

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

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

May/June 2022

OPEN DAYS RETURN

Olivers holds its first such event since 2019, celebrating its 75th year with Claas

AN ELEPHANT IN THE NETWORK?

Discussion surrounding succession plans

LITHIUM-ION BATTERY DISPOSAL

The challenges that dealers are facing

BACK IN (NOT QUITE) FULL EFFECT

Report from BTME '22

TALKIN' BOUT A REVOLUTION

A plethora of machinery options are available for today's commercial customers – with dealers playing a key role





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Letter from the editor **Steve Gibbs**

steve@servicedealer.co.uk



Welcome to the May/June 2022 edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

Spring saw the return of a couple of in-person trade shows for our sector – and by the time this magazine has landed on your desks, LAMMA will be imminent.

From the point of view of a trade magazine, whose currency is talking to people, it's undeniably great to be getting back together in real life after two years of absence – although all the industry members who picked up a dose of Covid in Harrogate might disagree!

However, there's still a big problem hanging over the network – and that's supply of stock.

During almost every conversation I had with a stand-holder at both the Garden Press Event and BTME (reports from both can be found in this issue) I asked "... and how are you finding issues surrounding supply now?"

Many of the answers I received implied that the situation is at least improving, at best quite good. I heard

replies from suppliers along the lines of "we're actually seeing stock come through", "we placed large forward orders so we're doing OK", or "our suppliers are managing to fill containers for us".

When I mentioned this in our Weekly Update and in our most recent dealer survey, it understandably didn't ring true for many of our readers. You can read the results and a selection of dealer comments starting on page 42 in this issue, but suffice to say, a lot of you are still incredibly concerned by the situation.

What's particularly worrying to read, is the number of dealers who say they are losing sales due to supply problems – and the dissatisfaction they have with the communications received from their suppliers.

As there doesn't appear to be a magic wand to improve the reality, manufacturers are going to need to up their game in order to keep their dealers in the loop and offer them support through tricky times ahead. After all, both sides greatly rely on each other.

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DEALERS



Yamaha ATV part with dealers

Contracts terminated

Service Dealer has been told that Yamaha is parting company with some long-established ATV dealers.

Anthony Deacon, managing director of MKM Agri, which has branches in Bedford and Suffolk, told us that they and Yamaha Motor Europe will end their working relationship on 14th August 2022. Anthony said this comes after nearly 10 years of success, and, as he put it, “meeting and exceeding targets every year.”

Yamaha confirmed to Service Dealer that through their implementation of what they describe as their ‘Customer Journey’ approach, they would be losing certain dealerships. Adam Kelley, Yamaha’s general manager of land sales, said “the enhancement of our brand and dealer network will not be aligned to every dealer and we accept in some cases we may part company with some established dealers during this journey.”

You can read Adam’s statement in full on Service Dealer’s website at tinyurl.com/4ypsk97k

Mono dealerships

Anthony Deacon informed us that over the last few months Yamaha Motor Europe has been encouraging the UK dealer network to purchase a large value of showroom display materials. He says this is designed to create an image the manufacturer wishes to see across their commercial ATV dealerships throughout the United Kingdom.

Anthony told us he is aware of some dealerships that have been reluctant to do this, with some refusing, which has led to the termination of long-serving, successful, commercial dealerships across the UK.

He also believed that Yamaha’s intention for dealers was to be ‘mono’ dealers, i.e not wanting their products

to be displayed alongside competitor machines.

Anthony explained, “I had an unplanned, last-minute visit from my Yamaha ASM recently. The news he delivered was no real surprise, to be honest, as I’ve been hearing that quality Yamaha dealerships from all over the UK were having their accounts terminated.

“I engaged in conversations with Yamaha regarding the visual identity for our new showroom that we plan to build later this year. They asked, if I wasn’t prepared to terminate agreements with competitor brands, that we build a separate showroom for the Yamaha products. However, there is just no way this can be justified financially. It is a shame because we have been very successful with Yamaha.”

MKM says they will continue to carry out warranty work with Yamaha until 14th August 2024 and offer full after-sales support to all Yamaha ATVs and UTVs for many years to come.

Yamaha’s Adam Kelley told Service Dealer, “We must have a consistent approach across the UK to support our objective of a premium brand experience. Where possible we do indeed encourage a mono dealer approach as we feel this can maximise the best Yamaha experience, however we do realise that we have some excellent multi-franchise dealers in the Yamaha Network. Our multi-franchise dealers will know this is our preferred route to the customer and it is down to us to ensure we can offer a realistic and sustainable business proposal for a dealer to commit to Yamaha on a Mono basis. We feel that our direction of improving every customer touchpoint in conjunction with our dealers will help us to achieve this objective.”

INDUSTRY

New home for Service Dealer

After two years remote working

TAP, the publishers of Service Dealer, has relocated to a new office space that boasts superb green credentials.

Owner of the title, Duncan Murray-Clarke, said, “In March 2020 we made the decision to close our UK office as the pandemic started. We’ve waited two long years but we’re so pleased to finally have a new home in Howbery Park, Wallingford. Like many businesses we are introducing the home/office hybrid model and hot-desking.”

The new office space is located in beautiful grounds that enjoy Thames river frontage, its own solar farm, a park biodiversity scheme, beehives on site, and even a TAP allotment. You can find out more about the mature parkland and unique trees that it is home to, here at www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-FDaYnDr-s

“We’re looking forward to inviting our friends, colleagues and clients here very soon,” added Duncan. “All are welcome to come and try our home-grown veg!”

The new trading address is: Howbery Business Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, Oxon. OX10 8BA.

All other details remain unchanged.



PEOPLE

Jim McGlinchey retires after almost 50 years

With Henton & Chattell

Jim McGlinchey, Henton and Chattell’s sales director, has retired, following nearly half a century with the company. Jim started his long and successful career with H&C back in the summer of 1973. He had played professionally for Notts County football club, a stone’s throw away from the company’s showroom and offices.

In the 1970s, Jim drove forward sales of Ransomes of Ipswich turf machinery to local authorities, golf courses and contractors in the East Midlands. Always looking for new opportunities, the then managing director John Chaloner saw there was a gap in the market. Pioneering parts distribution to garden machinery dealers initially on a regional basis, but progressively

expanding the area. Jim was instrumental in developing the customer base for parts and later the machinery distribution.

It wasn’t long before Jim was soon promoted to sales manager, then a little time later, sales director.

At the start of this century the business took the strategic decision to dramatically expand the business. Along with Peter Chaloner, the current managing director, and Andy Marvin, the sales manager, Jim grew the business from a regional distributor to a national distributor. In the latter years, the company developed its distribution range, many with exclusive agreements across the UK and Ireland.

“Jim has been fundamental to the success of our company. We are very



grateful for his considerable dedication and contribution over nearly 50 years. Whatever the challenge, Jim has always had a positive ‘can do’ attitude and mucked-in wherever needed. We will certainly miss working with Jim, and we wish him a very long and enjoyable retirement, he’s earned it!” stated Peter Chaloner.

Jim has always enjoyed walking, gardening and the great outdoors, as well as holidays in warmer climates with his wife Amanda, and their family.

DEALERS



Grinder installation at the Haydock branch

GGM Groundscare invest in business

£60k worth of grinders

Dealers GGM Groundscare, have made a £60k investment in two new professional blade-grinding machines for their Haydock depot from Foley.

The investment comes as GGM reports seeing significant growth in the golf and fine turf areas of the business with both Baroness and Dennis machinery. This has led to a requirement for the organisation to double their grinding capacity, and it is now able to offer grinding at both its Colne and Haydock depots.

GGM says, with the new investment, they believe customers will benefit even more, with improved response times, back-up support and a high quality of grinding, resulting in blades that are returned to good-as-new condition.

Managing director, Chris Gibson, said, "As a company, we are committed to offering an excellent after-sales offering, and this investment means customers can reap the benefits of premium grinding and get a first-class level of cut.

"We recognise that an important factor in achieving this is

to ensure blades are kept in optimum condition with precision relief grinding, something that is essential to golf clubs. This investment will allow us to offer this service to even more golf clubs."

GGM Groundscare has installed the two new grinders at its Haydock branch. One is the Foley 633 Accu-Pro, the other is Foley's 673 Automatic Bedknife Grinder.

Chris Gibson continued. "Following our previous investment in our two Foley Grinders at our Colne depot in 2018, we quickly saw an upturn in the efficiency and demand of our blade-grinding offering.

"This investment is on the back of our commitment to growing and developing our Haydock depot offering, and the two new Foley grinders enable us to offer our Merseyside and Cheshire-based customers a local first-class service with a quicker turnaround. Foley grinders return blades to manufacturer standard and provide customers with unmatched results."

EVENTS



SAGE entrance 2021

Visitor registration open for SAGE show

Taking place on 6th & 7th July

The sports and grounds maintenance trade show, SAGE, is taking place on 6th & 7th July at The Three Counties Showground in Malvern. Free registration is now open for visitors via the event's website, www.sportsandgrounds.events.

Organisers say there will be people from a wide range of industries exhibiting products, and providing live demonstrations and the opportunity to take a free training course.

In an official statement, the show

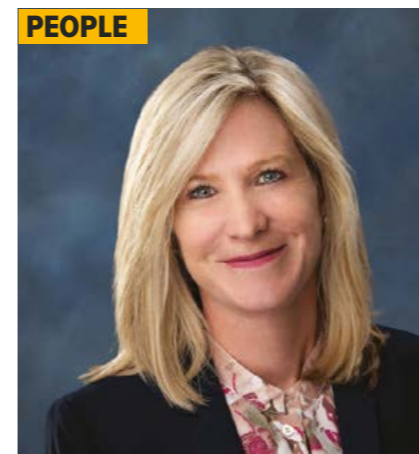
said, "The main priority of SAGE is that visitors get to see the industry products in action, in an environment that has ample space to accommodate the largest kit on sale. Among our exhibitors there are businesses that supply turfcare products and equipment, playground equipment and landscaping equipment."

SAGE this year will also be hosting the first sustainability summit, which will take place on Wednesday 6th July, in partnership with Bio-Circle. Organisers

say the summit will be led by experts across the industry and will provide guidance and support on how sustainable solutions can be achieved by businesses across the sports and grounds maintenance industry. The panel along with their colleagues will be on hand to deliver tailored options for those looking to adopt processes that are more environmentally friendly.

There will also be taster courses on offer, as well as talks from leading experts across the industry.

PEOPLE



Briggs & Stratton has announced that Michelle Kumbier has joined the company as senior vice president and president of its Turf & Consumer Products business, which consists of the company's Ferris, Snapper, Simplicity, Billy Goat, Victa and Branco brands of commercial and residential outdoor power equipment.

Senior leadership appointment at B&S

Michelle Kumbier joins the company

Michelle joins Briggs & Stratton after more than 22 years at Harley-Davidson Motor Company, where she most recently served as chief operating officer. Briggs says she has substantial experience leading transformations across multiple disciplines, and driving improvements in results and customer satisfaction. Prior to Harley-Davidson, she spent 11 years at Kohler Company.

"Briggs & Stratton is quickly transforming its business, and requires fresh perspectives and different experiences to drive change and success," says Steve Andrews,

president & CEO at Briggs & Stratton. "Michelle's leadership and expertise in operations, supply chain and product development will be integral in continuous improvement efforts and positioning Briggs & Stratton as a best-in-class provider of innovative power products and solutions."

In addition to Michelle Kumbier, Briggs & Stratton has named Chuck Marckwardt, previously the vice president of operations and supply chain with Brasscraft Manufacturing Co, as its new vice president operations for its Turf & Consumer Products business.



Mike Garwood, dealer principal and Richard Amphlet, territory manager for Opico Ltd

HE-VA network expands

Opico appoints Mike Garwood

Opico Ltd has announced the appointment of Mike Garwood Agricultural Engineers Ltd to their HE-VA dealer network.

With depots in Alton, Hampshire, and on the Isle of Wight, Mike Garwood's business has been established for over 30 years, and the relationship with Opico goes back almost as far, selling their machines since the early noughties.

Charles Bedforth, sales director for Opico, says, "We go back a long way together and we're really pleased that Mike Garwood has chosen to

sell and support our HE-VA brand, in addition to the range of Opico machines."

Mike Garwood, dealer principal, added, "I've worked with the team at Opico for many years. I've always been impressed with their support and I can't think of a better cultivation brand to add to our machinery portfolio than HE-VA. We have new stock available in both our depots and we are looking forward to getting out in the field and demonstrating to our existing and new customers this season."



Toro UK expand team

Customer care role for Lee Pace

Toro U.K. Limited has expanded its customer care team with the appointment of Lee Pace to technical service representative. Lee is based at their Spellbrook manufacturing facility, reporting to Martin Holden, UK service manager.

Lee takes on the role of technical support representative for Hayter and Toro Consumer, Landscape Contractor and Siteworks System products in the U.K.

Toro says Lee joins with over 20 years' experience within the automotive industry, working as both technician and trainer.

"With the growing UK market, ever increasing product complexity, diagnostic challenges, and advancing technology, Lee's technical/customer experience and diagnostic skills are a great addition to the customer care team," said Martin Holden. "Toro is dedicated to its UK dealer network, and ensures our dealers have all of the resources needed to sell and support the Hayter and Toro brands."



COBRA

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

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DEALERS

TH White purchase site

Investing in business



TH White has announced they have completed the purchase of the former J G Plant site in Tillington Road, north-west Hereford.

