rear, there are four/five remote valves, supplied by a 160 l/min pump with 210 l/min option, and one/two valves can be specified alongside the front linkage, which also comes with a two-speed PTO option. Time and flow rates can be varied via the iMonitor3 cab terminal screen, and operation is proportional via roller controls. Rear lift capacity is 11.1t, and the tractor has a 6.5t payload. Hydraulic oil change interval is 1,500 hours.

The majority of tractor operating functions are managed via the iMonitor3 terminal in the armrest, key elements of which can be monitored remotely on a smartphone or tablet via XTend capability.

"Three-quarters of issues with this technology is a setting that can be remotely corrected," suggests Mr Jefferson. "That's where this capability comes into its own, reducing wasted time visiting the machine for both the owner and the dealer, for ISOBUS and other settings functions. The large-scale professional customer we're aiming for demands this capability. They also want seamless data communication, with the ability to handle ISOXML and Shapefile data, which is what we give them.

"It's an ISOBUS-compatible universal terminal, with task controller capabilities that allow it to perform functions including variable rate and full section control of up to 200 sections. ISOBUS Class III functionality allows implement control (TIM) of key tractor operations such as forward speed, while data can be transferred either via USB or the multi-manufacturer AgriRouter two-way connectivity protocol."

Also on the precision farming front, there is a new TopCon SR20 receiver with three-axis gyroscope and optional Skybridge lost signal bridging system. Being capable of picking up the European Galileo satellite system means the receiver can work with double the number of satellites than previously. Steering technology includes headland auto-turn capability.

The 8280 is fully telematics-compatible, and an internet-based fleet management account means customers can locate, geofence and monitor their tractor for data such as fuel level. With permission, dealers can

monitor the tractor for service issues and track service schedules. The tractor is supplied with a one-year subscription to SDF Fleet Management.

SDF plans

Globally, SDF has eight production plants, 12 commercial branches, two joint ventures, 155 importers and a workforce of more than 3,800. While it has over 3,100 dealers across the globe, there is scope to further increase its UK coverage, says Graham Barnwell, MD of SDF UK.

"Collings Brothers was one of our most recent appointments, covering the Cambs, Beds and Herts area and they got off to a flying start, with a number of tractor sales in the months soon after signing. But during 2019 we also signed some other strong dealers in other parts of the UK, including Hodge Plant in northern Scotland, Philips Bros in Carmarthenshire and Seale Agri in Hampshire.

"Our coverage is becoming more complete, but we still have gaps to fill in areas such as North-East England, some of the South-West and parts of Scotland. There's no doubt we're capitalising on the fall-out from network reorganisation by other manufacturers, and we're keen to continue signing strong dealers who understand the value of customer commitment and loyalty.

"As we plan for the development of new premises on our site at Barby, near Rugby, we're underlining our commitment to the UK."



SDF remains committed to drawn-out plans to sell off some of its Barby premises and build new offices on part of the site

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HONDA'S ACTIONS ANGER AND DISAPPOINT DEALERS

The early weeks of January 2021 saw controversy play out between Honda UK and the dealers the company had decided to cut from its network in autumn 2020. Editor Steve Gibbs reports

As reported in the November/December 2020 edition of *Service Dealer*, Honda UK issued termination notices to around a quarter of its network last autumn, about 50 dealers, which became effective on 31 December 2020. *Service Dealer's* founder Chris Biddle, who wrote the most read article of 2020 on our *Weekly Update* with his assessment of how Honda handled the initial sacking with his piece entitled *A Total Lack Of Respect*, described the cull as coming without any advance consultation or discussion. "It came as a bolt from the blue to most of them," said Chris. "I described their

handling of the sacking as disrespectful to dealers who had been their partners for many years."

Chris wrote a follow-up piece for our *Weekly Update* in January, after being contacted by one of the cut dealers who had been horrified by a termination letter he had received from the manufacturer.

Described by Chris as a "fresh insult," the dealers were sent a Termination letter with threatening instructions sent by First Class Recorded Delivery, but incorrectly dated 5 January 2020.

The letter was addressed to 'Dear Franchise Partner' (although the franchise had formally terminated on 31

December 2020), instructed the sacked dealers to discontinue using any Honda trademarks, trade names etc covered by its Intellectual Property Rights and to destroy or return to Honda (at the dealer's expense) any signs, instructions books, technical pamphlets, catalogues, documents, paperwork or examples within 14 days or risk legal infringement.

What seemed even more extraordinary though, was that at the same time Honda sent letters directly to the customers of the sacked dealers confirming the removal of their franchise and simply directing them to Honda's website to find alternative dealers 'to service or repair your Honda

product', adding 'we apologise for any inconvenience'.

There was no explanation or rationale given, and within that first week Chris had already been informed of a dealer fielding phone calls asking if he was 'going bust'?

This dealer, who wanted to remain anonymous, told Chris, "I'm angry and also very saddened. We've lived and breathed Honda for over 30 years. We looked after their products and put them right at our expense if not covered by warranty, including many machines that had been bought online. When I got the termination letter in September, without any warning, I felt physically sick.

"We've always played the game, registering machines when many non-specialist outlets would not have done so, and they kick us in the teeth by writing to OUR customers, planting a seed of doubt that we might have done something wrong. To me Honda are the Power of Nightmares."

Strong feelings

As he did when the initial sacking of a quarter of their network took place in autumn 2020, Chris Biddle expressed his strong feelings in the *Service Dealer Weekly Update*. "Like most of you," he began, "when I get a letter addressed to Dear Homeowner it goes straight in the bin.

"In all my many years covering this industry, I have never come across such a callous, uncaring, unprofessional approach to ending a business partnership as that displayed here by Honda. To address a dealer who has spent thousands upon thousands of pounds with your company over the years, promoted, sold and serviced your products as 'Dear Franchise Partner' is quite unforgivable – and then to put the wrong date adds insult to injury."

But as Chris pointed out, that was only the tip of the issue. "I understand that this dealer still has over £10,000 worth of machines to sell," he explained. "To comply with the instructions in the letter, it would appear that he cannot

display Honda logos nor advertise these machines that he has paid for in good faith, if he is not to infringe Honda's Intellectual Property Rights with all of its threatened penalties.

"I'm no lawyer, but that would seem to constitute restraint of trade.

"Most dealers 'do the right thing'. They fill in registration cards and hand over details of their customers to manufacturers, whereas many non-specialist sellers do not. Honda knows that in such cases its authorised dealers are obligated to put things right.

"Here, Honda has misused the word Partner. It has used it with the implication that there is, or was, a mutually beneficial Partnership between two parties. Nonsense. Dealers signing dealership agreements, drawn up by international lawyers, must know that they have little or no protection against any negative action taken by the manufacturer."

Chris asked Keith Christian, Director of BAGMA, for his view. Keith replied, "Threatening legal action by letter if

there is no compliance to their rules is just an insult to the integrity and long-term support they have been accorded by the dealers they have sacked."

Keith went on to say, "The Honda brand carries a huge amount of weight internationally and they are a well-respected company. Surely, they could be big enough and sensitive enough to handle the changes they have made more professionally and more sympathetically in respect of the dealers that have supported them over the years."

Chris summed up his feelings of having to write about Honda in such terms, saying it saddened him, "because Honda have established a strong position in the OPE market over the years, during which time the division has been headed by some highly professional and approachable people".

Not anymore, felt Chris. "Dealers tell me that any attempts for them to have a dialogue with Honda, either in September or recently, have been



impossible," he said. "The organisation is now seemingly run by answering machines and malfunctioning mail merge communications!"

Dealer reaction

Unsurprisingly, Chris's piece really hit a nerve amongst our dealer readers. The piece had an unprecedented number of opens and created a huge level of dealer feedback. Not only were there many below-the-line comments on our *Update*, but we discussed it with dealers on calls during the week following and there was much chatter in other online forums.

Roger Gunn of Abbey Rose Garden Workshop in Holyport, Maidenhead, was one of the dealers cut. He summed up the feelings of many online commentators, posting to the *Service Dealer Weekly Update*, "Honda's treatment of dealers is almost beyond words and has completely deflated me right at the start of the season. Honda, you should be ashamed of yourselves."

Malcolm Fox of AMF Services, in Bedford said, "Honda's behaviour is beyond belief and the way they have treated loyal and long-standing dealers is despicable."

Other comments from readers included thoughts such as: "Unbelievable display of arrogance and absence of appreciation" and "disgraceful and shambolic way to reward the support shown." Words were not minced, with anger and disappointment clearly on display.

When we receive this level of dealer interest in a story, it's clearly our duty at *Service Dealer* to look for a response from those involved. However, we do want to make it perfectly clear that it is any manufacturers' right to run their company as they see fit.

Dealers are grown-ups and understand that the business world ebbs and flows. Manufacturers sack dealers. Dealers sack manufacturers. There is a constant dealer shuffle

which has been going on forever. However, I think it's fair to argue that there are good and less good ways of handling this.

Following Chris's story and the reaction it received, we submitted a few key questions to Honda UK, all reflecting the views of dealers that we had picked up from conversations we held and had read online. We didn't bombard them, this wasn't Frost/Nixon, we simply asked:

- **Can the de-listed dealers display and market their remaining Honda stock without infringing the terms of your Agreement?**
- **Why did you not contact the dealers to be de-listed personally? Especially those with decades of Honda history?**
- **Why undermine consumer confidence in the de-listed dealerships by writing directly to their customers?**
- **Why would you NOT add an expression of thanks for the years of service and support given to your products by dealers in the letter?**
- **Do you see the UK dealer network as becoming less important to Honda?**

We thought we would at least receive a statement from Honda addressing these dealer concerns, even if they didn't engage with each query specifically. However, Honda instead chose simply not to respond. Apparently, it was a decision taken at the highest level.

It is, of course, entirely Honda's prerogative whether it decides to enter into correspondence with us. The company is under no obligation at all to speak to a trade journal.

It might be said though, that it does owe its dealers who had given it years of loyal service something?

Sabotaging customer confidence

Among the various ways that Honda can be argued to have mishandled this situation, the one aspect that seems to have caused the greatest consternation is the manufacturer choosing to write to the de-listed dealers' own customers, encouraging them to find a new dealer.

Dealers' feelings on this were summed up by John Andrews, of Andrews of Hindhead, who wrote on the *Weekly Update*: "As for writing to the dealers' customers telling them to find another dealer to service their mower, it is morally corrupt."

Who knows how much damage this act of sabotage could have caused years of building up strong, local relationships?

It was an utterly extraordinary situation to see dealers who had been forced to place disclaimers front and centre on their websites, explaining to customers that no, they are not going bust and yes, they are still running a functioning service facility.

We heard of other dealers having to write their own letters to their customer base, explaining the situation and reassuring them that they did still exist.

Others spent time on the phone fielding concerned calls, and I even heard of one dealer who was pointing customers in the direction of Chris's article online to prove that it wasn't just happening to them.

As if dealers haven't had enough to contend with these past months?

As previously stated, a company such as Honda can choose to employ whom it likes and sack whom it likes. Business is business. It is the manner in which this situation specifically was handled that really disappointed – both with the initial termination and with the follow-up letter. It all felt very weird, coming from a brand that has such a pedigree and history in the UK market.



Keith went on to suggest: "Honda needs to write to the dealers' customers again and make it clear why they have taken the action they have and that the dealers themselves are not at fault."

Chris Biddle said, "Obviously, dealers signed a contract and Honda are quite entitled to ensure that all its terms are complied with, but it's the way they have gone about handling a livelihood endangering decision that is totally contrary to acceptable business relationships."

For other dealers looking at this situation and thinking ahead, it must highlight the importance of not placing all their eggs in one basket? Having a spread of quality brands in the showroom is vital. If something like this happened to a solus dealer, the results could be catastrophic.

Also, what all this most definitely highlights is that civility and openness costs nothing and both go a long way to making fellow humans feel valued.

What now?

At the time of going to press, *Service Dealer* still hadn't received any further correspondence from Honda addressing dealers' concerns.

Keith Christian of BAGMA told us this situation was "a very sad and unnecessary state of affairs created by a well-respected company with a strong brand name".

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UPPING YOUR SECURITY GAME

All too frequently we hear of another dealership suffering at the hands of determined thieves. Editor Steve Gibbs hears from dealers with thoughts on defending business



Far too often *Service Dealer* via our *Weekly Update* newsletter, has been in the unwelcome position of having to report on yet another dealership break-in.

A recent example towards the end of last year was F G Adamson of East Riding, which found itself a victim, with £10,000 worth of equipment taken plus a considerable level of damage inflicted to its premises.

It goes without saying that incidences such as this are always appalling, but somehow coming in the midst of all the hardships that the independent retail sector has encountered during the past year, it's like rubbing salt into the wound. It's also sad but true to say that Adamson is not exceptional in this. Dealers in our sector regularly suffer crimes of this type, some, tragically, more often than others.

It brings us back to a conversation we have had many times in the past, about what can be done to mitigate such occurrences?

I remember asking our readers for their thoughts on this subject a year or two ago, following a spate of incidences. I recall suggestions such as smoke machines or sophisticated CCTV systems cropping up in the discussion – more on which shortly.

One idea that cropped up from a reader recently though, who had some thoughts on the subject, came

from Nigel Barnes of Moggs of Wells (Engineering) Ltd. Nigel began by saying how he had been saddened to read that yet another dealer had suffered the heartache of a break-in and theft.

"Once again it is the hand-held products that have been targeted," said Nigel, "easy to carry out through small apertures when doors cannot oblige."

Nigel had some interesting suggestions that the industry could perhaps take on board to help diminish the potential for stolen machines to change hands, even if the subsequent 'owner' is unaware of the origin of the machine.

"Firstly," Nigel said, "could we not create a register of stolen machines by make, model and serial number so we can readily check the bona fides of any suspicious machine? After all, the automotive industry does this via HPI."

Nigel continued, "Secondly, if the serial number is missing do not service or repair the machine unless the presenter of the same can provide legitimate proof of origin and ownership."

"I know this doesn't stop the break-ins, but it might reduce the ease with which stolen machines can be passed on."

As Nigel implies, one feels that if a criminal is determined, they can find methods to enforce a break-in. Perhaps what could indeed be useful though, is taking these longer-term steps towards making stolen equipment much less valuable to thieves?

It's terrible to even be in the position of trying to figure out methods to make items stolen from a business less appealing, but that does appear to be the unfortunate reality we find ourselves in. If, as Nigel suggests, all dealers refused to work on machines that didn't come with proof of ownership, could this be a help?

When we floated this idea on the *Weekly Briefing* it did gain some comments of support.

In terms of a register of stolen models, this would

SECURITY SITES

Dealer Charlie Kirk points colleagues in the direction of the following sites offering security solutions for the dealership:

■ Hedges Direct

www.hedgesdirect.co.uk

■ RazorWire UK

www.razorwireuk.com

■ Detection Technologies

www.detection-technologies.com

■ UltraSecure Direct

www.ultrasecuredirect.com

■ Stage Depot (for glass frosting)

www.stagedepot.co.uk

■ Fog Bandit

www.bandituk.co.uk

■ Inferno Pro Security

www.inferno.se/infernoprosecurity

■ William Powell (for poacher alarms)

www.williampowell.com

■ Selecta DNA

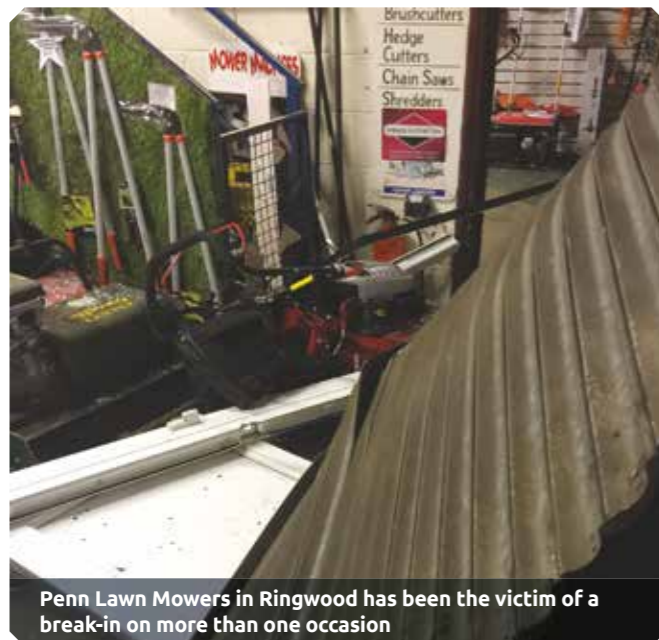
www.selectadna.co.uk

■ Datatag

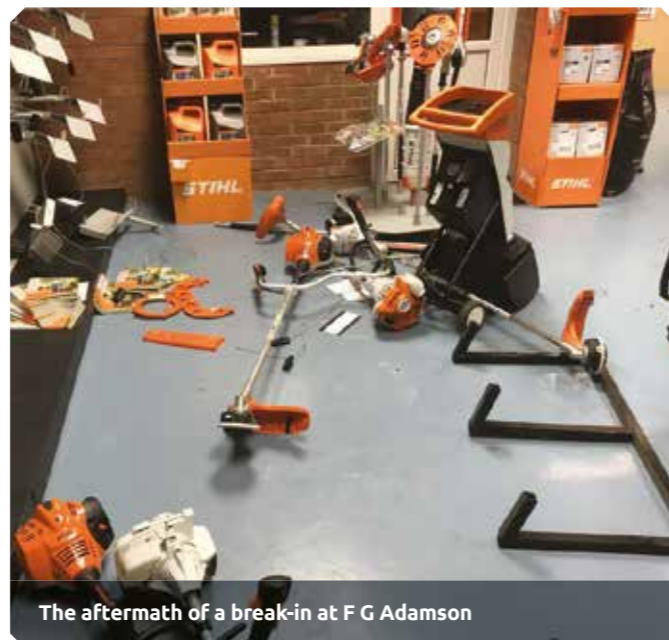
www.datatag.co.uk



Thieves cut their way into F G Adamson's showroom



Penn Lawn Mowers in Ringwood has been the victim of a break-in on more than one occasion



The aftermath of a break-in at F G Adamson

clearly need a trade body or individual organisation to organise it, but one feels that with modern communication and data recording methods it wouldn't be insurmountable?

Securing the premises

A dealer who has been in the awful position of having first-hand experience of some determined thieves is Charlie Kirk of C W Kirk Lawnmowers Ltd, of Burwell, in Cambridgeshire.

Charlie's dealership was the victim of a dramatic ram-raid in 2019. It saw a number of top-of-the-range chainsaws and strimmers taken from its site after criminals reversed a pickup truck into the front wall of the building, smashing through into the showroom.

At the time it was felt the thieves knew what they were looking for as only the high-value equipment was taken. As with many dealership thefts though, it is not just the value of the items taken that hurts, it is the physical damage inflicted on the premises that adds up the expenses.

"It cost us tens of thousands of pounds," confirms Charlie. "Not only was there the cost of the burglary, but we decided to close that branch and only continue with the one premises. To my surprise, when the insurance renewal came up, the cheapest cost for insurance was over double. We had several quotes and even though we had closed the branch that had been broken into, only having the one site, the costs were extraordinary."

Determined to do all they could to prevent a similar situation occurring again, Charlie said in 2020 they decided to up their security game with various products and methods.

"Firstly," said Charlie, "we looked at our perimeter. We have a dense hedge on one side which we're planting with additional spikey dog roses and pyracantha to further impede people coming through. Also, on our fence we have now put security wire on top.

"Next financial year I'm looking to have a sensor wire put in to detect if someone climbs or attempts to cut the fence. If they do, it will alarm. This can also be used around the perimeter of a building and can detect people breaking in before they get far – for example, if they are cutting in through a roof, skylight or door."

Simple things like making sure gates are locked at night and parking the company van in front of the vehicular access main gate also play an important part, says Charlie. "If they wanted to steal a trailer, large machine or forklift," he explains, "they would have to move the van, which is always left in gear with the steering lock full hand down." Again, this year a sensor wire is also planned to be installed.

Next Charlie says, they looked at their outdoor space, setting up beam alarms and external PIRs (passive infra-red sensors). "This system alerts me with texts and calls when someone is in the alarmed outside area. The alarm is zoned so I can tell where on the site that alarm has been triggered."

If something like this happened Charlie can check the Hikvision CCTV system remotely to see what the situation is. "Our CCTV system gives nearly full coverage of the site in HD in the day and also night mode," says Charlie. "It records and stores for nearly two months with four cameras. I'm looking to add three more, then we will have full coverage on the site including a Pan-tilt-zoom camera which can follow a vehicle or a person around the site."

Charlie says that the addition of infra-red illuminators would give him better night pictures and he is trying to work out how to capture number plates better in the hours of darkness. Audio would be useful too, he confirms.

Continuing with outside, they have three security lights outdoors and all the windows on the workshop have blinds which are closed every night. "I'm going to frost the glass," says Charlie, "so light can come in but prying eyes are kept out.

"I will be installing bars on the windows and improving the strength of the existing doors with the use of steel. The glass in

the windows I have investigated getting replaced with laminated glass, which is very tough to get through. I've seen demonstrations where a hammer was used to try to break in, but they were unsuccessful."

Charlie estimates that for six windows in the workshop, it would cost in the region of £600 to modify them.

Referring back to an earlier break-in, Charlie says one of the doors was smashed open once, "... but luckily the alarm went off and they ran away". The door was locked with a Euro-Lock, but to Charlie's amazement it was snapped in half. His advice is that anti-snap Euro-locks are available and it's important to make sure they don't protrude outside. The door is secured in a different way now though, he says.

Other security measures Charlie uses at the dealership include poacher alarms. These are legal, do not hurt, but will make someone run off. They comprise a 12-bore blank cartridge that is activated by a trip wire. The alarm can be positioned on the ground or attached to a post or other stable surface. If the wire is tripped, the released pin fires the blank cartridge. "I have four of these set behind the workshop and showroom," confirms Charlie. He says no one goes round there so it's safe for him and his staff.