The dealership says when the Hereford agricultural business J G Plant became part of the TH White Group in late 2018, a pledge was made to invest in the business and to develop it, to build greater support for farmers in Herefordshire.

In an official statement, TH White said, "The people who joined TH White from J G Plant have shown real commitment, helping to deliver service, growth and revenue."

"Over the last three years, the business has integrated well into the TH White operation, and improvements have been made to the dealership buildings, including upgrades to lighting, fire alarm and CCTV systems, as well as redecorations."

"Purchase of the site from the former landlord represents the next stage in fulfilling our pledge, and will enable the site to be further developed and enhanced, to serve the evolving needs of our customers, suppliers and the agricultural community in Hereford and surrounding counties."

PEOPLE

Promotion for Matt Wilson

Moves to EMEAA role for AriensCo

AriensCo has announced the promotion of Matt Wilson to product manager for EMEAA.

The company says Matt, who is stepping away from his previous role of UK sales manager, will be bringing his lawn and garden industry knowledge to their customers and dealers throughout Europe, Middle East, Asia and Africa, an area they describe as a "crucial expansion territory" for themselves.

AriensCo says the new appointment comes because of their investment in new product development, engineering and manufacturing for the EMEAA region. Since 2019 they have invested heavily in EMEAA, including establishing a UK factory in Oxfordshire, where it designs and manufactures zero-turn mowers and garden tractors for the market.

Matt's core responsibilities will include overseeing new product development strategies and engaging with customers and dealers across EMEAA to ensure all products continue to meet their standards.

Jef O'Riley, director of marketing and product management said, "AriensCo has seen unprecedented growth throughout Europe, in part due to our strategy of developing tractors and zero-turns specific for the needs



of European customers. Matt's vast industry experience and technical knowledge means he is best placed to guide us to a very exciting product line up."

Matt will be part of a team of European product managers led by the newly promoted Jef.

INDUSTRY



Henton & Chattell distributing new range

Developing a UK dealer network for GreensIRON products

Wood Bay Turf Technologies, based in Edmonton, Canada, has appointed Henton and Chattell as its UK distributor.

The company is a manufacturer of golf, lawn bowling greens and other sports turf maintenance equipment. The company has been creating turf maintenance equipment since 1987, with products in the range being the GreensIRON 3900 and GreensIRON 6200 turf rollers; the FDS9200 multipurpose turf dethatcher and the tungsten carbide tipped vertical

cutting blade, dynaBLADE.

"We are delighted to be working with the team at Henton and Chattell to further support and develop our turf specialist dealer network in the UK," said Lyall Adams, president and CEO of Wood Bay Turf Technologies. "The company will work closely with dealers, build on the existing network and support with pre-sale enquiries, training and on-going aftersales assistance."

Henton and Chattell is a family-owned business based in Nottingham,

working with one of the largest dealer networks in the market, supplying leading brands of turf and garden machinery.

Peter Chaloner, managing director of Henton and Chattell, said, "Over the last 32 years, Wood Bay Turf Technologies has developed the highest quality products for turf care applications, spanning golf course management, lawn bowling greens and field sports."



PEOPLE

Senior appointment made by Case IH

Marco Lombardi becomes head of commercial marketing

Case IH and Steyr have announced the appointment of Marco Lombardi as head of commercial marketing for Case IH and Steyr Europe.

Marco joined CNH Industrial in 2007, taking up his first position in the UK. Since then he has gained considerable experience within the business. During the past 14 years

he has held positions in various marketing and sales departments in the UK and Italy, before being appointed to his new role earlier this month.

“This new position gives me the opportunity to strengthen the existing partnership between the Case IH and Steyr brands and our dealers,” he says. “At the same time, I’m keen to intensify cooperation with new business partners and ensure we continue to build on the first-class

service and support that customers expect from Case IH and Steyr.”

Marco added that the company’s marketing will also continue to grow its focus on digitalisation. “The Case IH and Steyr marketing teams have done a lot of good work in recent years to position our brands firmly at the forefront of such solutions, and together with them I plan to help continue to build on this excellent foundation,” he said.

DEALERS

Further additions to Corvus network

Seven new appointments in Q1

Corvus made seven new dealership additions to their UK network in the first quarter of the year.

The most recent partners in selling and supporting the range of 4x4 utility vehicles are Scotland’s W.M. Rose & Sons and JG Paxton & Sons in Lancashire.

W.M. Rose, with roots dating back to 1923, is an established family-run business directed by brothers William and Ian Rose. The company has two depots in Peebleshire and East Lothian, supplying a wide range of agricultural, construction and industrial machinery.

Phil Everett, MD of Boss Off-Road Vehicles, the sole UK Corvus distributor, said, “We’re delighted W.M. Rose can give the Corvus range such a presence in Scotland, selling to customers the Terrain UTVs are very

much built for. It is great to partner with a company that invests so heavily in product training and support.”

Moving south of the border finds another family-owned agricultural machinery dealership, Paxtons, with its head office in the Durham village of Pity Me. Dating back to 1853, today it’s the main dealer for a wide range of brands. With depots in Northallerton, Alnwick, Bentham and Lancaster, it serves farmers, contractors, local authorities and equestrian customers across Northumberland, Durham, North Yorkshire and Lancashire.

“Paxtons has everything we’re looking for in a Corvus dealer,” says Phil Everett. “It’s all you would expect from such a progressive business providing high-quality service backed by highly skilled technicians.”



Phil Everett with Ian Rose of W.M. Rose



Phil with Gary Robinson, branch manager at Paxton's Bentham branch

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Plugging into the press

At a recent exhibition for gardening journalists, battery-powered domestic machinery was receiving the biggest push, reports editor STEVE GIBBS

At the start of March, I travelled to London to attend a great little show, aimed specifically at journalists working in the horticultural sector. Called the Garden Press Event, and held at the Business Design Centre in Islington, it's open only to writers who represent newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs and the like, that are serving gardeners.

Unlike myself, most other attendees won't be working for a trade-only title. They will be sourcing information to pass on to their readers and members of the gardening public – or to put it another way, customers.



Toro UK's Craig Hoare talks Service Dealer editor, Steve Gibbs through the new models, including the new Harrier

Pre-pandemic, I'd been attending the show every year, and it had been encouraging to see more and more domestic machinery manufacturers exhibiting each time. Seeing them alongside the more garden-centre-centric companies hawking their gloves and trowels and the like, I've always thought it a good sign that the companies our readers represent see value in attending this show. Promoting themselves to mainstream outlets that buying customers will read and pay attention to, can only be a positive, pro-active move.

However, whether it was because March's edition was the first one back following the enforced break or for some other reason, it was slightly disappointing to discover fewer companies who represent the machinery side of the domestic sector were there this time around. But those that were, all had a positive message to get across to the journos in attendance.

Battery to the fore

A couple of editions back, this message was very much about robotic mowers, with most machinery companies selling the benefits of their version of the technology. Whilst those machines were still in evidence this year, it was battery-powered tools that were very much to the fore. It felt that manufacturers knew if lawnmowers were to gain any column inches in a mainstream publication, pushing their environmental credentials would be their way in.

Of course, we know just how hard it's been lately for dealers to get hold of any stock to meet the demand from customers – especially of the cordless variety. I must say though, and maybe it was simply a case of bravado when talking to the press, but the message we heard from several suppliers was that things were getting better and



Stiga's Gary Philpott shows Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke, around the new Gyro

supply was coming back on stream.

It was good to see Cobra, Husqvarna, STIHL, Stiga, Toro UK, Barrus, Makita, Ambrogio all telling their stories to the writers in attendance.

TORO UK promoted the launch of the new Harrier 41 60V Push model, a variant of the Harrier 60V range. Craig Hoare, sales and marketing manager, said, "After the successful launch of our Harrier 41 & 48 60V Autodrive models, we wanted to continue to expand our range of cordless Hayter mowers, offering customers even more choice."

STIGA presented the Gyro, which they described as a world first in the domestic garden industry. Powered by the company's eMotion Technology – a unique electronic system developed to govern direction, steering and speed – Stiga said the mower benefits from a precise joystick, mounted on the armrest, which controls the vehicle and guarantees an enjoyable ride.

HUSQVARNA featured a spread of battery tools including the new LC 247i walk-behind mower, designed for mid to large-sized gardens. The company said the unit uses their new saveE™ feature, which lowers the RPM of the cutting blade at the push of a button, offering a longer runtime and lower noise emission. It also includes a PowerBoost feature for extra power when needed.

AMBROGIO displayed an interesting addition to their flagship 4.0 Elite robot – a sprayer attachment. Paul Chandler said the ZDefence uses a 100% natural bio repellent, which creates a barrier against crane fly. The sprayer emits a fine, atomised mist as it goes about its business of mowing the lawn. Of modular design, it can be



Ken Brewster, ex of Husqvarna, now at BioScapes, with editor Steve

retro-fitted to existing compatible models.

BIOSCAPES It was also interesting to catch up with Ken Brewster, ex of Husqvarna, in his new role working for BioScapes, the self-contained eco-systems designed to encourage biodiversity in residential settings. This endeavour was very much on trend with the environmentally conscious message being spread around the stands.

Hopefully next year a few more machinery companies will choose to re-attend the show. I do think it's a good opportunity for your suppliers to place their goods in front of the people who write about gardening in places that the buying public will actually pay attention to. Machinery used to tend the garden often appears to be overlooked in popular coverage of what is an incredibly well-liked pastime.

Any chance to publicise the specialist machinery sold by expert dealers should be embraced with gusto.



The Ambrogio robot, featuring the ZDefence sprayer attachment

The challenges of recycling lithium batteries



With the increase in use of lithium-ion batteries in the outdoor power industry, there comes the inevitable problem of what to do with them at the end of their life. BAGMA director Keith Christian looks at the issue

We are all used to batteries of various types, from 'torch batteries' to lead acid car batteries, to the wonders of tiny-but-powerful mobile phone batteries and the amazing world of lithium-ion or li-ion batteries. Indeed, the outdoor power industry has been using the li-ion batteries for many years. More recently there's been a huge increase in the application of li-ion batteries in OPE and in commercial equipment.



This all leads to an inevitable problem of what to do with li-ion batteries at the end of their life. They're different to lead acid and gel batteries, and their eventual disposal presents problems to the environment, as well as safety issues when being stored, transported and stockpiled. These issues seem to be

causing some concern within the OPE industry amidst a lack of understanding of what the 'rules' are, such as who's responsible for the eventual safe disposal or recycling of the batteries, whatever the size.

Generally, batteries of all types are covered by the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations, or WEEE. Details can be found on the government websites.

The rules and regulations about who is responsible for the disposal of batteries are many and varied, and again referring to government websites will help clarify some of the issues. According to www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-batteries-producer-responsibility: "You're a battery producer if you have a UK business presence and you're the first person in your selling chain (including importers) to make batteries available for supply or sale on the UK market."

That is only the beginning of the story in very simple terms. If you sell it, you are responsible for it if it's returned to you. If you are a dealer, you should be able to return it to your supplier, and they in turn to their supplier. The problems that arise from this are the logistics involved in the storage and shipping as there are many restrictions on how these can be done.

Issues involved:

The internet is a wonderful tool for research, but it leads you down all sorts of alleyways. Below are a few extracts to help with a better awareness of what may be the more obvious issues in dealing with li-ion batteries. Not in any particular order:



Li-ion batteries or those contained in electronic devices, should therefore be recycled at certified battery electronics recyclers that accept batteries, rather than being discarded in the trash or put in municipal recycling bins.



Lithium-ion batteries can be recycled, but only at permitted treatment facilities. When discarded, they must be disposed of at a household e-waste collection point or battery-recycling drop-off location.



Recycling processes today recover approximately 25% to 96% of the materials of a lithium-ion battery cell.



The approximate amount of lithium on earth is between 30-90 million tons. That means we will run out eventually, possibly by 2040, depending on demand.



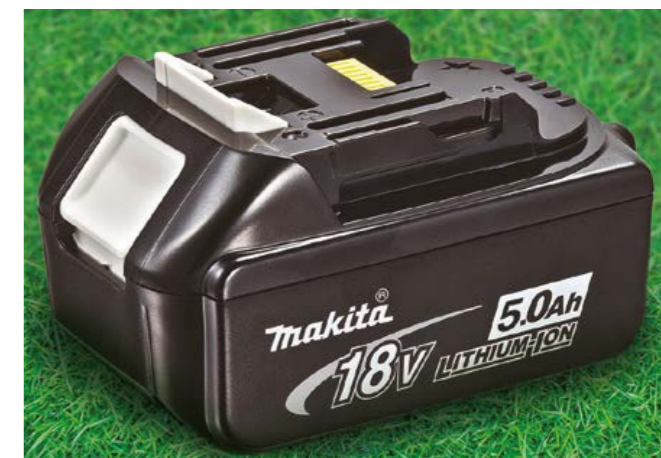
Traditional fire extinguishers, such as foam and water, don't work on lithium battery fires. The only way to extinguish a lithium battery fire is to flood the battery with water. A Lithium Fire Blanket will safely isolate a lithium fire battery for hours, until it can be flooded and extinguished.