Another product they use is Forensic DNA marking grease. This will mark intruders with traceable DNA and is set up in a way so it will cover intruders but not anyone else.

Charlie hopes that the prominently displayed signage for the wire, CCTV, forensic grease and alarm system will

hopefully work as a deterrent before any wannabe thieves even attempt breaking in.

Beyond the defence mechanisms to his premises, Charlie also always UV marks all new items with his dealership name and postcode. "I also keep accurate and up-to-date serial numbers for machines in stock," he says. "For customers' machines we take serial numbers and pictures. For our machinery that we use, plus for trailers and forklifts, we Datatag everything. Trailers also are wheel-clamped and hitch locked."

On top of all this, Charlie had a full professionally installed alarm system, which is remotely monitored, fitted towards the end of 2020. "Hopefully this should be enough to stop them!"

It is heart-breaking every time we must report on another dealership suffering a break-in. It seems sad to say, but during a working lifetime it feels like few will escape being targeted.

While criminals are as determined as they are, dealers sadly need to be as determined as Charlie Kirk of C W Kirk Lawnmowers in their efforts to keep them out.

"It's a shame to have to do all this," Charlie confirms, "and the cost to the bottom line of the business is always something to consider. But offset that against insurance costs and disruption to the business – it is necessary."

Sad but true. Hopefully with dealers helping each other with sound advice like this, it could eventually lead to far fewer stories of this nature to report on.

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Charles Bedforth with MD of dealer Netherton Tractors, Harry Barclay, in December 2020, as Netherton expanded its Opico partnership to include Maschio Gaspardo tillage and seeding equipment, and Maschio flail mowers, Sky grain drills and Strautmann Forage and feeding wagons

FOCUSING ON KEY DEALERS

Charles Bedforth has recently been promoted to the new position of Sales Director with agricultural machinery distributor Opico Ltd. Having built up strong relationships with the company's dealer network over the past 11 years, he looks back over his time with the firm, how it's coped this past year, and considers what may lie ahead

SERVICE DEALER: How did your time begin at Opico 11 years ago?

Charles Bedforth: I knew James (Woolway & MD of Opico) previously when he was working at Amazone and I met him at dealer events whilst I was working for Suzuki. When I read that James had bought Opico in 2008, I recognised his name and the company stuck in my mind. I congratulated him at the Highland Show in 2009 and later that year saw an ad for the Sales Manager role at the company. I saw the appeal of working for an independent business owned by one person, representing a number of interesting brands. Having had a previous connection with James I decided to apply, and here I am 11 years later!

SD: Do you have any dealers from when you first started who are still representing the company today?

CB: I still work with many dealers who have been with Opico since I first joined – too many to mention individually! More often than not, I have been dealing with the same people at the dealerships too. I've gone all the way through my Opico career with them.

SD: How has the company changed during your tenure?

CB: When I joined in 2010, the product offering was Opico grassland and dryers, as well as the HE-VA cultivation range. In 2012 we took on Maschio Gaspardo, and then Strautmann and Sky at the end of 2015. Most recently, mechanical weeding was added to the Opico product range in 2019.

Back when I first started there were five territory managers (TMs) who worked with every brand, but when we brought on Maschio we realised we needed dedicated TMs who could focus solely on Maschio products. The whole company has grown over the past 11 years, going from around 30 employees when I first joined, to nearly 40 now.

SD: How has it been for you this past year with all the restrictions in place?

CB: Like many other companies, we nailed Zoom during 2020. We've been very active on the phone with our dealers to make sure we stay in touch. The whole team has kept going in the face of adversity. TMs have been keeping up with demos and have made sure to adapt to



Charles Bedforth

any new rules and regulations. We've all worked hard to keep feeding the nation!

Farm machinery still breaks down, so our service teams have still been out keeping farmers moving. January and February are normally quieter times when we have dealers in our offices for training, and we're keeping up with this by having Zoom training for dealer sales and service teams to maintain and deliver the next level of knowledge.

SD: What do you think the future direction for agricultural machinery looks like?

CB: I've certainly noticed that as a whole, farms are getting larger across all farming types – all the farm businesses we supply do seem to be getting bigger, both

in the dairy and arable sectors. There's also a movement towards conservation agriculture in both arable and livestock, with a focus on input costs. Then we also have potential Brexit changes to consider. Those who don't adapt may end up being left behind.

Across the years we've also seen changes in how dealerships work, and we have learnt to do more business with fewer dealers. Focusing on our key dealers – that's where it's at.

SD: What are the company's plans for 2021?

CB: Our main focus is to continue to grow all our brands and to develop our dealer network to its full potential. We all know that people want to buy from people, and I can't see that changing any time soon. We need to develop our dealer network accordingly, invest in training dealer sales and service teams – I can't see people buying our machines on a computer.

We're going into 2021 with a solid forward order book and, as I mentioned earlier, it's thanks to a massive effort from our whole team. I see our TMs less as salespeople and more as agricultural machinery consultants. Between them they have lots of experience, have seen farming change over time and are still hungry to keep up with the changes that are coming in. It's not just about selling metal – we're giving advice, using industry knowledge to assist dealers and end customers. I'm proud to lead a team of TMs who are so knowledgeable that no matter where you are in the country, you can tap into an absolute wealth of experience and knowhow.

Because the majority of our TMs work across all brands, their understanding has to be strong across all farming practices; their knowledge extends across the board, from grassland maintenance to diet feeders and from racehorse stud operations to veg growers and pretty much everything cultivation-wise in between.

SD: What further developments can you see looking ahead?

CB: We have an excellent range of products to offer UK farmers and we need to focus on these for 2021. It's important to us that we have the right brands to take conservation agriculture forward, with Sky drills and the HE-VA Stealth being prominent in leading the way in this.

My role certainly also involves managing the relationships with our suppliers, and as we are an independent and agile company, we have the opportunity to work closely with our brands to bring the most suitable products to the UK market and to help with the development of new products. We can bring products to the UK market that the UK wants and we work with our manufacturers to import, what we see as, the best for British farming.

SD: Thank you.

MORE LIKE MATES...

That's how Tom Collings, Head Greenkeeper at The Point at Polzeath Golf Club on the Camel Estuary, views his relationship with his local dealership Masons Kings. Service Dealer contributor and TurfPro Editor LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR, spoke to Tom to find out how that relationship has fared during a turbulent past 12 months



The Point at Polzeath's Head Greenkeeper Tom Collings (right) with dealer David Barnes of Masons Kings and the new John Deere 2750E hybrid mower

One of England's most up-and-coming holiday golf destinations is the Point at Polzeath Golf Club in Cornwall, situated just above the Camel Estuary, five miles from Wadebridge and a mile from Rock and St Enodoc.

The 18-hole course has stunning views over Hayle Bay and Pentire Point. The club was bought in 2012 by the current owners, has received significant investment in every aspect of the business and is now fulfilling its full potential as a golf resort course. In 2017 it was awarded the Golfmark Club of the Year award.

The course is a real challenge for golfers of all standards and plays just

short of 6,300 yards off the back tees. As a result of the investment, the greens are now considered to be among the best in the county and the presentation of the course is hard to fault. Most holes have seen significant changes, with improvement to fairway definition, bunkers, tees and greens.

The course is managed and maintained by Tom Collings and his team of greenkeeping staff who rely heavily on having the right equipment and machinery at hand. Last year, for example, Tom was pleased to have received the first John Deere 2750E hybrid electric triplex mower sold in the county.

"I first saw the 2750E on social media after it was launched at BTME,"

said Tom, "so I was keen to have a look at it working on our course."

Tom's local dealer, Masons Kings, arranged a demonstration on site and after seeing it cut the first green, Tom was completely sold. "I just found it a totally different experience from any previous mower. Given how it handled and coped so easily with the conditions around the course, the decision to buy one was a no-brainer – it was just the mower I wanted."

The club has steadily replaced its previous, ageing machinery fleet over the past five years and invested in new Deere machines from the Masons Kings outlet at St Columb. These new additions didn't stop for Tom during the past year. In addition to the arrival of the 2750E and a 7700A PrecisionCut fairway mower in 2020, a new pedestrian Aercore 800 aerator was delivered to the club. These followed the purchase of two 220SL walk-behind greens mowers in 2019 and a 9009A TerrainCut rotary rough mower, 4066R compact tractor, ProGator utility vehicle and 8800A TerrainCut mower spread over the previous three years.

A close relationship

Tom's association with Masons Kings illustrates just how integral the relationship is between a turf professional and their local dealership.

"I've been dealing with Masons Kings for five or six years now," Tom confirmed. "I've built up a really good relationship with Dave Barnes, our local sales consultant, and Rob Blundell, the parts manager – I see them more as mates. They've always tried to help me out whenever they could, even before we had any equipment from them. Parts are always in when you want them, next day if needed, and most importantly they're honest and tell you if they can't do it – but they haven't let me down yet."

I asked Tom what his relationship has been like with his dealer throughout the pandemic? Had

how he interacted with them changed in any way?

"I think I must have spoken to Dave by phone or text every other week during the first lockdown," Tom replied, "and as far as I can remember parts were as reliable as ever. Obviously face to face contact has reduced and parts are delivered rather than picked up, but they've always been there for us when I needed them."

I asked Tom what qualities a professional customer looks for in a specialist dealer and whether he felt those have changed during the past months?

"I don't think what I look for has changed during the pandemic," Tom told me. "I've always believed you need to have trust between you and the dealer. I expect them to be honest, reliable and help where they can, whether it be parts or technical support."

Tom said he has historically bought machinery for his course outright, but in recent years has been rethinking this policy as "equipment loses its value very quickly, especially mowers".

He has also been finding buying parts to keep old machines going expensive. "We kept our last mowing fleet going for 6-8 years," he said, "but it got to the point when we weren't spending money on them yearly, but more like monthly! So, for the past two years we've obtained mowers on lease agreements of 4-5 years."

"We still purchase utility vehicles, tractors and implements outright. With the correct maintenance they can last a lot longer and generally don't do as many hard hours."

When the pandemic took hold last year, it was dealers of commercial machinery who arguably fared worst compared with their peers who specialise in garden or agricultural equipment. With sports including golf shut down, the purchase of new machinery by turf professionals such as Tom was very much under threat. As the season progressed, however, and the golfers returned, the picture



Tom Collings relies on Masons Kings outlet at St Columb

began to change.

Tom explained: "As I mentioned before, we had been nursing old machines for a few years. We had started upgrading our mowing fleet two or three years ago, with two of our oldest but key machines – a fairway mower and a greens mower – due for renewal in 2020.

"When the pandemic and the first lockdown hit, we assumed we'd have to try to keep the old machines going for another season or two. Fortunately, with the influx of new golfers we were able to not only carry out planned upgrades, but also acquire a new Aercore 800."

Has Tom's approach to surface maintenance changed as we have moved in and out of the various lockdowns I wondered?