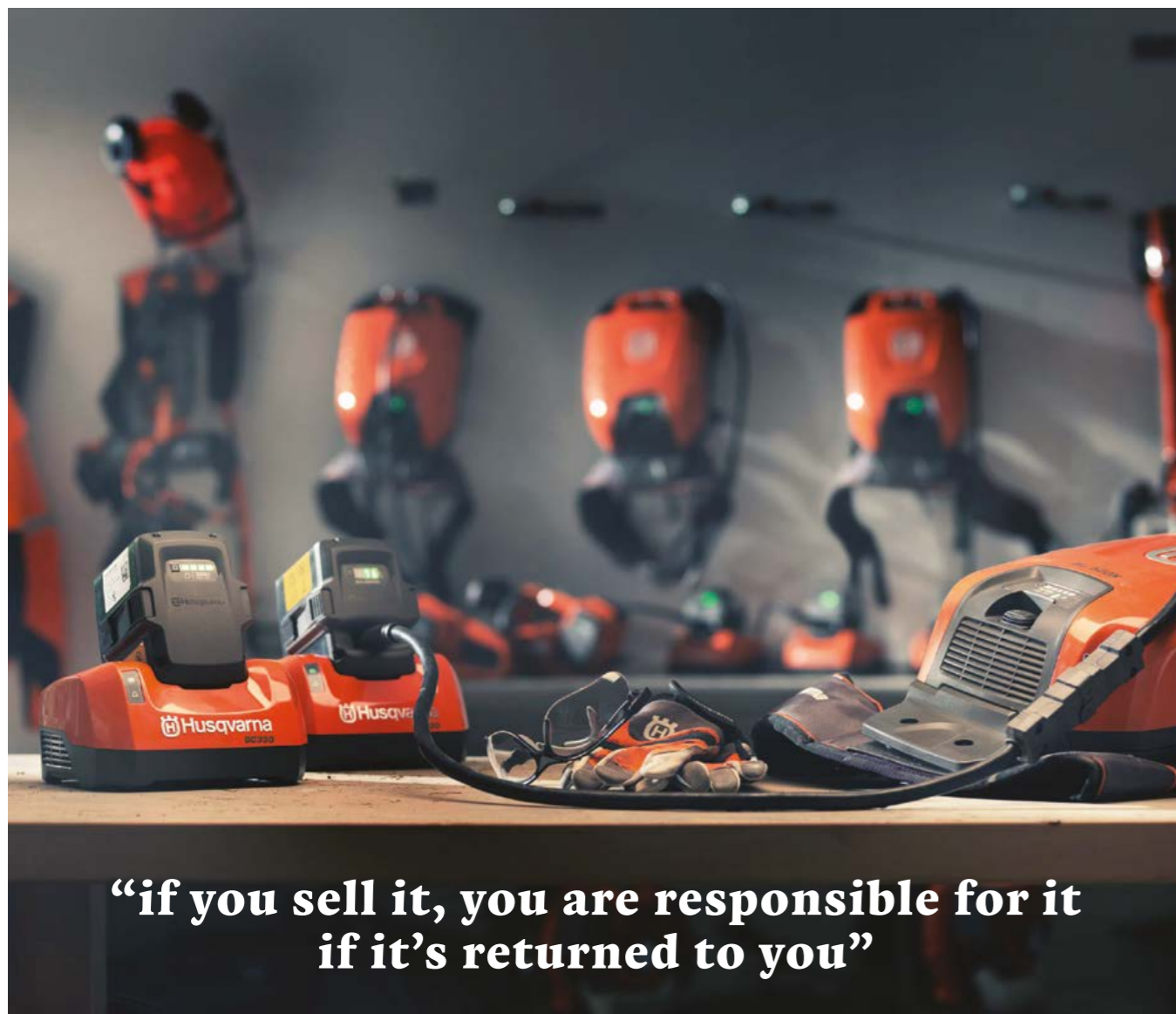


Li-ion batteries are generally safe, but if they are mistreated or used incorrectly, they can catch fire or explode. Luckily, it's easy to reduce the risk that these batteries pose to you and your property by taking a few simple steps.



Scientists in Japan are working on new types of batteries that don't need lithium, like your smartphone battery. These new batteries will use sodium, one of the most common materials on the planet rather than rare lithium – and they'll be up to seven times more efficient than conventional batteries.





“if you sell it, you are responsible for it if it’s returned to you”

Suppliers’ views

BAGMA have talked to some UK suppliers of outdoor power equipment to ask about their views on li-ion batteries. Those spoken to were very aware of their responsibilities and the issues that may be faced by dealers in terms of battery disposal. They had arrangements in place to return batteries, but were clear that transportation of both new and used batteries was an issue.

The recycling or repurposing of li-ion batteries is being looked into by at least one supplier. One interesting point that came up was the repurposing of batteries that may only have a minor fault and can be easily corrected and reused rather than recycled. Rather than simply replace a product or a battery, troubleshooting and doing diagnostic checks may identify a problem that can be easily rectified, and avoid the need to deal with the recycling problem. This may require dealer staff to be trained, but time could be saved by rectifying rather than taking the time and cost to dispose of the ‘faulty’ product or battery.

BAGMA will be looking into the issues of li-ion batteries, and following discussions that are taking place with various organisations regarding all the issues surrounding the use and disposal of li-ion batteries.

In all of our discussions to date our advice to dealers is to ensure batteries are stored safely, well away from other products and in proper containers. To make sure that you are aware of how to deal with a potential fire hazard from Li-ion batteries with the correct fire prevention equipment to hand. We would also strongly advise that dealers check their insurance cover or talk to their insurance provider to make sure that they are properly covered in the event of a fire caused by a faulty battery or incorrect storage. Dealers or suppliers may not be covered for storage of large quantities of used batteries.

This article first appeared in the Jan-Feb '22 edition of the BAGMA Bulletin

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Open day returns for Olivers' 75th year with Claas



One of the oldest farm machinery dealerships in the country, Olivers will celebrate its 200th birthday next year

With the lifting of Covid restrictions, dealer open days are returning to the calendar. Luton-based Oliver Agriculture – more commonly known as Olivers – held its first such event since 2019 in late March. Having reported on the last event, MARTIN RICKATSON attended to find out what's been happening in the interim

Given that Home Counties dealership AT Oliver and Sons has been serving agriculture for almost 200 years, and working with its major partner for three-quarters of a century, the business difficulties caused over the past two years by the coronavirus pandemic are put somewhat into context. Yet for its current management and staff, life since March 2020 has raised company

challenges not seen in their own lifetimes. Responses including adaptation and investment, though, have helped see the business through into its 199th year.

This was clear at the company's Wandon End HQ on the Beds/Herts border near Luton in late March, when Oliver Agriculture, the division of the business that has Claas as its major franchise, held its first open day since 2019. To respond to the continuing challenges to agriculture that

have been exacerbated by the virus, Olivers is continuing to invest, particularly in the service engineer and showroom areas of its business.

Writing in the spring edition of the dealership's own magazine, issued at the event, David Jarman, managing director of Olivers, noted that there was "light at the end of the COVID tunnel", after a period of two years in which the firm has been unable to deliver events to customers.

"Being in a predominantly arable area, we traditionally hold an early spring open day, in combination with the chance for arable customers to bring in their grain moisture meters for checking and calibration," explained David.

"It was disappointing to be unable to host our open days and grain clinics during 2020 and 2021, but we adapted to the need that remained for customers to have their moisture meters serviced by arranging 'drop and run' grain clinic facilities for owners of Martin Lishman meters, and we were really pleased with customers' show of loyalty in bringing in their units during the past two springs.

"We were delighted to be able to organise an in-person event again this year, giving us the opportunity to catch up with our customers and support the local agricultural community. Our grain clinic and open day is one of the first events in a busy events diary we have planned for 2022 as things slowly get back to normal, and we are looking forward to seeing our customers."

With the global pandemic having disrupted all manufacturing sectors, Olivers has tried to tackle supply shortages and delays by forward planning and placing an unprecedented number of orders.

"We've tried to mitigate supply issues by planning ahead," explains David, "and have placed an unprecedented number of advanced orders in order to maintain a pipeline of supply. Thankfully this situation has been acknowledged by many of our customers, who have prudently placed orders early to satisfy their seasonal

needs. We are still in the post-Brexit trade period, which continues with its challenges, and whilst we have got to grips with new import and export regulations, customs delays can still occur, and we appreciate our customers' patience with any delays in parts supply.

"As a business in the agricultural industry, we have stayed open throughout the pandemic, where others have had to close. Adaptations to daily operations have allowed us to continue to support our customers and keep feeding the nation over this critical period. Our customers and our hard-working staff deserve a good deal of thanks for their patience and understanding over this period."

Olivers has a strong order book for harvest 2022 combines from the Claas Lexion and new Trion ranges across both straw walker and hybrid configurations, reports David, as well as Horsch Leeb sprayers, including the firm's latest self-propelled models.

"But we are asking customers to remember that forward-ordering is key to ensuring timely supply, given the component sourcing issues that are affecting manufacturing. What is clear is that, with the current unsettled climate in Europe, and rising inflation as energy and raw material costs continue to increase, machinery prices will continue to rise, so we are encouraging customers to lock into current prices while they last.

"With several new grant schemes available, and good prices for farm commodities, we are also trying to encourage buyers to take advantage of the new super deduction scheme from HMRC, which allows 130% capital tax allowance on qualifying new machinery."

To support customers investing in new machinery, the business is itself investing in new facilities and new recruits. During the pandemic the parts showroom at the Wandon End premises has been given a thorough revamp, with new Granit and Claas Farm Parts displays.



David Jarman, Oliver Agriculture managing director (left) with recently recruited marketing manager, Alex Way



Olivers is also one of the longest-serving UK Claas dealerships, and in 2022 is celebrating 75 years selling the marque



Olivers is also one of the oldest JCB Agriculture dealers via its Oliver Landpower division, which will be opening a new Essex depot in the coming months



During the pandemic, the parts showroom at the Wandon End premises was given a thorough revamp, with new Granit and Claas Farm Parts displays



Daniel Bond and Edward Garner manning the counter in Oliver Agriculture's new parts showroom at Wandon End

Parts manager Daniel Bond and assistant Edward Garner were among the team in charge during the open day, with a steady flow of visitors seeking showroom bargains. Meanwhile, new staff to have joined the business over recent months include a number of new service recruits and the company's first marketing manager.

While recruitment generally remains challenging, in recent years the company has signed 16 apprentices across Oliver Agriculture and its sister business, Oliver Landpower, which retails JCB, other implement franchises and groundcare equipment from branches at Luton, Tingewick, Bucks, and Kings Langley, Herts. Of those, it has retained all bar one, says aftersales director Ian Morton.

"We've developed a good system of recruitment across various sources, from colleges to local schools to customers' sons.

"Once they're on board, we invest time in finding out what makes them tick and what specific interest areas they might have, before we move on with their training.

"We've also developed good contacts with dealers in other parts of the world, particularly Australia and New Zealand. Rather than losing young service engineers to wanderlust after a year or two, we offer them the chance of a supported opportunity to work down under for three-month spells, gaining experience of the same job type and equipment in a different country, with their position here held open for them when they return. It's a system that's worked well for us for a while now.



Visitors were able throughout the day to have moisture meters calibrated, and to talk with staff from all of Oliver Agriculture's key suppliers

"But we try also to make them feel wanted in other ways. Although it's grown from three branches to five in recent years, spread across Buckinghamshire down to Hampshire, and we also have our Landpower business with three outlets, and a new branch to be developed in Essex, we retain a family ethos, particularly relevant as the Oliver family are still involved in running the business. Agricultural engineering is a business that's more people-oriented than in some of the sectors where technicians occasionally move to seek more pay or fewer hours. That's also true of those who occasionally leave dealership businesses to work for themselves. We make an effort to ensure staff are looked after here, and that they understand the benefits of working for a business like ours that they may not get either at a larger one or when working independently."

Meanwhile, the company has also been investing in its marketing and communications efforts, an essential part of any business, but progressively more important as a company grows larger. Two years ago, Olivers appointed Alex Way as its first full-time marketing manager, working across both the Agriculture and Landpower divisions.

"It's been a really interesting role to make my own and develop," says Alex of his appointment.

"With five Claas branches on the Oliver Agriculture

side, plus three outlets for the Oliver Landpower business, and another to come, since the company was awarded the JCB franchise for Essex, we have a considerable number of customers to communicate with. We're doing that in a wide variety of ways, from social media across various channels, to the development of our customer magazine for the Oliver Agriculture side of the company. Where formerly this was a small publication with a few bits of company info alongside used machinery listings, it's now a full 72-page A4 publication with testimonial features from across our customer base. It's been really well-received."

With sister firm Oliver Landpower's expansion into Essex to cover the JCB territory being vacated by Tuckwells as it parts company with the British handler maker later this year in favour of a John Deere-sanctioned partnership with Kramer, Olivers will soon have another new set of customers to get to know. Based on the success of Oliver Agriculture's move south into Berkshire, Sussex and Hampshire in recent years – a similar open day was held at the Petworth, Sussex branch in mid-March – applying the same principles of customer and employee retention should hold the new venture in good stead.



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Talkin' bout a revolution

LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR – Service Dealer contributor, TurfPro editor and ex-professional greenkeeper and groundsman – offers his view on the machinery options available for today's commercial customers, and the key role dealers play in being the link between manufacturer and the professional end-user



Laurence Gale

With over 50 years' experience within the sports turf and amenity industry, I have been blessed to witness several innovative machinery developments that have revolutionised the way we manage and maintain our landscaped amenity sites and sports facilities.

Over the years we have seen many significant innovations that make the life of the turf professional that much easier. For example, I'd argue that a key one of these is the VertiDrain. First appearing in the early 1980s, it's a punch tyne, tractor-mounted aerator that could penetrate to a depth of 300mm – a game-changer in decompacting winter sports pitches.