"My approach hasn't changed, but maybe my priorities have," he explained. "I've always believed it's important to get the basics done first.

"During the first lockdown we furloughed most of our team, only keeping a couple on to keep things ticking over. It was very difficult at first, because I kept trying to do everything as normal and it was hard seeing areas like bunkers becoming unkempt. But we just had to concentrate on the basics, keeping the fairways, tees and greens tidy. We raised the height of cuts and reduced the semi rough down to just a day's mowing, whereas before it had taken two days.

"When golf reopened, we were able to start getting more of the team back. As another member of the team

returned, we would add another area to our weekly programme until we returned to normal-ish. During the more recent lockdowns we've kept all the team on and concentrated on project and improvement work, and just reduced mowing and raised the height of cuts."

Looking ahead to this year, Tom will continue to rely on his relationship with Masons Kings. He already has his eye on a wish-list of machinery purchases for 2021. "We have a semi rough mower, the 9009A, coming to the end of its lease," Tom said, "so we'll be looking at a number of options for replacements throughout this season. I'd also like to get a couple of pedestrian cylinder mowers and a utility vehicle . . . any more than that and I'd be pushing my luck I think!"



One of The Point's mowers being serviced at Masons Kings



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LAWN MOWER

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Adjustment **6 stage**
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Deck **Steel**
Propulsion **Self-propelled variable speed**

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UPDATES ACROSS JCB HANDLER RANGE

JCB has launched new DualTech Stage V Loadalls, updated TM pivot-steer telehandlers, a new 'ultra-compact' wheeled loader model and revised mid-range wheeled loaders for 2021. MARTIN RICKATSON discovered more

An industry-first 50km/hr eight-speed powershift and the sector's most powerful engine in a machine of this type are key claims for JCB's latest artic telehandlers

While tractor makers continue to enter the telehandler segment – most recently Fendt has joined the likes of New Holland, Claas, Case IH and Massey Ferguson, while John Deere continues to push its partnership with Kramer – the specialists remain dominant in the sector, and arguably it's JCB that is most dominant among them. For 2021, the British marque's dealers have a host of new products available to offer customers.

On the telescopic handler front, the key news is revised Loadall models. These feature more powerful Stage V emissions-compliant engines, with the Agri, Agri Super and Agri Xtra specifications now offering respective power outputs of 109hp, 130hp and 150hp. Meanwhile, the DualTech Variable Transmission is now available on additional models. Previously the hydrostatic/powershift hybrid came only on top-specification Agri Pro Series III

Loadalls, but it can now also be specified for 'second tier' Agri Super versions, as well as the smallest full-size Loadall, the 532-60, for the first time. The latter is now fitted with JCB's 40kph four-speed TorqueLock 4 powershift transmission.

In Agri Super guise, the 532-60 is equipped with a 130hp engine and DualTech. At the top of the range, meanwhile, the 560-80 Agri Super has a regular four-speed powershift but in new top-spec Agri Xtra guise comes with the 150hp engine and either six-speed AutoShift transmission or DualTech. All other models – the 538-60, 532-70, 542-70 and 536-95 – are available with a choice of Agri 109hp specification with JCB TorqueLock 4 transmission; Agri Super 130hp spec with four-speed Powershift, six-speed AutoShift or DualTech; and with the Agri Xtra package combining the 150hp engine with six-speed AutoShift or DualTech.

AutoShift-equipped Agri Super and Agri Xtra versions of the 542-70 and

536-95 are available as 'sway' models with hydraulic chassis levelling to enhance safety when working with an extended boom on uneven ground, and 40kph top speed is now standard on all 6m, 7m and 9.5m models, courtesy of a new gearbox and axle combination for Agri Super variants equipped with the four-speed Powershift transmission.

Engine in all models is JCB's Stage V 4.8-litre, tweaked to produce power/torque outputs of 109hp/516Nm (Agri), 130hp/550Nm (Agri Super) and 150hp/600Nm (Agri Xtra). There is no exhaust gas recirculation, while the variable geometry turbocharger has been replaced by a simpler electronically-controlled wastegate turbo. A new Auto Stop feature shuts down the engine after a period at idling speed to eliminate fuel wastage.

All Loadall Series III handlers now come with a seat-mounted joystick as standard in the Command Plus cab. Air conditioning is optional on Agri and

Agri Super versions, and on Agri Xtra models the standard system can be upgraded to climate control.

Agri Super specification adds JCB Auto Smooth Ride boom suspension and the option to fit up to 11 LED worklights. The LED package is standard with Agri Xtra specification, which also includes a limited slip differential front axle, dust covers between boom sections, and centralised rear grease points on 7m and 8m versions.

Industry-first features for new pivot-steer handlers

An industry-first 50km/hr eight-speed powershift transmission and the sector's most powerful engine in a machine of this type are the key claims for JCB's latest four-model range of articulated telehandlers. Both developments feature in a new flagship 173hp TM420S model, while all versions benefit from a new cab. Lift capacities/heights continue at 3.2t/5.2m for the TM320 and TM320S, and 4.1t/5.45m for the TM420 and new TM420S.

A new eight-speed JCB Powershift transmission is based on the established six-speed unit. In 50km/hr format it is standard on the new TM420S and optional on the TM320S. JCB Torquelock direct drive is available in every gear, including the four reverse speeds. The base spec 40km/hr version of the eight-speed transmission is fitted to the TM320 and TM420, with torque converter lock-up available in forward gears five to eight.

Both versions of the JCB-engineered and manufactured transmission can be operated manually, via joystick buttons, or via auto powershift for gears five to eight. In auto mode, the transmission responds to light use of the accelerator pedal by shifting up and down at a relatively steady engine speed for optimum fuel economy. More aggressive pedal use results in delayed up-shifts for greater power and torque exploitation and maximum acceleration.

All four models are equipped with a

new Command Plus cab that features a one-piece upward-curving windscreen with internal ROPS/FOPS safety grille. The new design also allows for a roof wiper option, and there are larger rear three-quarter windows and a standard rear-view camera. Inside, there's a return-to-position steering column, while externally there are illuminated cab steps and programmable 360° lighting with a night exit delay.

New is a joystick-mounted assignable 'hot key' button that can be used for any one of a number of functions. These include switching between transmission auto and manual modes, torque lock-up engage/disengage, auxiliary hydraulic valve control, muting the radio, answering or hanging up calls on a Bluetooth-connected mobile phone, and acting as a worklight master switch. Meanwhile, all models now have a pressure release control inside and outside the cab as well as at the headstock.

The 4.8-litre JCB 448 DieselMax engine used in all four new TM models meets Stage V emissions regulations via a single-canister DPF/SCR and features selectable Autostop for automatic shutdown if left idling for a time-adjustable period. TM320S power/torque is now 150hp/600Nm, while figures for the TM420S are 173hp/690Nm, making it the highest-powered JCB machine with the firm's DieselMax engine and the

most powerful telescopic loader available. Both models have flow-on-demand hydraulic piston pumps but the TM420S has 'regenerative' boom hydraulics, which exploit the boom weight to lower it faster for quicker cycle times, and a twin hydraulic pump installation totalling 100cc capacity to deliver oil at up to 160-litre/min using only modest engine revs.

JCB TM320S models specified with the 50km/hr variant of the eight-speed Powershift transmission get a number of the more powerful machine's features, including dual-circuit braking with oil-immersed disc brakes in both axles, 10- instead of five-stud axle hubs, and an electric rather than a mechanical parking brake. Both TM420S and TM320S are available in Pro Edition spec, which adds Smoothride boom suspension, transmission belly guard and variable-speed/reversing cooling fan, plus a chromed exhaust stack, 360° LED cab- and boom-mounted lighting, twin flashing beacons, in-cab storage box, toolbox, grease gun and Bluetooth radio.

Targeted at less demanding applications, the TM320 and TM420 feature a new 40km/hr eight-speed JCB Powershift transmission. The TM320 gets a power and torque boost to 130hp/550Nm, while figures for the TM420 are 150hp/600Nm. These general-purpose models have the same lift capacity and lift height figures as their S counterparts, but



JCB Loadall upgrades for 2021 include more powerful Stage V emissions-compliant engines and wider DualTech transmission availability

lower capacity 63cc/230 bar and 72cc/260 bar variable-flow piston pump hydraulic systems respectively.

The TM420 has a heavier-duty chassis and axles, larger wheels and tyres, disc brakes in both axles and 'regenerative' hydraulics that exploit the weight of the boom to speed lowering.

New ultra-compact wheeled loader

JCB has doubled its range of 403 ultra-compact wheeled loaders, with a new Plus version offering twice the power of the 25hp Smart Power model, courtesy of a 1.7-litre capacity 50hp engine equipped with Autostop. Further specification includes greater lift capacity (616kg rather than 575kg on the Smart Power), 60 l/min hydraulics, heavy-duty axles, optional 100% locking diffs front and rear, and a fully-equipped cab. Overall width on narrow tyres is 1.10m.

There are 20km/hr and 30km/hr versions of the machine's hydrostatic transmission, and a 60 l/min gear pump (43 l/min on the Smart Power) provides oil for the articulated steering, lift arms and front-end attachments. An auxiliary circuit for attachment operation also provides constant flow to drive a hydraulic motor on equipment such as feed buckets. Flow can be controlled using a regular lever valve or optional electric control on the loader joystick.

Up front there is a choice of lift arm sizes, with the standard version offering a load-over height of 2.6m and the extended option taking this to 2.8m. JCB says both designs are patented for the way stresses are dissipated throughout the chassis, and both give true parallel lift. Four different quick-hitch couplings are available, with hydraulic pin locking.

Operator accommodation choices include a fixed canopy with front and rear windscreens and a fully-glazed cab. Overall height for both is 2.2m, although the folding FOPS/ROPS canopy can be lowered in 40 seconds to reduce this to 1.84m.



JCB has doubled its range of 403 ultra-compact wheeled loaders, with a new Plus version offering double the power of the 25hp Smart Power model

A new towing option is available with clevis and 50mm ball hitches, both with 750kg capacity. JCB LiveLink telemetry is available to help aid security, service scheduling, location, fault-finding and operating records.

Upgrades to mid-range wheeled loaders

JCB's latest mid-range ag wheeled loaders have extra power, torque and refinement upgrades in a package of updates alongside Stage V compliance. The 411 Agri, 413S Agri and 417 Agri are now powered by the latest 4.8-litre JCB DieselMax four-cylinder engine, also featuring Autostop auto shut-down.

The 411 Agri and 417 Agri are designed and equipped primarily for hard surface applications, driving through a four-speed JCB powershift transmission. Weighing 8.7t, the 411 Agri has High Torque lift arms giving 3.36 metres of load-over clearance with the quick-hitch fitted and a 5t full-turn tipping load with a general purpose 1.2-1.6 cu m bucket. On the 417 Agri there are three loader arm choices, giving up to 4.2m clearance, and a 3.9t full-turn tipping load in that configuration, with up to 5.8t capacity available with a quick-hitch on the standard arms, which will clear 3.3m.

Designed, says JCB, for more demanding applications such as silage and manure work, the S designation of the JCB 413S Agri denotes that it has

greater engine power, a six-speed powershift transmission, optional limited slip diffs front and rear and a 50km/hr top speed. Tipping loads range from 4.6-5.6t, with the former being the figure for machines equipped with optional High Lift arms, with which they can clear 3.61m. Hydraulic boom suspension is optional on all models.

Several enhancements previously introduced with Stage V versions of larger models have filtered down the range, including rubber cushioning pads on the front face of the rear chassis near the articulation joint, softening contact when steering to full lock in either direction. There are also upgraded seat options, a rear-view camera and dedicated in-cab display as standard.

The JCB 411 Agri and 417 Agri move from a 4.4-litre engine to the latest-specification 4.8-litre JCB DieselMax, which is also fitted to the 413S Agri and comes with Autostop and a single-canister SCR and DPF in addition to the DOC unit. The 109hp 411 Agri's peak power and torque figures are unchanged, but the 417 Agri benefits from a 4% increase in maximum power to 130hp, while the JCB 413S gets a 5% power rise to 150hp and 7% more torque at 600Nm. All three models have a wide-core cooling pack and reversible fan option with ambient temperature-related hydraulic drive speed adjustment.

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COMMUNICATION IS KEY

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: Avoiding breakdowns in communication in the dealership

One of the biggest hurdles we must address with employees of dealerships is a breakdown of communication due to poor documentation. This may seem like a very simple problem to fix but it takes effort and a process.

The first breakdown in communication, that ultimately creates a snowball effect throughout the whole dealership, is the first contact with the customer. Dealerships and employees are getting better at attaining the customer's contact information, but I find most documentation stops there. I encourage employees to dig deeper and to document what the customer says, even if it might not seem extremely relevant to the job at hand. It is normally in those details that we can find missing links to problems.

So, how do we get this information and what are the best ways to document the information gained?

1 The Initial Customer Contact

Begin by collecting information from your very first contact with the customer. When the customer drops off the unit for service you should get:

- The customer's contact information, including their mobile phone number
- unit information, and
- general information gained by asking questions about their unit – for example: "Since owning this unit, have you noticed any changes to how it is operating?"

At this point we need to make sure we are making notes, not only in the computer system, but also on the triage sheet, so that the customer's concerns are communicated to the technician as they are doing the triage.

2 Following Triage – Information from the Technician

As you or the technicians are writing or typing notes into a computer, be sure that you have captured a clear picture of the story of what is being requested or needed, so that the work order could be handed to anyone in the dealership and they could have a conversation with the customer if they needed too. Clarity is key!

3 The Flow of the Work Order through the Process

It is key that the progress of the work order be updated throughout the process of the repair or service.

Whether you are using clipboards to transport and signify work orders are moving to the next stage of the process, or if you are using the computer, we need to constantly be updating notes as these work orders flow through our process.

- *The easiest way to do this is to utilise your software system and simply change the status of the work order. I encourage dealerships to utilise this function of your software system in order to follow every step of the process. These steps give us, internally, a lot of information and indicators of the status of each unit. They also give us a very quick reference for the customer if they were to call in.*
- *As you and your employees are updating the status of a unit, it is critical that notes are being made along the way; everything from the approval you receive from the customer, to parts that are on back order.*

4 Final Steps

The final piece is to call the customer and let them know their unit is ready for pickup or delivery. A note should be made as to when the customer plans to pick up their equipment or what day the customer can expect the unit to be delivered.

A commitment to excellent documentation will benefit you, the customer and the dealership as a whole. Remember, start documentation with the first customer contact, make sure that all documentation is written clearly for all departments to understand and finally, be detailed and document each step throughout the process. If even one step is missed, the chain of communication, either internal or external with the customer, will be broken.



Sara Hey



Chris Gibson

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

Chris Gibson, MD of GGM Groundscare, appreciates the value of team-made decisions in the dealership and wonders about stocking levels for the forthcoming season

When we closed for the Christmas break with Brexit finally done, we were all looking forward to a year that would see us start to return to a more normal environment. It quickly became clear, however, that a large part of 2021 was going to be anything but normal. Despite this, the start of the New Year did provide us with the opportunity to reset the dials and focus on our objectives for the season ahead.

In our organisation, we place huge importance on teamwork, and this is a great time for me to keep our team up to date with how business is developing and our plans for the season ahead. I find dialogue about how we can continue to develop our customer service is a hugely beneficial and rewarding experience and always results in some great ideas.

A good example of how this has paid off for us was during one of these sessions a couple of years ago when we were discussing how to continue to develop our Baroness Golf business. We addressed the need for the service department to adapt its offering to meet the needs of the golf market, and the subject of our old, rather tired, Bernard grinders arose and that we should consider their replacement. Wanting to ensure we selected machines that were the most efficient and allowed us to both spin and relief grind, I tasked the workshop with reviewing the market

and selecting the machines that best suited our needs. The result, after a successful demonstration, was a not unsubstantial investment in a pair of Foley grinders that were duly installed, and our engineers trained.

Two years on from this we are now reaping the rewards. Our workshop was busy with grinding work throughout last year and the winter season, with one head groundsman who previously used a competitor for grinding, commenting that his Dennis G860 was cutting better than it did when it was new.

Would I have selected these machines for the workshop without the team's input? Maybe or maybe not; perhaps I'd have just looked at the quotes and selected the cheapest or gone for the 'safe' same again approach.

Throughout the winter our workshops have remained busy and our service business has continued to grow, with the continual challenges of recruitment remaining one of the biggest issues facing our industry. This year, we had hoped to engage with some local schools and encourage some work experience opportunities.

I'm a huge believer in starting the recruitment process early and taking the time to get the pupils engaged in the business; explain our industry, our culture and values and help them see for themselves what great opportunities our industry has to offer. I hope that later in the season we will get a chance to make this possible.

Aside from keeping everyone working safely, one of my principal concerns for the season is stock availability. We're finding that many suppliers scaled back their forecasts last year while demand remained strong, resulting in less stock for this season. Their response to the pandemic was, I think, entirely understandable, but it certainly does not help us as a dealership.

This has made us consider how best we market to our customers ahead of the season so we can meet their expectations for supply, as there is nothing worse than turning orders down because you can't get the equipment in time.

In our parts business, we invested heavily to cover the effects of a No Deal Brexit, as had many of our suppliers, but the news of a last-minute trade deal with the EU still came as a relief. Despite this deal, the additional administration and customs clearance costs will adversely affect parts supply. With the season just around the corner, there seems little alternative than to maintain higher levels of parts stock and where delays do occur keep customers informed.

As dealers, we all take responsibility for what goes on in our businesses. External factors such as a global pandemic and Brexit are outside our control, but with good teamwork, planning and organisation we will continue to grow our business, secure in the knowledge that spring is in the air and the grass is starting to grow.

BUSINESS MONITOR

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WINTER SERVICING SURVEY 2021

Many report increases in business during 2020

According to dealers who responded to our *Winter Servicing Survey* conducted towards the end of January 2021, workshop levels for many are down this year – although seemingly, not across the board.

A slight majority who responded described their workshop levels as down this winter (28%). Although, illustrating just what a mixed picture it appears to be this year, this was only slightly more than those who said their levels were actually up on 2019 (25%) and those that described them as roughly the same (also 25%).

As you would expect there is one factor which is determining the levels of business seen in the workshop more than any other this year, and that is the effects of

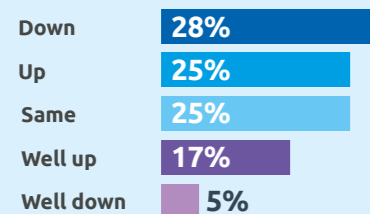
the pandemic; 50% of dealers who responded cited this as the major factor this season – well beating the perennial influencers of the weather and staffing issues.

Most dealers who answered said they had not raised their labour rates this winter (67%), with most of those that had (46%) saying they had only increased by up to 5%.

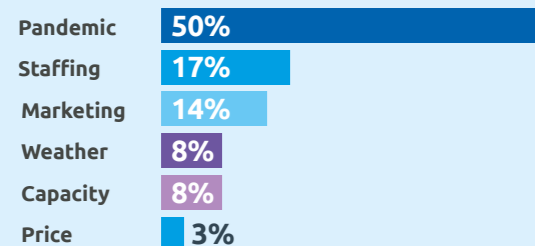
Perhaps unsurprisingly, very few dealers said they had increased their workshop technician levels in the past 12 months (86% said they hadn't) – with the vast majority describing the process of doing so as difficult (74%).

Similarly to last year, there wasn't a ringing endorsement of training courses available to staff by those who responded, with 42% describing them as adequate and 42% describing them as inadequate.

How are servicing levels this winter compared with last?



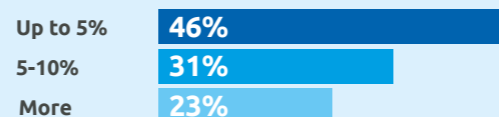
What factor has most influenced your winter servicing levels this year?



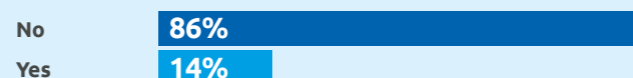
Have you increased your labour rates in the past year?



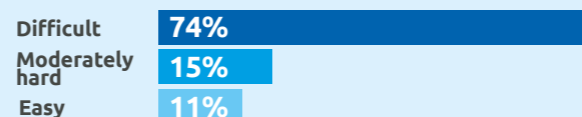
If you have increased your labour rates this past year, by how much?



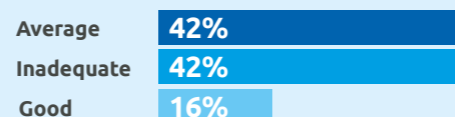
Have you increased your service staffing levels this past year?



When you do want to increase service staffing levels, do you find the process...



Do you find the standard of training courses available to your service staff...



YOUR SAY...

We asked you: are there any key issues that are currently impacting on the service side of your business?

- Our volume of service work, compared to last year, is huge. We think this is partly because so many dealerships are now closing so customer choice is limited. We also wonder if this is an indication of economic uncertainty which might suggest fewer new machinery purchases in 2021. Grounds care service technicians are nowhere to be found so recruitment is extremely difficult. As for courses, the pandemic aside, most manufacturers' offerings are poor. We were offered a course from one manufacturer recently and they couldn't even tell us what the course content was or what level of staff it was aimed at!
- The service side is being hit due to the pandemic. Although we are still very busy with a fair amount of work in the workshop, it is not as it usually is with regard to bookings and products lined up in the yard. Normally we would have a huge amount in, and I would be thinking "how am I going to get it done in time?" (We always do of course, somehow.) I would say it is the steadiest January in 10 years. I will add, however, that I think it will come but spread over a longer period, rather than the January-March mayhem – which isn't necessarily a bad thing as I believe winter servicing needs to move with the times.
- Probably like most other dealers, we have vacancies for the correct people in service departments. We have taken on new entrants and new starts recently, but have difficulty in keeping them and bringing them forward to suit all.
- It has been a case of adapting and trying new things in regards to marketing techniques.
- Found some spare parts are coming from suppliers much slower than usual. This has been expected by us as the dealer and apart from the odd few, customers are understanding and happy to wait up to four weeks for a service instead of 1-2 weeks.
- Because of lockdown, I don't think we should be encouraging customers to make 'unnecessary journeys' to bring mowers in for service, so we have not sent out any service reminders this year, which is normally very effective.
- The pandemic is affecting us as people are sticking to the rules locally and staying at home.
- Lack of footfall due to the three lockdowns and a lack of support for small businesses from the government. Even being open during lockdown you have to practically be taking nothing for the council to show any interest.
- Parts supply is hampering us if the item is not in stock in the UK due to COVID.
- My customers think I am closed, like many other businesses, which will impact on the spring rush.
- Getting hold of sufficiently qualified technicians is a nightmare.
- None really, but the weather can be a big factor regarding service. As I write this the sun is shining and it is dry – hence the phones have been busier. Earlier in the week when there was snow on the ground it was very quiet – I could have closed and gone home!