The concept of this machine evolved into a series of other beneficial aeration-type units that were both tractor mounted and pedestrian. We now have a wide range of solid, hollow and air-compressed tynd aerators at our disposal.

Another major innovation that transformed the way we renovate sports pitches is the brainchild of Ko Rodenberg – the Koro Fieldtopmaker (Koro FTM) – which came to market in 1997. This machine essentially planes

off unwanted surface vegetation and leaves the surface clean and even, in preparation to sow new grass seed.

This machine was brought into the country by Richard Campey of Campey Turf care, who over the years has continued to bring to the marketplace several innovative machines, such as the Dakota Sand spreaders, Inmants Shockwave, Inmants Rotoknife, Koro Recycling Dresser and Air2G2.

Vast development

The investment and development of the vast range of products turf professionals now have at their disposal is colossal. Every major manufacturer has developed a massive range of products for us to ensure we can work more efficiently and be productive.

When I started my career as a greenkeeper back in the early 1970s, working on a council municipal golf course, our set of powered machinery equated to one tractor, two sets of gang mowers, two Auto Certees greens cylinder mowers, two Acto 20-inch cylinder mowers and a Pattison spiker. How things have changed in 50 years! Most turf professionals now have a plethora of powered machinery in their sheds and we benefit from a wonderful dealer network in the UK

that's able to supply and service the vast array of machinery products.

A typical 18-hole golf course will now have a magnitude of powered machinery in their sheds to ensure a small staff of five greenkeepers can be efficient and produce a high-quality presented course.

Power source changes

I personally think one of the primary drivers that helped promote and develop the opportunity to produce such a diverse range of garden machinery products, was the development of the compact four-stroke and two-stroke petrol engines. The likes of Briggs and Stratton, Kohler, and Honda paved the way for mass production of these power sources for hand-held and pedestrian products.

Since the late 1980s we've seen many petrol-powered products come to market, making the turf professional's life more efficient and easier. As time went by, we saw the development of smaller compact two-stroke petrol engines, with the likes of STIHL, Husqvarna, ECHO and many others developing a larger range of powered hand tools, namely the popular trimmers, hedge trimmers, chainsaws and blowers that have become essential tools for most



STIHL showing off new battery products

grounds professionals.

However, with the threat of climate change and the need to reduce emissions curtailing the use of petrol and diesel-powered vehicles, machinery is becoming a priority for both legislators and manufacturers. Many of the main turf industry manufacturers are gearing themselves up and investing heavily in electric, hybrid and battery-powered equipment. Examples are the cordless hand tools, such as strimmers, blowers, chainsaws and pruners, which are becoming cheaper and more accessible to both professional and domestic end-users.

In the last few years, we have also seen great strides taken by all of the major mower manufacturers to develop battery and/or hybrid-driven mowers. An example of this is Dennis Mowers, which has spent over three years working with carefully selected partners to develop a range of quality battery-powered equipment. Managing director Ian Howard said, "Reliable and long-lasting solutions are a must-have for our customers, and in this rapidly developing technology field we have chosen our partners very carefully. For us, it was important to create no-compromise alternatives to petrol mowers, which would not need

constantly recharging or swapping with batteries – it's imperative they last the distance."

The new battery-powered range was launched at SALT X in 2021, where Ian Howard stated, "The hard work has paid off and now we can unveil our first market-ready equipment befitting of the Dennis badge." The Dennis E-Series range currently consists of three products: the ES-860, 34-inch battery-powered turf management system; the ES-34R rotary mower with twin contra rotating blades; and the ES-36.

Other leading manufacturers, including STIHL, Mountfield, Stiga, Husqvarna, ECHO, EGO, Countax, John Deere, Ransomes, Allett, Toro, and Hayter have developed a wide range of battery products. Some are specific to fine turf managements, such as the Club Cadet Infinicut, which has become very popular with football, golf and cricket facilities due to its precision cutting.

Earlier this year I was invited to an EGO demonstration event where I was introduced to a range of their powered products, some of which I have previously tested, such as their range of hedge trimmers. I was certainly impressed with their performance. During the day I had the chance to

test drive their new EGO Power+ 42" Z6 Zero Turn ride-on mower that can deliver the equivalent power of a 22-horsepower petrol engine, with none of the emissions. The company says the Z6 covers up to 2.5 acres on a single charge with six of their 12Ah batteries. It will certainly give a petrol-driven equivalent a run for its money, especially when it costs only around £4,200, with no additional fuel costs.

Also, in March this year I attended a STIHL roadshow at Harper Adams University to test some of the latest battery-powered products now available to the professional market. Again, having tried many of these products in separate trials over the last two years, there is no denying that these cordless products are fast becoming an equal to their existing range of petrol-driven equipment.

However, having said all this, the current cost of these battery products is still quite high compared to existing petrol and diesel powered equipment, even taking into account the lower long-term ownership costs of fuel and servicing. One suspects these expenses will come down substantially in the next few years as battery technology improves. It will certainly be interesting to see



Battery tools on show at a recent demo day by Ego



Koro Fieldtopmaker



Husqvarna's new robotic Ceora



Turf Tank robotic line-marker at Rugby School



VertiDrain in action

how long it will be before we see a range of battery-powered scarifiers, aerators and rotovators added to the list of tools we have today.

Robotics

The other major revolution going on in our industry is the development of robotic devices, which in recent years have focused on mowers and line-marking technologies. We now have plenty of robots to choose from, with the likes of Husqvarna, STIHL and Ambrogia leading the way with their range of both domestic and professional products.

Toro has recently been showcasing its GeoLink Solutions for efficient fairway and greens mowing. Reelmaster and Greensmaster concept units were displayed at the 2020 Golf Industry Show.

With the implementation of GeoLink Solutions technology, golf mowing will become more time and cost-effective. When operating autonomously, the built-in detection capability ensures avoidance of obstacles. After defining the mowing boundary, a variety of mowing patterns can be selected. The mowers operate consistently for straight lines, even in conditions with poor visibility, and during the clean-up pass. Even more efficiency is achieved by utilising the entire width of the mower, reducing overlap, and self-transport between mowing areas.

As for line marking, the ability to do this task autonomously has saved a lot of time and money for many turf professionals. However, they do not come cheap, with most robotic line markers costing anything between £25,000-£100,000, depending on the size and scale of the technologies. Many professional football clubs, private schools and contractors are now using robotic line marking devices to be more efficient and accurate.

All industry manufacturers are now fully aware and are essentially driving many new initiatives to develop alternatives to the current petrol and diesel machinery that we have become so used to relying upon for the maintenance of our sports and amenity facilities. It will certainly be interesting to see what the outcomes will be and how quickly we see the last of the many thousands of existing petrol-powered machines at grass roots sports clubs finally succumb to the scrapyard and be replaced by battery or other alternative-fuel-driven machines.

Dealers are key

Turf professionals must also thank the tireless work done by all the UK service dealerships. In the main, the dealers are the link between the manufacturers and end-users, providing a point of sale and, crucially, after-sales service.

Many of our current dealerships are

family-run businesses, providing a supply of machinery, spares and after-sales services and repairs locally. As the demand for machinery sales has grown and the range and selection of products increased, many dealerships have of course expanded, sometimes amalgamating to form bigger premises and groups, allowing them to cover larger areas.

Having now met many dealers through my association with Service Dealer, I am constantly amazed at the level of commitment and endurance they undertake to support their customers – highlighted by the especially amazing work performed throughout the pandemic.

Their depth of product knowledge and the support they provide for their customers is second to none.



Many turf professional end-users probably do not realise the effort and expense entailed in running a dealership. Many perhaps need to be more understanding and perhaps a little more patient on occasion, when benefiting from wonderful services they provide.

Equally, local dealers know that for a successful, long-term relationship with their local professional customers, they need to nurture that partnership – being there for their customers to the best of their abilities, as much as they can.

Without the skills and dedication of the dealers, we would not have a successful new and second-hand machinery market that gives us a wide choice and selection of tools to do our job.

Machinery is not getting any cheaper, there is a price to pay for the many years of R&D, development, and production by the manufacturers. Buying from a reputable dealer ensures commercial end-users will get the best out of their machinery and be supported by the terms and conditions of a sale.

The next few years are certainly going to be testing times for all. However, the need and reliance on machinery products will never diminish. It will be fascinating to see where we are in the next five to ten years – and where we are on the journey from fossil to alternative fuel use.



Motivating dealers, marking milestones

Materials-handling machine specialist Manitou will have been trading in the UK for 50 years in 2022, and to mark the occasion its UK subsidiary held a convention and celebration to thank its dealer network. MARTIN RICKATSON was in attendance

Few companies in the machinery sector – whether agricultural, construction, grounds care or outdoor power equipment – can build up a name and a market from scratch without a network of supporting dealers.

When Manitou machines first arrived in the UK in the early 1970s, the French materials handler manufacturer was almost unknown on this side of

the Channel. Yet the rapid recruitment of a dealer network by the UK subsidiary established in 1972 enabled the manufacturer to become one of the dominant suppliers of yard and rough-terrain handlers in the country.

Back in the early 1970s, materials handling on farms and construction sites was still largely reliant on tractor-loaders and cumbersome shovel-type machines. Manitou entered the UK market in 1972 with a

rough-terrain-masted site forklift built around an International Harvester tractor. With the growing adoption of palletised materials in construction and farming, plus a plant hire industry ready to consider new types of machinery, the market for forklifts grew rapidly.

The Manitou business evolved from the French building machinery-maker Braud and Fauchoux, which had expanded in the 1950s and 1960s

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Claims can be registered on-line from 1st February 2022 and must be registered within 28 days of purchase for qualifying models. Qualifying models must be purchased by 30th June 2022 to qualify and registered within 28 days.

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through the production of concrete mixers and small self-erecting tower cranes. The company's first site forklift was the brainchild of Marcel Braud, who, in 1957, replaced the skip of a three-wheeled Sambron site-dumper with a mast. The following year, his next design improved rough terrain performance by mounting a fork mast onto the rear of a McCormick Farmall Cub tractor with reversed driving position, and the name Manitou – a combination of 'manutention' (handling) and 'tout' (everything) – was adopted.

When Marcel Braud took control of the family business in 1970 and started to seek export opportunities, the UK was high on his list, and Englishman Gordon Himsworth, who had married M Braud's sister Jacqueline, was recruited to assist in the development of a UK business. He organised for Manitou 2.0, 2.5 and 3.0-tonne lift capacity forklift models to be shown at the International Building and Construction Exhibition at Olympia in London in November 1971. Based on tractor units from International Harvester, which were evolutions of the McCormick units, the machines generated sufficient interest from potential dealers and customers to warrant a plan to enter the UK market.



The UK was among Manitou's first export markets, with masted forklifts finding favour in construction, and later agriculture

Rather than appoint a concessionaire, Manitou decided to set up its first overseas subsidiary to cover the UK and Ireland, and Manitou (Site Lift) Ltd was formed in April 1972, with an issued capital of £15,000.

The new company initially rented a small yard and offices in Chandlers Ford, near Southampton, which at the time was the port of entry for the machines arriving from France, and 50 units were sold in its first year. Manitou adopted a policy that continues today, that of having a UK national at the helm. Its first was John Iles, who became managing director of Manitou (Site Lift) the following year, during which sales grew to 280 units. By 1975 this had more than doubled to 700 units, giving Manitou a market-leading 48% share of rough-terrain forklift truck sales, and prompting a move to larger premises nearby. The 1974 introduction of new MB20C and MB25C models, specified with double-acting hydraulics on the tilt cylinders, and higher specification Goodyear tyres to satisfy the needs of UK contractors and plant-hire companies, helped boost sales. As hire companies began to replace their first Manitous with new units, the used machines began to enter the agricultural market as farmers



The UK business branded Manitou's first telehandlers 'Maniscopic' and developed the attachment head that subsequently became the global company standard



Just as it had developed forklift models specifically for agriculture, so Manitou did the same with telehandlers, with the 1989 launch of the Manireach 2600

started to seek higher lift heights and capacities than tractor loaders could manage. Recognising the potential demand, the UK business instigated the development of a new MB25P specifically for farmers. Its success provided the blueprint for Manitou in France to extend its sales into agriculture in other countries. As the number of Manitous sold to both the construction and agricultural markets in the UK and Ireland increased, Manitou (Site Lift) needed bigger premises, so it purchased five acres of the new Ebblake Industrial Estate at Verwood, just over the Hants/Dorset border, and built its current HQ. The facility, with 5,650m² of offices and workshops plus 7,060m² of yard space, was opened in 1980.

With the growth in interest in telescopic handlers in both construction and agriculture, Manitou had entered the sector in agriculture with a badge-engineered machine sold as the Manireach 2000L. After significant input from the UK subsidiary, this was soon followed

in 1982 by the firm's own design, the 2,000kg capacity 2wd MT220 and 4wd MT420. The UK business branded them 'Maniscopic' and developed the attachment head that subsequently became the global company standard.

In 1993, John Iles left to set up his own business, and John Walker, who had been with Manitou (Site Lift) since October 1973, succeeded him. In 1999, the UK business set up a finance arm, Manitou Finance. Upon his retirement in late 2003, John Walker's role was taken by Ivor Binns, who had come to the company six years earlier. He was joined by Jonathan Tapp, who would become sales director of the business, which changed its name to Manitou UK Ltd in May 2005. While agriculture continued to grow as a key business area, construction also continued to expand, and Manitou's offering was extended into new areas, such as access platforms.