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Edited by Adam Bernstein

FAMILY BUSINESSES

FAMILIES IN DISPUTE



You can choose your friends but not your family, writes SME Digest Editor, Adam Bernstein

What happens if you run a business with family – is trouble guaranteed, or can commercial harmony follow?

David Emanuel, Chairman and a Corporate Law Partner at VWV, thinks that every family business dispute will be different, but there are common themes, many of which are obvious. The most frequent tend to involve a lack of succession planning which leaves the next generation feeling frustrated, or uncertain about what comes next, and which of the next generation should be involved; differences over strategic direction – a family-owned lifestyle business or one that demands external management expertise at the expense of family members employed in the business; and different attitudes among or across generations on whether the business should stay in the family or be sold, and who decides.

But other issues can drive home a wedge, and some of them, reckons Philippa Dempster, Managing Partner of law firm Freeths, may be very trivial but can fester.

Money is often the root cause. She says, “remuneration can often lead to a dispute if one family

member feels that they are not being financially rewarded as well as another, or if they feel others are not pulling their weight but are remunerated the same as those that are taking on key roles.”

On top of this is what happens when one family member feels that they are not being included in decision making, however small that may be.

Dealing with the issues

As any good lawyer knows, documentation is key. For Emanuel, this could include an obligation in a shareholder’s agreement with mediation as a mechanism for resolving disputes. Dempster agrees, stating that alternative means of dispute resolution is always preferable “because litigation can be expensive and time consuming, and is a distraction”.

This point is taken further by Emanuel. He suggests that if the family doesn’t want to bear the cost of mediation, an alternative “is an independent, respected, family-related figure”. But, as he explains, “the parties need to be in a frame of mind to mediate for this to have a chance of success”.

Before embarking on mediation, Dempster emphasises that it’s

important for the parties to know what their legal position is. She believes that by knowing, for example, “that a court may not agree with a party’s position from a legal perspective they will go to mediation with an open mind”.

Risk management

Families can also lower the risk of trouble through a charter which sets out the fundamental principles on which members want to see their business run, and a shareholder’s agreement that offers detail on ownership and management rights and responsibilities. For Emanuel, these important governance documents can, he says, “help business and family relationships, and give confidence to face future challenges”.

Dempster sees similar value here too. She thinks a formal business plan should be written “so that the parties have some structure and each party is aware of the direction that is proposed for the business. Meetings should always be minuted to avoid misunderstandings down the line, with minutes circulated and if possible, an independent third-party present.”

Both Dempster and Emanuel consider that regular communication

is critical. Emanuel advocates a “forum for family members to meet, away from home, to discuss family business issues in the context of their respective roles, whether as family member, employee, or shareholder”.

Dempster recommends openness where “parties can be open and transparent with one another by, for example, having regular meetings to discuss company finances, business initiatives, staff issues”.

It’s about people too

If agreement on business decisions cannot be reached it is inevitable that family members may have to exit the business, or the business be wound up. Here, says Dempster, “the business will need to be valued so that the leaving party can either be bought out by the remaining parties or the company buys back the shares at value”.

Of course, business isn’t necessarily about the current generation, it also concerns the future. Bringing in new family members at an early age can help them feel that the business is very much part of the family.

As Emanuel notes, however, to work in a business long term they need the right skills for their roles.

Dempster feels the same. Her advice is to get younger members of the family into the business to shadow older family members – she says that it’s “a great way for them to learn what is involved with, and what it takes, to successfully run the business”.

But shadowing alone may not be appealing to the younger generation “so it might be useful to give them small tasks in the business, so they feel that they are contributing”.

To conclude

While blood may be the strongest bond, it doesn’t guarantee success. The reality is that without a firm basis for good communications, an understanding of how businesses are run, and ideally, good documentation, the seeds of destruction will be sown. But each to their own.

TAX LEGISLATION

CREW-CAB VANS A NASTY JUDGEMENT FOR ALL



Some firms use a crew-cab van to help them provide a dual-purpose vehicle that operates as a van by day and a car out of hours, writes Helen Thornley, a technical officer at the ATT

A recent tax ruling, however, has effectively nixed this as an idea and will have repercussions for those that have used this form of tax planning in the past; it’s also turned on its head the advice Service Dealer published in 2019.

An overview

In a long-running case, the Court of Appeal decided in August (2020) that three modified crew-cab vehicles that Coca Cola supplied to employees should be classified as cars, not vans, for benefit in kind purposes. Previous tribunal decisions had determined that one of the vehicles could still be considered a van while the other two were cars, despite similarities.

Coca Cola provided three types of modified crew-cab vehicle to its employees who were allowed private use of the vehicles. The three vehicles in question were a first- and second-generation VW Transporter T5 Kombi and a Vauxhall Vivaro.

Coca Cola had treated all the vehicles as vans for tax purposes. HMRC argued they were cars. The difference mattered because the benefit in kind charges on the private use by an employee of a van is lower. It is chargeable at a flat rate and can even be nil if the private use is limited. In contrast, the benefit in kind charge for a car can be substantial, no matter how little the private use, as it depends

on the list price of the car and its CO₂ emissions.

The vehicles provided by Coca Cola were all based on a panel van design but with a second row of seats behind the driver – a so called ‘crew-cab’ vehicle.

At the first hearing the Tribunal determined that the Viraro was a van – just – because the available load space was larger as the fixed seating behind the driver didn’t span the full width of the vehicle. However, the Tribunal classed the Kombis as cars – even though the seats spanning the full width of the vehicle were removable, which increased load space. In the Tribunal’s view this meant that the Kombis were equally suitable for goods or people.

The Court of Appeal decided that all the vehicles it considered were cars for tax purposes – none were primarily more suitable for carrying goods than passengers.

Implications for employers and employees

There are now two areas of concern. Firstly, businesses must ensure that any new or existing vehicles are treated correctly going forwards. Although the Court of Appeal decision could be appealed, it is binding for now.

Secondly, businesses must also look back to see if they need to

make any amendments to previous returns where they have treated as vans crew-cab vehicles which are similar to those in the Coca Cola case which might now be considered a car.

Even where businesses are happy that they have classified vehicles correctly in the past, they should make sure they have evidence of their reasons in the event that HMRC opens an enquiry. But if HMRC opens an enquiry and concludes that vehicles have been misclassified as vans when they should be treated as cars there is potential extra tax for both the employee and employer. The employee is at risk of additional income tax demands on increased value of the benefit in kind they have received, and for the employer there is both the risk of additional employer’s national insurance on any understated benefits-in-kind and potentially, more tax to pay if capital allowances have been over-claimed.

Capital allowances

Businesses should also look at how they have treated the vehicles for capital allowances purposes; the definition of a van for these rules is very similar to the one considered in Coca Cola for benefit in kind purposes.

The big difference between vans and cars for capital allowances purposes is that vans are eligible for

the annual investment allowance, but cars are not. This means that all but the very largest of businesses will generally get the benefit of tax relief on the cost of a van in the year of purchase. The tax relief on the cost of a car, by contrast, is drip-fed much more slowly.

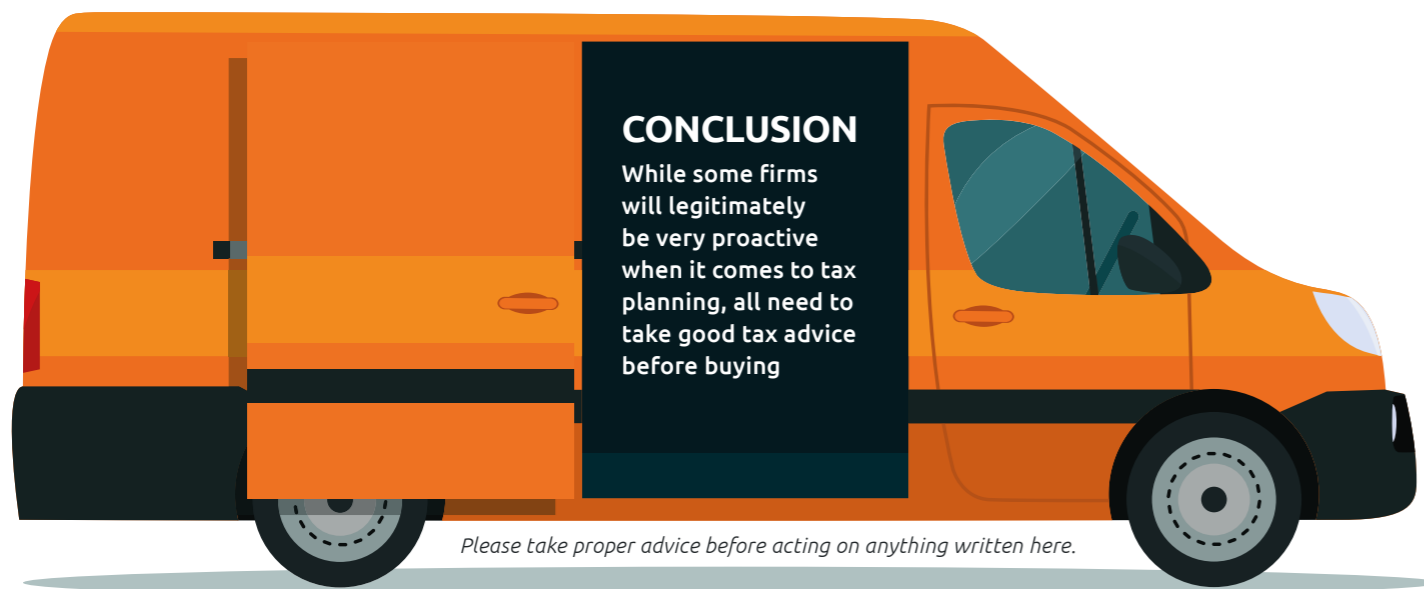
VAT

The other area where businesses have to take care is with VAT as it can usually be recovered on the purchase of a van while it is generally blocked on a car’s purchase.

Just to complicate matters, the definition of a car for VAT purposes is different to the definitions considered above. Any vehicle which can carry a payload of one tonne or more is not considered a car for VAT purposes, even if it has seats behind the driver.