Aided by a dealer network, including many of those who signed up during the marque's early days in

the UK, strong coverage has seen Manitou vie with JCB for telehandler and forklift market dominance in the UK. Unit sales in the UK and Ireland peaked at almost 3,000 units in 2007 before the following year's global economic crisis hit the construction market. Manitou UK downsized a little and weathered the storm, helped by its strong presence in the relatively stable agricultural market. Despite the challenges, the UK subsidiary remained profitable and, after a low point in 2010, has since seen steady sales growth. The 2008 purchase of the Gehl and Mustang skid-steer loader concerns, and the development of small articulated wheeled-loader models, has extended the company's business into further new handler areas in agriculture and beyond. In 2017, the UK subsidiary premises were completely renovated to enhance employee working conditions. The previously separate offices made way for a large open-plan space designed to promote team cohesion and communication between departments.



Dealers were invited onto the stage during Manitou UK's 50th anniversary celebration evening at Silverstone

The Verwood workshops, meanwhile, were modernised to provide enhanced facilities for technicians during training sessions.

Manitou UK today provides technical and sales support to 51 Gehl and Manitou dealers in 91 locations across the UK and Ireland, with the UK subsidiary employing 50 staff across sales administration, marketing, spare parts and after-sales service. The market covered by Manitou UK represents nearly 10% of the group's turnover, making it one of the main Manitou markets after France and the United States. The subsidiary's business is dominated by construction, which accounts for 60% of sales, with the agricultural market accounting for approximately 20%.

"The construction market recovered very quickly after the 2020 fall, meaning our 2021 turnover was back to pre-pandemic levels and close to a record," says Mark Ormond, Manitou UK managing director.

"Although supply is currently the limiting factor affecting our turnover, we expect 2022 to be a new record



Appropriately enough, given the venue, dealer entertainment included racing car simulators and the chance to try out pit-stop skills changing racing car wheels

year of sales for Manitou UK. For that we must thank our staff, dealers and customers for the trust put in us. We are very proud to be celebrating our 50th anniversary. And we were really pleased to be able to show our dealers how much we value them by throwing a 50th anniversary

celebration and dinner held in late March, choosing Silverstone as a suitably prestigious venue for such an occasion."



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DISCUSSION POINT

The issue of a lack of succession planning in the UK dealer network was raised recently – generating some interesting responses. *Editor STEVE GIBBS reports*



An elephant in the network?

There are perennial industry topics that tend to get discussed *ad-infinitum*.

Areas such as recruitment, retention of staff, marketing the business, etc. These plus others are regular touchstones that are returned to frequently - perhaps because there are no definitive answers.

There is, however, one subject that's often lurking in the background, but maybe not receiving quite as much attention as some other areas – probably because it's not as urgent on a day-to-day basis. This is

the subject of what happens to the business when the current owner decides to call it a day. Essentially, what succession plans does a dealership have in place?

Worried for the network

Service Dealer recently heard from a representative of a major manufacturer that broached this very subject. They told us they had been visiting dealers with their sales team, and were worried for the future of the dealer network.

That's quite a dramatic statement, but they explained that, in a particular

area of the country where they had visited nine or so dealers over a few days, perhaps only a couple had an obvious succession plan. They felt that many dealerships were closing, with hardly any springing up to replace them.

The big question for this supplier was what will our industry – and, crucially, the dealer network – look like in 10, 15 or indeed 20 years' time?

Sooner rather than later

Doing some digging around the subject, it certainly feels like it's something that experts in the field

argue should be given some serious thought sooner rather than later.

It's understandable, though, how perhaps many do not like to confront it. Service Dealer's SME Digest editor, Adam Bernstein, recently wrote in our pages how talk – or lack thereof – regarding succession can be a cause of much dispute in a family business.

Adam said, "The most frequent disputes tend to involve a lack of succession planning, which leaves the next generation feeling frustrated or uncertain about what comes next, as well as which of the next generation should be involved, differences over strategic direction, and different attitudes among or across generations on whether the business should stay in the family or be sold. And who decides what."

Another detailed take on the subject was delivered recently by our friend, Service Dealer founder Chris Biddle's podcast – Inside AgriTurf. In an episode from November 2021 Chris spoke to Stephen Shortt, who is a small business strategist, about the tensions, the planning, the dynamics, and the personal ambitions that come into play when deciding on succession issues.

In a wide-ranging conversation that is well worth catching up with, Chris and Stephen talk about how each family business set-up is different. Sometimes succession is a straightforward matter. Other times, when several family members are involved, damaging conflicts can arise that can spread from the boardroom to one's home life.

Speaking from personal experience, Stephen outlines how potentially serious family disagreements, often as a result of dogmatic attitudes, can be diffused to the benefit of all concerned when deciding on succession planning.

Starting a conversation

When you hear how troubling these conflicts have the potential to become, it's clear why planning of this nature could get pushed to the back of the priorities list – especially



Scamblers permanently closed their doors on the 21st of December last year after Tony Scambler retired and sons Ed and Dan decided they wanted to pursue avenues outside of grounds care

when there are pressing matters that need addressing to keep the business running.

But listening to these people who know infinitely more about the subject than I do, they make for a compelling argument that it is in everyone's best interest to begin considering options now. Avoidance of the subject entirely is far from helpful.

Service Dealer columnist Sara Hey from U.S dealer development specialists Bob Clements International, says how it's important to get on top of the conversation.

She told us, "Succession planning is full of emotion. In so many of the conversations I have had with dealers, the current owner has put blood, sweat, tears and money into something that they have seen grow and change. Moving that into someone else's hands, no matter how capable, takes a lot."

Three quick tips she gives as to how a dealer might start to hold a succession conversation are:

- Pick a place where you can have the conversation and won't be interrupted.
- Ask questions and listen to the answers.
- Use others as an example to bring up the conversation.



Bigwoods Agri shut in June 2021, citing the increasing difficulty in hiring technicians - with dad Keith hanging up his boots and son Tom going back into the motor trade as a parts and service manager

Whilst the complete solution to the problem most likely won't be resolved in any initial conversation, it should at least get the ball rolling and generate some groundwork towards a transition.

The nature of the conversation surrounding succession can involve traditionally taboo subjects, such as money and, sadly, death. But perhaps for the sake of the future landscape of the UK dealer network, more businesses should be taking those, albeit uncomfortable, first steps.

Readers response

We asked our readers for their thoughts regarding succession in the network

"I was interested to read about a manufacturer that's worried about their dealer network disappearing. I have been warning our suppliers about this for several years now. It's plain for all to see and, what's more, it puts huge pressure on those of us that are left. Not only are dealers closing (10 that I know of in our area in the last three years or so – largely through retirements) but they are not releasing any staff. So, the work finds us but we can't find people to do the work. Then you look at manufacturers who are starting to sell direct now – is there any wonder the dealer network is getting smaller? There is too much of a focus on sales and not enough on support (I'll include poor warranty rates in this too)."

UK dealer
Anonymous

"I put a post on Facebook the other week saying our three staff members working on a Saturday morning had a combined age of 203, and the following Saturday the four staff working had a combined age of 265.

It is more than likely this is a position replicated throughout the dealer network. Over the years,

dealers have supported customers and manufacturers to a really high standard. Manufacturers have benefitted from our loyalty, and quite often our staff, who could have formed the route to succession, have seen their way to progress in the world, joining the manufacturer rather than remain in a dealership.

Dealers have all kinds of things to cope with on a day-to-day basis, time flies by and we all put off this important matter mainly to get the customers' machinery renewed or repaired. We are currently two members of staff short and are under pressure from all sides – I feel most dealers will be in a similar predicament. I have been in business for 33 years and could easily be for the next 33 years, but one major problem faces me. I am now 64 and run a profitable sales and repair organisation with lots of potential moving forward.

One final thought – what are the manufactures plans to support their products if all us older guys and girls have not had a succession plan?"

Steve Bartle
The Mower Shop (Northampton) Ltd

"The real problem is having someone who wants to take over the business. We have lost two in our locality in the past couple of years because there was no one able or willing to take them on. This has meant that we are much busier but typically we can't find staff to cope with the extra load."

John Rollinson
Cliftons Turf Machinery

"Succession planning has been an issue with some businesses for as long as there have been businesses. The LBE sector has some issues in this area because dealers are mostly privately, and family owned but the longevity of most of the businesses speaks volumes for their origins, strength and tenacity. It can be difficult to sell a dealership to a new owner and this can cause concerns for the survival of the business when there is no family member to take it over. Fortunately, this is not as common as it may appear."

Keith Christian
BAGMA director



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Back in (not quite) full effect



BIGGA's turfcare exhibition aimed at professional greenkeepers in the golf sector returned to an in-person event at the end of March. Editor STEVE GIBBS reports on an undeniably quieter and less buzzy than usual BTME

It was always going to be an interesting experiment holding the BTME exhibition towards the end of March.

Moved from its traditional January slot by resurgent Covid fears at the back end of last year, apparently the end of March date was pretty much all the Harrogate Convention Centre was able to offer to organisers BIGGA. And ever since these dates were announced, fears were voiced by some that it simply wasn't the best time for the golf greenkeepers this show is principally aimed at.

I'm told that the last couple of weeks of March are traditionally renovation periods at courses around the country, and with the warm, sunny weather the country was basking in that week, the need for these turf professionals to remain at their courses was exacerbated.

Therefore, the show was undeniably not quite its usual busy, buzzy self. But to be fair to BIGGA, they didn't attempt to spin their way out of what was quite blatant to all who made the trip to North Yorkshire.

Director of the association, Jim Croxton, gave an open and honest assessment to the trade press at lunchtime on the Wednesday and day two of the show, describing the event

as "OK" and "fine" – no more than that.

What Jim did say, however, and I agree with him on this, was that kudos should go to his team for managing to put a show on at all, what with the relatively short time period they had to rearrange everything, combined with the scheduling constraints from the venue. Essentially, the choice for BIGGA was either to make the best of the week offered, or put the show off for another year. So, they opted for the former.

Whilst official figures hadn't been released at the time this magazine

went to press, Jim said he believed visitor numbers for day one were something like 37% down on what they were in January 2020. Stand space taken was along the lines of 20% down.

This reduction in visitors and exhibitors was obvious to all who had attended any previous edition of the show. One of the Red Zone halls, for example, was partly partitioned off, whilst around the complex there were empty stands that had been converted into more seating areas.



Iseki were exhibiting in the Blue Zone

How Ibcos Computers Is Helping Dealerships Manage Their Aged Parts Inventory

Dealerships all develop the same problem over time – aged parts inventory takes up valuable storage space, can impact your ability to keep the parts you need in stock and will affect your cash flow.

Money tied up in depreciating parts can act as a huge drain on your finances. Shifting your aged parts inventory, while it still has some intrinsic value, should be one of your highest priorities.



The Cost of Aged Inventory

Every foot of space that you're dedicating to aged and unsold inventory is space that you can't fill with newer, more desirable stock. Storage space costs you money and puts you at a disadvantage when you're trying to stock up on the parts you need.

This might not mean much if only a few parts go unsold, but if more than a quarter of your inventory is left to gather dust, it quickly adds up. If your dealership operates under very tight margins, then a few areas of unsold inventory can quickly eat into your profits and become a major business risk.

Selling Parts

If your dealership is overrun with outdated parts, that your existing customer base doesn't want, then it may seem like you have no choice but to absorb any losses. On paper, writing off the excess inventory may appear cheaper than hoping to find a buyer, but it isn't always the best option.

It's important to remember that there can still be a market for the parts that you carry, even if it doesn't overlap

with your existing customer base. Aged inventory isn't inherently worthless, but it needs to be sold in ways that give it a new source of value. If your market for selling this inventory were much wider than your existing customer base, it is much more likely that you will find a buyer for it. Other dealerships may need the parts that you don't. If you had access to most of the agricultural dealership market in the UK, how much of your aged inventory could you sell? And what price would you be prepared to sell it for?

Purchasing Parts

Looking at this from the opposite angle, your dealership isn't the only one with outdated or unsold parts. All dealerships will struggle with this problem and just like you, they might be trying to sell their old parts, which is the perfect opportunity for you to source parts at a discount. This may be particularly useful at a time when parts supply may not be as reliable or as fast as it once was.

A Simple Solution

The Ibcos Gold Parts Marketplace is a business-to-business marketplace that makes it easy to

sell your aged parts inventory and buy the parts you need.

To sell, you can create quick listings, using selection rules you define according to your business needs, which will be visible to a large proportion of the UK dealership network, enabling you to sell to dealers who need your old parts.

Buying parts is also very straightforward and gives you the opportunity to stock up on needed parts at a discounted price

Ibcos Gold Parts Marketplace, with its own existing user base, can help you open new sales channels and build a consistent way of selling aged inventory. Most of the hard work is managed through expertly-designed automated software, from having your parts advertised on the marketplace itself ready to be sold, to producing documentation for the parts you sell.

If you want to know more about how Gold Parts Marketplace operates, go to:

www.customer.ibcos.co.uk/gold-parts-marketplace

or send an email to: sales@ibcos.co.uk

Most apparent, though, was the feeling that it just wasn't a busy show. During the peak time of, say, 10.30am to 2pm-ish, when aisles should have been teeming with people, it just never reached those levels. Of course there were people around, but they were noticeably far fewer.