On this basis, a crew-cab that can carry a big enough load may still be treated as a van for VAT purposes, even if it doesn’t meet the definition of a van for benefit in kind or capital allowances purposes.

An alternative to consider is a double cab or dual-cab pick-up. These too have seats behind the driver but, instead of an enclosed load space behind, there is usually a flatbed loading bay. HMRC accepts that if double-cab pick-ups meet the payload test, then it will apply the same treatment for benefit in kind purposes as well.



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COMMERCIAL

ELIET OVERSEEDER NEW LAUNCH

DZC 450 is a more compact counterpart to the 600

Eliet has announced the launch of a new overseeding machine, the DZC 450, a more compact counterpart to the DZC 600.

Smaller than the DZC 600, the company says the DZC 450 is designed to make overseeding more accessible. With a usable width of 45cm, it is lighter and more compact than its big brother, with dimensions that make it suitable for use in smaller and less accessible gardens.

The unit is equipped with the patented Eliet Helix Seed Duct seed distribution system and the residual seed can easily be removed from the machine when the work is complete.

It features 45 Permanently Sharp Blades, with 27mm spacing. It also benefits from a rubber ejection paddle that discharges any materials removed by the blades and spreads it evenly as topdressing behind the machine.

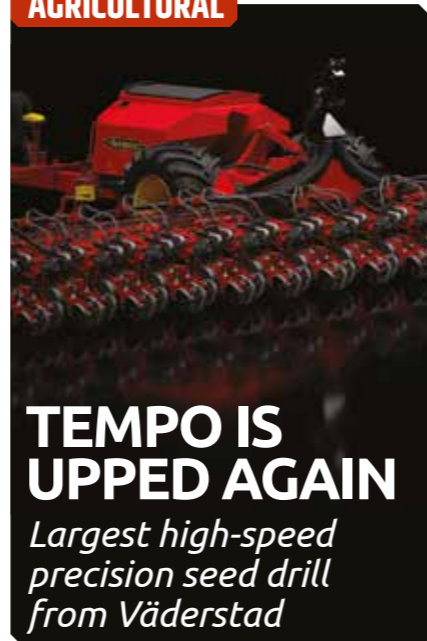
Operator safety and comfort is aided via the handlebars that are fitted with anti-vibration dampers, variably adjustable to the correct height, while the working depth of the blades can be quickly and easily altered.

The new machine is available from PSD Groundscare through its network of specialist dealers.



Eliet DZC 450 overseeder

AGRICULTURAL



TEMPO IS UPPED AGAIN

*Largest high-speed
precision seed drill
from Väderstad*

Väderstad has launched its largest high-speed precision seed drill to date, which will be available from June this year. Despite its size the company claims the Tempo L 32 can maintain increased output without compromising performance.

The new drill is equipped with 32 row units of 375mm spacing, a 3,000l seed hopper and a Central Seed Fill as standard. To manage a narrower row spacing, every second-row unit is offset. The row cleaner angle and gauge wheel size have also been reduced.

To increase the versatility of the Tempo L 32 it is possible to hydraulically raise half of the row units and lock them in an upper position, reducing the number of rows from 32 (375mm row spacing) to 16 (750mm row spacing).

In practice for UK growers, says Väderstad, this means it is possible to drill oilseed rape and then change to maize on 16 rows with 750mm row spacing quickly and efficiently.

AGRICULTURAL

PLUS-SERIES VARIABLE CHAMBER BALERS FOR NEW SEASON

Launched by Kubota

Kubota is to introduce a revised range of variable chamber round balers for the 2021 season. Designated the Plus-series, the updated models comprise the BV5160 and BV5200 versions, and the Flexiwrap baler-wrapper combination which uses the BV5160 with a 14-knife crop-chopping system.

The manufacturer says the changes have been implemented to improve output and lower operating costs, and combine a redesigned roller crop press capable of lifting higher in heavier crops, with strengthened side support arms with improved limit stops. Enhanced protection against crop wrapping is also provided for the crop press bearings, which have now been mounted inside the roller.

Up front, the 2.2m pick-up reel, which features twin-cam tracks and five tine bars – has also been refreshed. It now features 10mm-longer tines and wider stripper plates to improve cleaning in wet crop conditions.

The pick-up drive chain has been increased in size for added durability.

The baler driveline has also received attention and is now equipped with long-life HBC specification chains, providing higher fatigue strength and increased wear resistance, compared with conventional chains. The bale chamber gets a new design of idler rollers which benefit from a 45% increase in bearing diameter, along with larger internal grease capacity and improved shielding. The idler rollers also gain a continuous central shaft, which adds rigidity.

Visually, the new Kubota BV Plus-series models are distinguishable from previous BV models due to high-level LED road lights. Intake systems comprise the SuperFeed rotor or 14-knife SuperCut crop chopping system, and all models are equipped with Intelligent Density 3D, PowerBind net tying and a drop floor rotor unblocking system.

Maximum bale sizes are 1.65m and 2.0m depending on model, and prices start at £39,908 for the BV5160 SuperFeed model.



Kubota BV5200 Plus

DOMESTIC/COMMERCIAL

PRESSURE INCREASED BY STIHL

New premium model released

STIHL says it has enhanced its range of high-power pressure washers with the launch of the RE 150 Plus, a premium model suitable for extensive heavy-duty domestic and semi-commercial applications.

The new 13A RE 150 Plus offers benefits from 612 litres per hour maximum water throughput and 180 bar of pressure. The company says the new model also offers flexibility and control due to individual pressure, flow rate and detergent dosage controls.

Operators can make adjustments depending on what or where they are cleaning. An induction motor, brass pump head and stainless steel piston are used to provide durability for extended usage.

The new pressure washer features a soft grip and rotating spray lance.

In addition, the quick connection system allows users to get the machine up and running quickly.

Other features include 12m of steel-reinforced high-pressure hose with anti-twist, quick action couplings stored on an integrated hose reel, rotary and adjustable jet nozzles with an integrated storage compartment, and an integrated detergent tank.

The pressure washer also utilises an

aluminium telescopic handle for transportation and storage.

A range of accessories are compatible with the RE 150 Plus, including a snow foam nozzle designed specifically for this model.



STIHL RE 150 Plus

COMMERCIAL



NEW SIZES ARE A VERTI REALITY

Redexim launches new models

Redexim has launched two new additions to its scarification portfolio. Extending the Verti-Cut range, 2021 sees the introduction of two larger working widths with the launch of the Verti-Cut 1600 and Verti-Cut 2000. Both of the new models offer scarification to depths of up to 50mm.



The new Verti-Cut 1600 offers a 1.6m working width which makes it suitable for smaller, undulating surfaces such as golf greens, while at 2.0m the Verti-Cut 2000 lends itself to the scarification of larger spaces such as sports fields.

Both new models are tractor-mounted and PTO-driven, with the drive system utilising chains to ensure constant drive to the blades, even when working at depth. Adjustment of the working depth can be done through alterations to the front roller, which also helps to negate scalping when working on undulating ground.

As standard, the Verti-Cut comes with 2mm blades operating at a spacing of 30mm, though this can be increased to 58mm if required. 1mm and 3mm blades can also be specified as an optional extra.

The new models will be available this spring.

COMMERCIAL

NEW IKON OFFERS A COMFORTABLE RIDE

Latest zero-turn from Ariens

Ariens claims its latest IKON XD zero-turn mower offers a comfortable and easy ride with a newly designed seat and intuitive controls.

Sporting new decals and side panels for a sharper look, the new model comes with a wide range of commercial features. It is constructed with a fully fabricated, heavy-duty tubular-steel frame to provide enhanced strength and stability while travelling over different terrain.

The power comes from a Kawasaki 726cc engine driving a commercial quality cutter deck. The deck is fully fabricated from 10-gauge steel and there are 13 cutting



heights which can be adjusted by turning a dial on the control panel.

Described by the company as being built for comfort, with its new high-back seat, armrests and vibration-reducing floor mat, the IKON XD comes with a three-year or 300 hours warranty.

Models available: IKON XD 42 with a 107cm cutter deck or the IKON XD 52 with a 132cm deck.

FORESTRY

NEW ENGINES AND EVOS

Developments from GreenMech

With the full effects of the Stage V Emission Regulations coming into force in June, GreenMech says it will be introducing a range of new engine options across its Quad and Arborist collections, along with some more additions to the EVO series.

With June being the revised cut-off date for the manufacture and sale of pre-Stage V engine units, the company says it is ready to introduce new compliant diesel engine options along with extending its petrol offering across some of its more popular ranges. This year sees the introduction of a 25hp Kubota diesel engine in the QuadChip and QuadTrak 160D models (replacing the non-compliant 34hp engine), plus a 37hp petrol option for the QuadChip and QuadTrak 160P.

Further up the range is the introduction of the new Arborist 200P – powered by a 57hp Kubota petrol engine. The Arborist 200P will feature a 200mm x 280mm letterbox opening, making it suitable for handling large quantities of bulky material.



Kubota BV5200 Plus

Alongside engine upgrades, GreenMech will also be launching further expansions to the EVO 165 series. Joining the line-up will be the EVO 165PT – a fixed-track model with the 37hp petrol engine – and a SAFE-Trak variant of the original EVO diesel model that will become the EVO 165DST.

In addition to the new tracked models, the EVO range will be extended further with a new eight-inch product line. The EVO 205D will feature a Stage V compliant 50hp Kubota diesel engine and new GreenMech Smart Sense Controller – for intelligent feed speed and a Smart Economy option for optimising fuel economy.

Available at launch in road-tow format, SAFE-Trak and SURE-Trak versions of the EVO 205D are due to follow later in the year as replacements for the 19-28 models.

DOMESTIC/COMMERCIAL

AUTO CHOKE AND EASY START FROM ECHO

Two new rear-handle chainsaws



ECHO-CS-3510ES SAWS

ECHO has introduced two rear-handle chainsaws designed for easy starting.

The manufacturer says the CS-3510AC is built for casual users and farmers looking for a reliable all-round saw to get through the work quickly. Equally, it will suit the keen gardener who needs a chainsaw for infrequent tasks or is new to using one. The saw features an auto choke with a solenoid valve at the carburettor. This controls the amount of fuel needed, depending on the engine's temperature.

It boasts a 34.4cc engine and with a weight of 3.8kg and compact design it helps reduce operator fatigue, offers longer use and maximum power.

The CS-3510ES is equipped with ECHO's patented ES Start and benefits from a professional-grade 34.4cc engine and a dry weight of 3.7kg. A precisely designed anti-vibration system minimises vibration levels to give manoeuvrability, operator comfort and precision when cutting. There is a momentary switch for a quick and easy engine restart, side-access chain tensioner for quick chain adjustment and an automatic clutch-drive oiler to lubricate the chain. A transparent fuel tank provides easy level checks and there is G-Force Engine Air Pre-Cleaner, to reduce engine exposure to dirt and debris, for less maintenance and longer life.

Both chainsaws come with a two-year commercial or five-year domestic warranty.

COMMERCIAL



Husqvarna Automower 550 EPOS

VIRTUAL BOUNDARY TECHNOLOGY TO AID PROFESSIONALS

New Husqvarna Automower to launch in May

Husqvarna is soon to launch the high-capacity Automower 550 EPOS robotic mower. Its satellite-based virtual boundary solution offers solutions for areas up to 5,000 m².

The EPOS technology is a high-precision satellite navigation system that the manufacturer says delivers an accuracy of 2-3cm on areas with an open sky.

The virtual boundaries also enable aerating and scarifying without breaking physical wires and

the user can change boundaries and transport paths from their phone.

With the Precise Area Management feature, several work areas can be defined with different timers and settings, including cutting height. It also makes it possible to create temporary stay out zones.

Operating with low noise levels, it is suitable for environments that require some degree of noise control, for example at golf

courses, football stadiums or in urban areas such as city parks.

For convenient user interaction, as well as easy maintenance and handling, it is possible to monitor and control the mower through the Automower Connect and Husqvarna Fleet Services apps.

The 550 EPOS will be available from May and costs £5,199 inc VAT for the unit and £1,099 inc VAT for the reference station. The reference station can serve multiple machines.



Contact Chris York 07884 374445 or chris.york@hustlermowers.co.uk

CONSIDERING BECOMING A HUSTLER ZERO TURN LAWNMOWER DEALER?

Hustler Turf Equipment have launched brand new homeowner models for 2021, The Dash XD, Raptor X, XD and XDX. The Hustler Trimstar walk behind has a new and improved rear discharge deck. Hustler invented the world's first Zero Turn Lawnmower in 1964 and have been producing innovative and market leading lawnmowers ever since.



The product range caters for customers with small lawns right through to the most demanding commercial operator who wants tough, reliable lawnmowers which can deliver superior performance. We offer flexible terms to suit individual dealer requirements and provide comprehensive sales and spare parts support service.

Distributed by Southern Machinery UK Limited: www.hustlermowers.co.uk



uni-power

ENGINES • TRANSMISSIONS • PARTS





SELL THE SIZZLE, NOT THE SAUSAGE!

To promote our industry we need a plan and we need momentum, says Chris Biddle

I recently had the opportunity to chat to Richard Charles, Training Manager UK and Ireland for AGCO for an episode of my weekly Inside Agri-Turf podcast (I hope you've had chance to catch it).

The talk, inevitably, turned to the perennial problem of finding suitable staff to take us forward over the coming years. Technicians of course, but others to fill vital roles in the dealership. Richard, who was admirably open and frank for a senior member of a major manufacturer (not always the case) was in no doubt that as an industry we were regarded as a closed shop by outsiders.

Companies tended to rely on the 'same old, same old', looking to recruit in all the usual places with the result that there was often a revolving door of staff moving between dealerships.

We are niche industry. We cannot compete with the sheer scale of the automotive, aerospace, construction, rail or marine sectors for public awareness. But then we are not looking for hordes of new people, it's not a numbers game. We are looking for those who are willing learners, inquisitive, team players, resourceful and never duck a challenge.

All of which led me to a newly formed organisation, Forces Farming, set up by former John Deere employee Jeremy Gibbs. His aim is to connect ex service personnel, or those planning to leave the services, with jobs in agriculture, for they do embody

many of the qualities we seek.

One of his 'protégés' is Will Foster, who left the Army last year at the age of 39 after 23 years of service. In his final role, he was a technical trainer on tanks based at Bovington Camp teaching drivers, mechanics and commanders and had served several overseas tours including Afghanistan.

Will joined Jeremy and myself for a recent episode of the podcast to tell his story. He had originally decided to train for a technical role in the railway and rolling stock industry, but slowly turned his attention to agricultural engineering after some colleagues told him that it was 'cool'.

After gaining some voluntary work experience with Ben Burgess, he landed a job as a service technician with Chandlers Farm Equipment which he says is 'his dream job'. Although initial



Will Foster

technical training has been limited because of Covid restrictions, he obviously enjoys the banter with younger, but more product knowledgeable work mates and it is clear he is trusted by customers – because of his services experience.

In order to get into the industry, he had to do all the research himself, using mainly LinkedIn, building up a network of contacts with businesses and people.

Interestingly, although there is an industry careers website (www.landbasedengineering.com) supported by AEA, BAGMA and IAgRE through its training and education arm LE-TEC, neither Jeremy nor Will had come across it.

To my mind, it's not enough just having a website. It should be a buzzing, living, breathing, in-your-face communication, constantly updated with jobs, events and personal tales linked to a social media campaign. The problem is that three worthy industry organisations all want their say, and there is no one mouthpiece, figurehead or 'driver' for the campaign.

Even when doing his work experience, Will told the podcast, "I was bedazzled by the glamour and glitz of the industry!" Must say I've never heard it portrayed in those sizzling terms before!

Industry campaigns have come and gone. What we need is a plan and we need momentum.

We need to sell the sizzle, not the sausage!

www.forcesfarming.co.uk

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

MARCH 2021

26-11 /04 Ideal Home Show, Olympia, London
www.idealhomeshow.co.uk

APRIL 2021

22-25 Harrogate Spring Flower Show
www.flowershow.org.uk/spring-show-2021

24-25 West of England Game Fair, Royal Bath & West Showground
westofenglandgamefair.co.uk
CANCELLED

28-29 Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry
www.executivehireshow.co.uk

MAY 2021

3 North Somerset Show
www.nsas.org.uk
POSTPONED TO 2022

6 Grassland UK, Bath & West Showground
www.bathandwest.com/grassland-uk

18-23 Chelsea Flower Show
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/
POSTPONED TO 21-26 SEPTEMBER

25-26 LAMMA 2021, Birmingham NEC
www.lammashow.com
POSTPONED TO 2022

29-30 Herts County Show
www.hertsshow.com

30-1 /06 spoga gafa 2021, Cologne
www.spogagafa.com

JUNE 2021

2-3 Staffordshire County Show
www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show
POSTPONED TO 25-26 AUGUST

6 Rutland Show
www.rutlandcountyshow.com

8-9 BIGGA Festival Of Turf, Warwickshire Event Centre
www.bigga.org.uk/event/festival-of-turf.html

8-10 The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC
www.cvshow.com

9-10 Cereals 2021, Boothby Graffoe
www.cerealsevent.co.uk

10-12 Royal Cornwall Show
www.royalcornwallshow.org
POSTPONED TO 9-11 SEPTEMBER

17-20 BBC Gardeners' World Live – Birmingham NEC
www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com

17-20 Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh
www.royalhighlandshow.org

18-20 Royal Three Counties Show, Malvern
www.royalthreecounties.co.uk

21-23 Royal Cheshire County Show
www.royalcheshireshow.org

23-24 Lincolnshire Show
lincolnshireshow.co.uk

26 Derbyshire County Show
www.derbyshirecountysshow.org.uk

30-1 /07 Royal Norfolk Show
royalnorfolkshow.rnaa.org.uk/
POSTPONED TO 2022

JULY 2021

2-4 Devon County Show
www.devoncountysshow.co.uk

3-4 Royal Isle of Wight County Show
https://iwcshow.co.uk/

4 Cranleigh Show
www.cranleighshow.co.uk

6-11 Hampton Court Garden Festival
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-hampton-court-palace-garden-festival

9-11 Kent County Show
https://kentshowground.co.uk

10 Newport Show
www.newportshow.co.uk/

13-15 Great Yorkshire Show
www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk

19-22 Royal Welsh Show
www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh/
POSTPONED TO 2022

21-25 RHS Flower Show – Tatton Park
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-flower-show-tatton-park

23-25 The Game Fair, Ragley Hall
www.thegamefair.org

24 Mid Devon Show
www.middevonshow.co.uk

27-29 New Forest & Hampshire County Show
www.newforestshow.co.uk

30-31 Border Union Show
https://borderunion.co.uk/

AUGUST 2021

4 North Devon Show
https://northdevonshow.com/

6-7 Dumfries Agricultural Show
www.dumfriesshow.co.uk

8 Ripley Show
www.ripleyshow.co.uk

13-14 Shrewsbury Flower Show
www.shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk

17-19 Pembrokeshire County Show
www.pembsshow.org

27-29 Bath & West Country Festival
https://www.bathandwest.com/bath-and-west-country-festival

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JIM GREEN

BELOW-THE-LINE COMMENTS

MANUFACTURER'S ACTION BRINGS IRE HONDA-SELVES

Dealers come together online to express anger



Back when I first started writing my column for this journal, in the days when it was put together by Letraset and delivered by carrier pigeon, my role was almost that of Chief Gossipmonger.

In those days I'd report on what was being said after hours in the bar (*remember those?!),* what the scuttlebutt was at the show (*again, remember those!)*, or what the dealers were talking about on the factory visit (*you get the picture!)*.

Well, those days of passing on whispers and idle chatter have pretty much disappeared thanks to a modern invention you may have heard of called the internet. Now everything is out in the open. Everyone and their brother has a mouthpiece and a forum on which they can pretty much freely express any opinion and share their views.

We can get into a big moral debate about how helpful this is in the wider world, however I do think that within targeted platforms, facilitating specific groups to speak among themselves on issues which directly affect them and about which they have first-hand knowledge, is a

fine development. It also takes the target off my back for passing on any salacious rumours!

I believe the value of dealers in our sector being able to directly express their views with each other was clearly illustrated recently by the Honda situation. In the olden days there might have been a flurry of calls between dealers who knew each other, or thoughts saved up ready to be shared at the next mass get-together, but when something kicks off in today's world that riles a community, both barrels can be fired off immediately. Honda would've been pretty naïve not to expect just that.

Looking back on the comments posted on the *Service Dealer Weekly Update* (not even considering all the many others on various online forums), dealers can't be accused of holding back in their ire. Some of the less swears posts which stood out for me included: *"This is going to leave a bad taste in everyone's mouth for a long time to come."* *"We need to know are any of us safe?"* *"It seems to me that Honda's current conduct is intentional and calculated to sabotage both the past and current dealer network."* *"The company is very arrogant."* *"Trust and loyalty are a thing of the past and consigned to history."* *"There should be a law to protect small family businesses against this."* *"I sincerely hope that in the long term this hurts Honda more than it does the specialist dealer."* And quite simply, *"SHAME ON YOU."*

These comments are indicative and frankly, the tip of the iceberg. Also, entirely avoidable if the process had been approached in a more professional and thoughtful manner.

Hopefully there have been lessons learnt from this incident. Lessons about treating dealers with respect and lessons about the very public reputational consequences for those who choose not to.

STIGA



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1 SATISFIED DEALER.
STIHL LIFE.

Emily Waterman, Garden Tools & Engineering.
STIHL Dealer since 2008

Retailers like Emily at Garden Tools & Engineering love being a STIHL Approved Dealer. And it's not hard to see why.

At STIHL, our goal is simple. To make sure our dealers' customers benefit from the ultimate sales and service experience. So, we support you with an industry leading delivery and logistics network. We keep you up to date with all the latest service related developments. And we have a customer service team always on hand to deal with any enquiries.

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