What Jim and several machinery exhibitors I spoke to did say about the punters who had turned up, was that there was a good proportion of what you'd describe as 'quality visitors'. Perhaps the head greenkeeper or a decision-maker from the course had come along, leaving their team behind

to get on with the work that needed to be done. Usually, the crew would get a day or two out in Harrogate, attending the educational seminars and looking round the stands, but this year, not so much.

Looking for positives then, perhaps some meaningful business was getting done on the stands – just probably not at the levels exhibitors were hoping for.

I heard from various outdoor power machinery exhibitors who told me that if this show wasn't directly supporting the wider golf industry – if it was a purely commercially run operation, for example – based on what they experienced in

March, they would have to seriously contemplate whether returning was in their best interests.

As Jim said, the proof will be in the pudding when the results of BIGGA's exhibitor survey are analysed in due course.

Around the halls

All that said, across the stands there was still enough to interest any commercial machinery dealers that had chosen to attend.

Some companies of note to our dealer readers included:



Jonathan Snowball and the rest of the Husqvarna team were promoting the commercial Ceora robots

HUSQVARNA who were promoting their new Ceora robotic system for large-scale commercial use. The team were confident that supplies of the new autonomous mower would be with dealers by mid-April. They said that behind the scenes several deals are being done with some high-profile venues to put the new machines into very public use – something they would be publicising over the coming months.



Henton & Chattell md, Peter Chaloner, was looking for dealers for the Woodbay products

HENTON & CHATTELL were promoting the WoodBay GreensIron products for which they have recently become the exclusive UK distributor. MD Peter Chaloner explained how the units have a very keen following as a specialist product amongst professional greenkeepers. There's a model for golf, and one for bowling greens too, which Peter felt could prove to be very popular in this country. They are currently looking to establish a network of dealers, both amongst dealerships already known to themselves, and indeed the right new ones in the right areas.



Milwaukee's marketing manager Sam Croft said the company has big ambitions

MILWAUKEE'S marketing manager Sam Croft told me that the company is in a good place when it comes to stock, as they look to increase their UK outdoor power equipment dealer network. The company, he said, is ambitious in its aims to establish itself right up there amongst the top brands in the cordless market. They certainly have an extensive range that was on display in Harrogate, with Sam telling me how they had been expanding their team – with sales managers out on the road, demo-ing to dealers around the country, with the aim of signing them up to their network.



Makita's stand enjoyed a prominent position

KUBOTA once again at BTME exhibited alongside Baroness, demonstrating how a complete solution could be offered to the golf course professionals. Speaking to the team on the stand, they saw the show as an opportunity to reconnect with customers following this turbulent couple of years. Getting their message out there to the professional end users was seen as the most important aspect to exhibiting to them.

MAKITA who I think were exhibiting at Harrogate for the first time, had a great spot in the Green Zone, which drew in visitors as they first arrived

into the show. Showing off their XGT-40VMax range, they seemed to generate a lot of interest amongst the greenkeepers in attendance.

TORO It was also interesting to hear from Toro how well they feel their line of Star electric utility vehicles has been going. I was told by sales manager Dave French, that getting containers of the vehicles across from China has been working well for the company, with stock reaching dealers. Dealerships selling the range do not necessarily have to be dealers of Toro's commercial equipment, with those that are selling the vehicles



Campey's stand in the Red Zone

seeing good business due to the lack of infrastructure costs associated with their use – they simply plug into the wall to recharge.

CAMPEY TURFCARE featured plenty of new machines on their stand, including new and updated versions of the Shockwave, Air2G2 and the Vredo Super Compact. Lee Morgado, director of the company, said they had recently sold a lot of machines into stadiums in Qatar, ahead of November's World Cup finals.

Reconnecting with the industry

Asking exhibitors what they hope to gain from a trade exhibition in 2022, especially considering the enforced absence of the past two years, many, like Kubota, talk of a reconnection with both the dealers and their end-user customers

Whilst Zoom gave us all a connection lifeline throughout the pandemic, there does appear to be a feeling that now is the time to move on, and get back to meeting face-to-face.

For suppliers, promoting their message and showing off their new innovations to both you and the professionals who will be using them, is vital. In the context of a trade show such as BTME, quantifying how successful a

couple of days in an exhibition hall has been, will forever be nebulous.

When a show isn't as well attended as both the organisers and the exhibitors would clearly like, I suppose a company's odds of making the right connections, or establishing those great new leads, is cut somewhat. However, it only takes a couple of valuable conversations to make the whole thing worthwhile.

Hopefully enough of these will have taken place to ensure that next year's event, which will be back in January, will have enough goodwill from both stand-takers and visitors, to make Harrogate fulfil its great potential.



BUSINESS MONITOR

Taking the temperature of the dealer network, sponsored by Garden Trader

Supply crisis deepens

Dealers tell us situation not improving, leading to lost sales

Despite buoyant words from some suppliers at spring trade shows regarding what they considered an improving situation when it comes to supply of stock, dealers who answered our recent survey had a different story to tell.

Unsurprisingly, everybody who responded said they were still experiencing issues when it comes to delivery of wholegoods and parts for the dealership. When asked if the situation could be described as improving from where it was a year ago, more than half who answered (52%) said it was not at all – with just 26% feeling it was starting to get better.

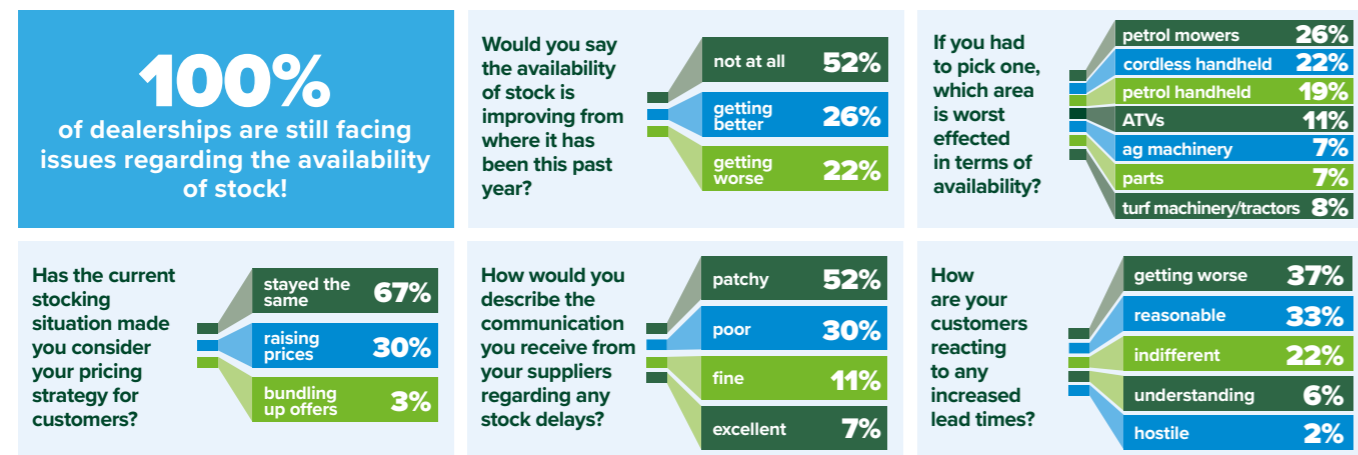
Like last year, when asked to single out a product area worst affected by supply, the most popular answer was

petrol mowers (26%) – but second most cited (at 22%) was cordless handheld, which last year was much further down the list.

67% of dealers who answered said that in response to the situation they had in fact kept their prices broadly the same – but a significant 30% said they had been forced to raise prices.

Communication from suppliers didn't exactly receive a ringing endorsement from respondents, with 52% describing it as "patchy" and 30% saying it was "poor".

Also, there was a split in opinion over how customers were reacting to increased lead times, with 33% of those who answered saying people were "reasonable" – but a concerning 37% felt reactions were "getting worse".



“Your say”

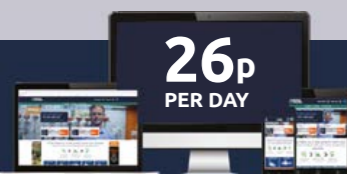
How is the stocking situation impacting your dealership right now – and do you see it improving?

- Certainly from our side of the fence, stock isn't increasing, with lead times still way out to the point that the early season buzz will be gone. Margins are being retained due to lack of stock, which is a positive. It's like being on an intravenous drip with some suppliers, and yes, it could be life or death for some dealers! Manufacturers need to stop pretending, and be honest with the dealers and shareholders alike.
- Very difficult when you don't have the stock to sell – we have lost many sales because we don't have the stock and it may not arrive for another 2-4 weeks (apparently). Also, very slow this year on servicing and repairs. Being a small business, we don't have multiple suppliers, so are dependent on the couple that we do have for all of our stock. Have also cancelled a couple of ride-ons as customers have already gone elsewhere as we have no definite delivery date yet. By the time it improves, it may already be too late for many customers.
- We have lost lots of wholegoods sales due to lack of supply. When the item the customer wanted comes in weeks later and you contact them, they have bought something elsewhere. Probably lost £30k turnover in the last three months due to supply issues – the customer still wants it NOW, and if they can't, they will buy something else they can get.
- We have lots of winter stock machines still on backorder that may not arrive until May, June or July, which will cause issues as we need them now. Winter stock arriving in July or August is no good to us, especially when the manufacturers still want another winter order a few months later. Manufacturers need to look at how they are managing dealers' orders and be more flexible and understanding. We are lucky that we have stock to sell but if we have a good year and sell our stock, then have no restocks, things could get worrying.
- Have lost a few sales, and have machines sat in storage awaiting parts. Some were sent back with incomplete services due to parts being unavailable.
- Lost sales as most people can't or won't wait; machines backing up in the workshop due to parts back-ordered; huge increase in phone calls and email enquiries asking for price and availability; stock turning up too late for the relevant season, which in turn is causing cash flow issues; customers cancelling orders without informing us; spending a lot of time searching for new stock to order.
- It's certainly challenging, and we are having to be more diverse and resourceful in matching the best available product to need, rather than a specific model or particular brand. Stock commitment and investment has increased to manage the protracted lead times, and forward planning with those suppliers that we can communicate with is helping buffer and keep a good flow of supply. Poor communication and a lack of clear supply date information from others is frustrating as it pressures our PDI and logistics planning, as well as customer promises. Supply will improve but the added costs and price increases are going to affect the sales process and numbers.
- How can anyone say things are improving when there are so many examples of long outstanding orders with estimated delivery dates having long since passed? We are told next to nothing without asking and what we do find out by asking often proves to be unreliable.
- At the moment, we have manufacturers' delivery predictions we quote our customers, only to have the product rescheduled by another three months. We only deal with three manufacturers, which makes our business vulnerable. I do not see an improvement in the situation, in fact I only see further deterioration. Trying to stay positive, although it doesn't sound like it!
- It's making it more profitable as we have lowered our discounts on machines and items we've sold – which is great for our dealership.

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Restitution

A guide to mistaken payments

It's so easy to make a payment. We can use contactless, PayPal, Apple Pay, BACS, CHAPs and others. But there is always a nagging concern – what if I make a mistake? Will I recover my money, asks *Nathan Talbott, partner at Wright Hassall LLP.*

A mistaken payment is usually an accidental transfer of money to someone who has no entitlement to it. This may happen because of a mistake made by the individual or business making or requesting a payment, or by their bank. It is also called a “misdirected payment”, or, in banking terminology, “misapplied funds”.

Mistaken payments can be made to people or businesses who are known to us, but who are not in fact owed money – a standing order may not have been revoked, or a direct debit may be made after an account has been closed.

The mistake when making a payment may be one of fact – such as thinking that a bill is outstanding when it has already been paid; or a mistake of law – for example, paying tax without realising it, which is not legally allowed to be charged.

Even though the mistake may be entirely your own, the law allows you to recover your money. “Restitution” is the legal term for allowing the reversal of such an injustice. The recipient of the mistaken payment may repay you voluntarily, or you may have to take legal action to successfully recover your loss.

You can recover the full value of the monies that have been enjoyed at your expense. This means both the amount of the money that was paid, and possibly its use-value while

it was erroneously held. Courts have also allowed interest and bank charges to be reclaimed.

As almost all payments these days are made directly or indirectly from our bank accounts, the first thing to do is to contact your bank. In most cases they cannot simply reverse the payment, but they should begin acting within the

sector's misdirected payments recovery framework to give you the best opportunity to recover the money.

Banks processing digital transactions through the payment services Faster Payments and BACS must act within two working days of being alerted. Where the recipient does not dispute that the money was sent to them by mistake, it will be returned within 20 working days. If, for some reason, this is not possible, your bank should advise you on what action to take.

Reversing a payment ultimately needs the cooperation of the recipient of the money, so success may depend on whether you know the identity of the recipient or not. If you know them, contacting them as soon as possible will probably resolve the situation swiftly. However, if you mistakenly transferred money to a stranger's account, they need to consent to a reversal of the payment, and you therefore need the support of your



bank and the receiving bank to contact that person, and to persuade them to allow the money to be repaid. The receiving bank may also freeze an amount equal to the mistaken payment in the recipient's account.

If the recipient refuses to return the money, you need their details to pursue the matter. These should be requested in writing from your bank. If the bank refuses to provide these details on data protection grounds, you will need to get a court order compelling the bank to disclose this information. Once you have these details, you may contact the recipient directly. If the recipient continues to refuse to repay, you need to take legal action against them.

Employees

Employment law protects employees from unlawful deductions from their wages, but expressly allows employers to recover overpayment of salary or expenses. However, if the overpayments were made over a long period of time or were made some months before and have only recently been discovered, an employer is advised to work out with the employee how best to repay the mistaken amounts.

Those that refuse to return monies, or spend it, may face a criminal charge. So, if you notice an unexplained payment in

your account, you should contact your bank immediately to investigate it and have it reversed. Failing to do this may not only result in a charge of theft but may be assisting in money laundering if the funds have been obtained illegally.

There are some situations where a recipient may keep a mistaken payment. The first is if the recipient has experienced a detrimental change of circumstances linked to the monies since the payment was made and it would be unfair to force repayment. Usually this means that the money has been spent, and the recipient has no way of repaying the money. However, there must be a credible argument as to why the recipient believed that the money could be kept and spent – otherwise it could simply be classed as theft.

Another defence to a claim for repayment is that the recipient assumed that the money was “good consideration” for a debt that was owed.

In summary

As cash continues to decline as a payment method, both the banking industry and government are under pressure to provide better safeguards to protect customers. Nevertheless, vigilance and quick action also continue to be the best defences against mistaken payments.

Confidential information

Don't let secrets walk out the door

Key players regularly move around, whether to further careers, branch out, or to set up a business to rival their former employer. The obvious question is how can businesses protect their confidential information and prevent it from walking out the door with a departing employee, asks *SME Digest* editor, *Adam Bernstein.*

Understand what is confidential

According to Aron Pope, a partner in City law firm Fox Williams, there are three general categories of confidential information – general skill and knowledge; confidential information, such as client lists, financial information, and marketing strategies; and trade secrets that include commercially valuable secrets that give the owner a competitive advantage.

He says: “During employment, employees have an implied duty to keep this information confidential. However, once they have left, the picture is different, and employers will be more at risk of misuse of their confidential information and data.” He adds that although employees are still subject to an implied duty to keep trade secrets confidential, “without specific and robust post-termination confidentiality terms in

the employment contract, wider valuable information could be passed to a competitor.”

However, there are, says Pope, four practical steps that can be taken to protect confidential information.

Identify confidential information

Firstly, organisations should pinpoint the confidential information that it owns. This may include intellectual property, such as designs and trademarks, or it may be as simple as a list of client names and contact numbers. Once identified, Pope recommends “that it should be appropriately labelled with ‘confidential’ or ‘not to be disclosed externally’, securely stored, and handled accordingly.”

Further, he advises that individuals with access to confidential information should be documented, as

“not everyone in a business needs access to company confidential information to do their job.”

Fundamentally, knowing which employees have access to this information will assist when it comes to justifying the employment contract protections that need to be put in place.

Protect what is confidential

Next, employers should use contracts and policies to ensure that there is a legal disincentive against information and intellectual property being poached.

From Pope’s perspective, bespoke confidentiality clauses should be incorporated into employment contracts. These “should be specifically tailored to information that is relevant to the business and tightly drafted to capture only that which the business can lawfully protect.”

And as well as confidentiality clauses, he points to well-drafted appropriate restrictive covenants that can also protect confidential information: “An enforceable non-compete restriction can prevent an employee from joining a competing business for a specified period, generally no longer than 12 months, after their employment ends.

Similarly, non-solicitation and non-dealing restrictions may prevent them from contacting and/or working with any key clients or suppliers for a limited period.”

But as any good lawyer knows, restrictions will only be enforceable if they operate in a way that is no wider than necessary to protect a business’s legitimate interests as well as goodwill and the stability of the workforce. This can also include trade secrets and confidential information.

The same principles apply when drafting clauses in a settlement agreement where an employee is exiting the business. As a result, Pope says that the agreement may need to ensure a specific payment is made in return for new confidentiality restrictions, which also “will protect the tax treatment of any separate compensation payments and may assist with enforcement.”

Similarly, employers should put in place a confidentiality policy that highlights the business’s expectations about confidentiality; the types of confidential information existing within the business; and ways to keep such confidential information secure. But for it to be effective, Pope warns that it must be read and understood by the workforce.

And in addition to the legal documents that may be deployed, training should also be provided as a further means of reducing risk. This will help employees identify confidential information they may be working with or have access to, understand how to keep that information confidential, and raise awareness of their contractual obligations, both during employment and after leaving the business.

In Pope’s view, “training is more important than ever now that so many employees have been regularly working from home and may continue to do so through hybrid working arrangements.”

Monitor for abuse

Another option for employers is to consider how to monitor systems to pick up on any data and confidentiality breaches promptly. And the point is important, says Pope, given the growth of hybrid working. “Employers may now be more vulnerable to the loss of confidential information as remote working makes it more difficult to ensure data security.”

It is possible to monitor the use of confidential information with software that can alert instantly to suspicious behaviour, such as large downloads, emails to personal accounts or voluminous printing.

Pope cautions, however, “that there are various legal restrictions, including GDPR, which put employers at risk of overstepping the mark. They will need to ensure that any monitoring is proportionate to the legitimate interest that they are seeking to protect.” He also says they need to keep employees well informed about the type of monitoring the company is likely to perform through data privacy notices and other documents.

Lastly, post-employment checks can be performed on company devices returned by a departing employee to ensure that confidential information has not been suspiciously downloaded or emailed externally.

In summary

Confidential information is by its very nature valuable, and organisations should take great care to protect it against loss and misuse. Similarly, employers should ensure that they are not put in a position where they might be accused of abusing another’s protected information.



Promoting your expertise



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

THIS ISSUE: The importance of selling your product knowledge

As an owner or manager in a dealership, you are often viewed as an expert in the product that you sell and service, and rightfully so. You know more about the details of the product than just about anyone else. When thinking about conveying professionalism in your dealership and selling your brand, it’s important to not undervalue the power of the knowledge.

People come to your business because you are the expert.

Think about the amount of time and money you have put into becoming an expert on the products that you carry. I assume it’s a substantial amount of both. But, if you are like many of our dealers, the product knowledge you and your team have may be one of the best-kept secrets in your dealership!

When we understand that people come to a dealership because they assume we are the experts, it changes how we do things and how we equip our people. We must start thinking about how to get the word out. Maybe start by making sure every invoice leaving your dealership has the cumulative time in the industry of all your employees, or maybe break it up by department. When your employees finish a certification or training, think about sharing it with your customers. When our customers know about the continued training we are doing with our people, it elevates the status of our dealership in their minds, and continues to allow us to charge a premium price for the services we offer.

One of our dealers made sure that everyone knew when their service manager completed their EDA Service Manager Certification by not only putting the emblem on their website but by ensuring it was on the dealership’s social media accounts and other promotions they sent out. Your customers don’t need to know everything you know about the product, they just want the information that affects them.

On the flip side, while we have this incredible knowledge base about the products we carry, your customers don’t want all the details about every piece of equipment you have in your dealership. They only want the information that is relevant to them. Many times we see salespeople talk themselves out of a sale because they are oversharing specific product knowledge that the customer doesn’t care about. Your customers only have one question in mind when they’re buying from you: “How does this affect me?” The challenge for salespeople is to answer that question with as much clarity as possible, while keeping the customer engaged.

We know you have all the information in your head, but not all the information needs to come out of your mouth.

Find out what it is the customer needs from the product you are selling and servicing and stick to what they need. Typically, a customer can only retain three key points about the product during their discussion with you, keep it simple and you will have a customer that not only remains engaged but will be more likely to buy the product or service you’re sharing about.



Like a coiled spring



Anthony Deacon of MKM Agriculture, describes how the dealership is waiting for official go-ahead to put new plans into action

The season is now in full swing, and we are as busy as we hoped we would be. We have just finished our 2021/22 financial year, and although we delivered a lower turnover than the previous year, we still managed to retain a healthy profit while increasing our workforce and subsequent overheads – all planned in preparation for our expansion into the new premises.

Unfortunately, I do not have much more to report since the last issue regarding the new building. The local authorities moved the planning decision date back by four weeks because they realised that for our size of application they can take longer to make a decision than they first anticipated. At the time of writing, we still needed to wait for this decision. I'm like a coiled spring with crossed fingers ready to put our plans into action on notification of an approved planning decision – hopefully it won't be too long now. We have had responses from some of the local authorities during the consultation

period, and fortunately nothing alarming has come up, with no objections.

Stage two of our recovery has now ended, and our yard ground works have been completed. We have lots of new yard concrete, a new entrance twice as wide, all the drainage and below ground infrastructure is now in place, landscaping and tree planting has been completed – all in anticipation of the new build.

I have heard from our steel frame building manufacturer that, due to the crisis in Ukraine, there has already been a £300 per tonne increase in steel prices. 60% of European steel comes from ore mined in Ukraine, and although UK steel does not generally come from here, it is having a knock-on effect on supply right across Europe. I just hope that by the time we must commit to our steel, these prices have dropped.

While we are waiting to progress with the building I have been working more on our utilities and working practices for the new dealership. I have my reservations on the use of electric vehicles – I'm just not sure the

infrastructure is there yet. It sounds like a good idea, but is it practical? I'm still undecided about our source of heat, light and power. I don't think there is an obvious choice to make with the rising costs across all avenues. I guess I'm hoping for someone to knock on my door and give me the answer – but I'm not holding out much hope of that!

I have been working on our brand partners over recent weeks because, as you might have read, one of our brands decided to part company with us. I guess they felt they did not want to be part of this journey. But, as they say, when one door closes many more open, and they certainly have for MKM. I have been in discussions with a few new partners who have a real passion for growth, products, and the future. They also share similar aspirations as myself.

These are exactly the businesses I feel we should be working with in this forever changing world and I'm feeling positive that we will have the best products to offer our customers.



The rebuild underway at MKM



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AGRICULTURAL

Entry-level loading from Claas

Three new Torian models from 46 to 74hp



The Claas range of small Torian wheel loaders with articulated steering now includes three models with engine outputs of 46 to 74hp.

The new entry-level Torian 530, which is powered by a 46 hp Yanmar four-cylinder engine with 2.2l displacement, features a hydraulic system that delivers 61 l/min at 230 bar and enables an articulated tipping load of 3,000 kg. The parallel-guided Z-kinematics of the conical mast allows for a bucket pivot point of 3.18m to be dumped over heights of up to 2.82m and maximum reach of 1.46m. The mast and attachment are operated using a joystick. Alternatively, the two additional control circuits can be controlled using an additional lever or at the push of a button.

On the larger Torian 535 and Torian 639 models, power from the 2.1l Yanmar four-cylinder engine has been increased to 74 hp. They are now optionally available with either standard or High-Lift Z-kinematics. In the standard version, overreach heights of 2.82m (Torian 535) or 2.98m

(Torian 639) can be achieved, while the High-Lift version can reach 2.97m to 3.18m. Depending on the version, the bucket pivot point is between 3.19m and 3.54m. Maximum reach is from 1.49m to 1.71m. With a hydraulic delivery volume of 70 or 80 l/min, the articulated tipping load of the Torian 535 is 3,500 kg (High-Lift: 3,300 kg) and on the Torian 639 it's 3,900 kg (High-Lift: 3,600 kg).

The engines of all three 'small' Torians meet the Stage V emissions standard using a diesel particulate filter (DPF) and a diesel oxidation catalyst (DOC) without SCR.

All three models also have a hydrostatic drive with two speed levels, which accelerates the 530 to a maximum of 20kph and the two larger models now up to 30kph.

The company says the completely redesigned cab has lots of storage options, offers all-round visibility and, thanks to the curved front windscreen, the operator has a clear view of the mast and raised attachments.

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DOMESTIC

Stiga claims a Swift world's first

Ride-on mower with interchangeable batteries

STIGA has introduced the Swift, which it says is the world's first ride-on mower with interchangeable batteries.

The unit is equipped with a combined 25 Ah battery pack comprising four 48V batteries (2 x 5 Ah + 2 x 7.5 Ah), included in standard delivery. The company says the interchangeable batteries make for virtually limitless riding time, making the mower suitable for use on expansive lawns. Stiga says the batteries work synchronously and constantly balance the available energy. Onboard charging supplies new energy to one battery after the other, so the first one is ready for use again after 30 minutes.

The interchangeable batteries can be used in a wide variety of the manufacturer's range of handheld equipment. They also claim the Swift runs reliably on only three batteries.

Featuring a width of 735 mm, the mower has a turning radius of 1,620 mm. Three mowing options are available in total, according to demand and energy consumption. While the standard mode provides a performance of 3,500 rpm, the boost mode offers 3,700 rpm. Eco mode (3,200 rpm) saves users up to 40% energy, covering an area of around 2,800 sqm.

The company also says the mower offers low-vibration, ergonomic features and a reduced noise level. While the steering wheel can be turned easily with just one finger, the one-button start, cruise control and Stiga One Pedal Drive ensure intuitive start-up and driving. The tractor stops automatically when the drive pedal is released. The parking brake also activates automatically as soon as the machine comes to a stop, with no need for manual intervention.

Using the extended connectivity with the Stiga.Go app and the virtual

dashboard, users can always keep track of the current battery status and adjust the various settings to suit their personal needs.

Benefiting from a low centre of gravity of 351 mm, the new dual-blade mowing deck is designed for more efficient airflow inside the tunnel and at the blades, which Stiga says also improves the collection of clippings. The shredded grass is fed into the 170 l catcher bag. And with the washing attachment, cleaning takes a few seconds after the work is done.



5 SECOND INFO

- Interchangeable 25 Ah battery pack
- Automatic stop
- Eco mode - saves up to 40% energy



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	MXU 300	MXU 550	MXU 700
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Engine:	SOHC 4-Stroke	SOHC 4-Stroke	SOHC 4-Stroke
Cooling:	Liquid	Liquid	Liquid
Power:	15.7 kW (21 HP)	22.4 kW (30 HP)	29 kW (39 HP)
Fuel System:	Injection	Injection	Injection
Gears:	H,L,N,R Auto Transmission	H,L,N,R,P Auto Transmission	H,L,N,R,P Auto Transmission
LxWxH (mm):	1900 x 1030 x 1180	2140 x 1245 x 1250	2140 x 1245 x 1340
Turn Radius (mm):	2900	3450	3450
Fuel Capacity:	12.5 L	21 L	21 L

DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL



Ego boost to range

Including new ride-on

Ego has launched three key new products.

The Ego Z6 is the company's first zero-turn ride-on mower, using the same interchangeable batteries that power the rest of the company's garden tool range. By combining up to six of their 56V ARC Lithium platform batteries, the manufacturer says the Z6 delivers the same power and performance as a 22HP petrol ride-on mower, cutting up to two-and-a-half acres on a single charge with six 12Ah batteries. The zero turning radius Z6 features three driving modes and four blade speeds, with easily adjustable cutting height positions between 2.5-10cm. Operators can also choose to collect the clippings, side-discharge

or mulch them.

Alongside the Z6, Ego is expanding its Power+ range of chainsaws with the CS1610E. Combining high torque and chain speed, it is designed to cut through branches and medium-sized logs up to 40cm wide. The chain tensioner has been improved and streamlined to make flush felling cuts possible, and auto-chain tensioning maintains proper tension during use or tool-free chain tensioning. The oil filler cap can also be opened and closed without the need of tools, while the saw lies flat on its side when being filled with oil, removing the need for awkward balancing acts.

Completing the new tool range for 2022 is the LB7650E leaf blower,

offering a run time of up to six hours on a single battery charge. With 1,300m³/h output when in Boost mode, it features a thumb selector for variable speed and airflow control.

They are supported by a new 12Ah battery and Professional Multi-Port charging case. The 12Ah battery is the largest in the range, increasing battery run time between charges by up to 20% across all Ego products. The company says the Charging Case will charge any combination of up to six Ego portable batteries at the same time. Their intelligent power management system replenishes batteries with the lowest level of charge first, then brings all the batteries up to full charge at the same rate.

DOMESTIC

Recycler recycled

Upgrades to Toro mowers

Toro has upgraded its 55cm (22") Recycler mower line-up with a range of new mowers. Both petrol-powered and 60V Flex-Force battery-powered models have been enhanced with what the company describes as "performance-driven features", such as the Vortex Technology, which increases airflow to "supercharge grass cutting".

Toro's patented Vortex Technology is powered by an intake system that fuels the cutting chamber with additional airflow. The air infusion whirls grass clippings around the cutting chamber at a faster rate, either shredding them into ultra-fine clippings or shooting them into the newly-designed Super Bagger with increased velocity.

For those times of the year when lawn maintenance requires additional clean-up, you can use the newly designed grass bag, which fits more grass clippings. Combining Vortex Technology with enhanced bag-fill capabilities, Toro says the mower is transformed into a lawn vacuum. Additionally, the new tapered bag design promotes easier, cleaner bag emptying.

Also new, the Automatic Drive System is described by the company as the next evolution of the self-propelled mower. Much like a car's automatic transmission, users can grab anywhere on the steering-wheel-inspired handle and walk at the pace they choose. The intelligent mower will sense and adjust to the operator in real-time.

With an arc, telescoping handle, and a bail that requires 50% less force to engage, users will stay comfortable, even on the extra-long jobs.

Toro also says they stand behind its Recyclers with a two-year full warranty on both the petrol and battery mowers, a three-year, guaranteed-to-start on all petrol engines, and a full three-year warranty on batteries.



DOMESTIC



Additions made to the Webb site

Cordless product updates

Now available is the latest Webb cordless range of hedge and lawn care products with their new interchangeable 20v Lithium-ion batteries.

Each tool in the range comes with a battery charger that features a 1.5Ah slot, so each battery takes 80 minutes to charge (2Ah only). The company says the Lithium-ion batteries hold their charge and don't degrade in storage.

Featuring a new design, the Webb WEV20HT cordless hedge trimmer comes equipped with 50cm dual action blades. Described by Webb as lightweight and compact, it is suited to smaller gardens and lighter trimming jobs, with a runtime of up to 45 minutes (2Ah).

Recently updated to form part of the new Cordless range, the WEV20PHT long reach hedge trimmer is designed for tall hedges due to its extendable shaft with articulating cutter-head. For jobs closer to the ground, the company says the Webb WEV20LT cordless line trimmer is designed to put the finishing touches to a lawn with 25cm (10") cutting width, using an auto-feed head and adjustable telescopic shaft. The line trimmer can be used to trim or edge lawns and pathways with its rotating head, and has up to 35 minutes runtime (2 Ah).

Also available in the range is the Webb WEV20LM33 cordless 20v rotary lawnmower with integrated fins for up-to-the-edge mowing. Featuring a 33cm cutting width and a 35-litre grass collector, an integrated handle enables it to be transported around smaller gardens. It is supplied with five cutting heights from 25-65cm, with one easy adjustment lever.

For the task of tilling the soil, the Webb WEV20TIL tiller is described as a lightweight, easy-to-handle model. A 19cm (7.5") working width, and capable of depths of 15cm (6"), this is suitable for flower beds or small allotments. It has up to 40 minutes of runtime from its 2Ah battery.

From Jethro Tull to Elon Musk

Who will drive innovation this century?

Chris Biddle



A fascinating feature in the *Farmers Weekly* recently charted the rise of so-called super dealers in the UK. It was compiled for the FW by industry journalist Peter Hill, who must have been dreading the receipt of yet another press release announcing that A Green Tractor Company Limited had acquired Tinkerbell and Sons Farm Machinery Ltd in the middle of his research.

It is a mammoth piece of work that Peter says “grew like Topsy” the more he delved into dealer figures for the 2020 trading year – not helped, of course, by different year ends.

So, what do we learn?

First, unsurprisingly, the big are getting bigger. Also, the two largest dealerships, Claas UK and Scot JCB, are directly associated with a manufacturer brand, although they're not exclusively wedded to that manufacturer's core product.

In a way, it is difficult to make any direct comparisons because many of the largest dealerships have diversified into parallel markets such as construction, grounds care, animal feeds, and so on. Some dealerships, such as Tuckwells and Doe, for instance, own farms, while the Paflinger lorry crane division contributes significantly to the T H White Group business. Haynes Bros has its car and commercial vehicle business, and Carrs Billington, who are just outside the Top 20, derives much of its +£45m turnover from its animal feeds business.

The Claas UK dealer group tops the leaderboard with a turnover of £155.4m, and is unique in being the only manufacturer-owned dealership, a legacy from the 1990s when it took ownership of a few dealers in order to protect the Claas brand in certain areas.

Meanwhile, Chandlers were in 12th place in the FW survey, with a turnover of £75.1m, but would have catapulted into second place with turnover of +£139m had its acquisition of Lister Wilder's AGCO branches been counted a few months later.

The striking feature of those in the 'field' is that the majority of dealerships are family-owned, some stretching back several generations. For me, it is a tribute to, and an outstanding feature of this industry, that so many remain in the immediate control of the family. Most will have started from modest beginnings. A blacksmith, a hardware shop, a general trader.

The families involved have had to change and adapt to a rapidly evolving industry, and there is plenty of evidence that they will continue to do so.

Advent of long-line

However, so much is changing in farm technology, with the advent of robots, autonomous vehicles, drones, vertical farming, electrification, new power sources, and so on. The whole business of food production is bound, in time, to move away from the tractors and machinery, which have been a mainstay of our industry since John Froelich, from Iowa, created the first gasoline tractor in 1892 to replace cumbersome, steam-powered machines.

His presentation to a group of businessmen went well, and, mightily encouraged, he went into limited production with a new company, the Waterloo Traction Engine Company. However, in the event, he only sold two machines – and both of these were returned! The project was abandoned, and the company reverted to manufacturing engines.

Froelich, however, stuck with the idea, convinced it was the future, and around

20 years later, he finally produced the Waterloo Boy Tractor, which was immediately commercially successful. Other manufacturers were starting to enter the tractor market, and an implement maker, John Deere, was looking to complement its range. In 1918 it bought the manufacturing rights from Froelich. Today, the Waterloo Tractor Factory in Iowa is one of the largest tractor manufacturing plants in the US. It was to be the birth of the 'long-line' manufacturer, which has been shaping the direction of travel for many dealers – although total brand exclusivity is still a comparative rarity.

The industry is on the cusp of significant change.

Farm equipment manufacturers are acquiring technology companies at a rate of knots. These are mainly specialised start-ups providing AI (artificial intelligence) systems, mechatronics, monitoring, tracking and controlling systems similar to those used in aviation, marine and many other industries.

All of which of course will impact the modus-operandi of sales and servicing dealers in the future.

Up to now, farm machinery development has been driven by those already in, or associated with, the agricultural sector. From agronomist Jethro Tull, who invented the seed drill in the 1700s, to ag engineers John Freolich in the 1800s and Harry Ferguson in the 1900s.

Who will be the game-changers in the 2000s? Will our traditional space be occupied by the likes of Elon Musk or Bill Gates?

What is certain is that many more of those we attract into our dealerships in the future will have a technology, rather than an agricultural, or indeed a mechanical, background or qualification.

What's on?

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, we advise checking with organisers websites and social media channels.

MAY 2022

North Somerset Show www.nsas.org.uk	2
LAMMA 2022, Birmingham NEC www.lammashow.com	4-5
Nottinghamshire County Show www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com	14
Balmoral Show, Belfast www.balmoralshow.co.uk	14
Scotgrass, Dumfries www.scotgrass.co.uk	18
Smallholding & Countryside Festival Royal Welsh Showground www.rwas.wales/whats-on/smallholding-countryside-festival	21-22
Chelsea Flower Show www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show	24-28
The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC www.cvshow.com	24-26
Herts County Show www.hertsshow.com	28-29
Suffolk County Show www.suffolkshow.co.uk	31/5-1/6

JUNE 2022

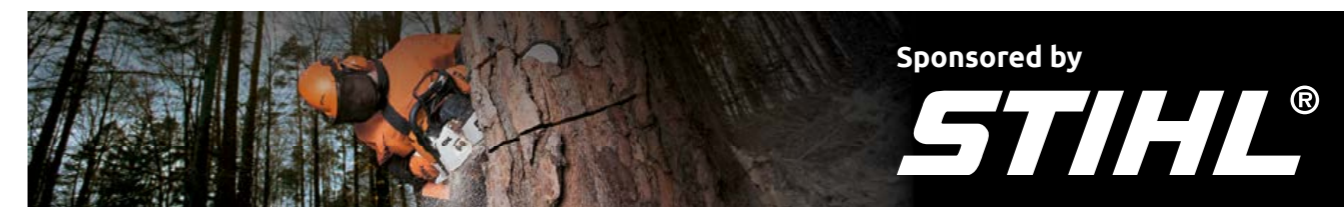
Staffordshire County Show www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show	1-2
Royal Bath & West Show www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show	2-4
Rutland Show www.rutlandcountyshow.com	4
Cereals 2022, Duxford www.cerealsevent.co.uk	8-9
Royal Cornwall Show www.royalcornwallshow.org	9-11
Arable Event Woodlands Farm, Weston Under Lizard www.thearableevent.co.uk	15

(June 2022 continued)

Three Counties Show, Malvern www.royalthreecounties.co.uk	17-19
spoga-gafa 2022, Cologne www.spogagafa.com	19-21
BBC Gardeners' World Live - Birmingham NEC www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com	18-21
Royal Cheshire County Show www.royalcheshireshow.org	21-22
Lincolnshire Show www.lincolnshireshow.co.uk	22-23
Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh www.royalhighlandshow.org	23-26
Derbyshire County Show www.derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk	26
Glee 2022 www.gleebirmingham.com	28-30
Devon County Show www.devoncountyshow.co.uk	30/6-2/7

JULY 2022

Sports & Grounds Expo, Three Counties Showground, Malvern www.sportsandgrounds.events	6-7
Newport Show www.newportshow.co.uk	9
Kent County Show www.kentshowground.co.uk	9-10
Great Yorkshire Show www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk	12-14
Royal Welsh Show www.rwas.wales/whats-on/royal-welsh-show-2	18-21
Mid Devon Show www.middevonshow.co.uk	23
New Forest & Hampshire County Show www.newforestshow.co.uk	26-28



A ground caring sector

Industry steps up to do its bit

Ukraine initiative

In my last column I was asking whether Sue Gray (remember her?) had been able to hand in her fully completed homework yet?!

That feels like an awfully long time ago now though, doesn't it, with all that's transpired since? Taking over the narrative and our thoughts are the daily, escalating horrors seen in Ukraine. I know my job is mostly to be the flag waver, for good, positive news in this journal, but it becomes difficult when what we're seeing every day is increasingly appalling.

I suppose what we can hold on to, though, as evidence of the inherent

goodness of ordinary people in this country and around the world - sickened at what Putin and his brainwashed lackies are carrying out - is their desire to help however they can. With there being little practically that the likes of you or I can do to benefit the victims of the atrocities, it has become apparent that a worthwhile course of action is to donate what we can.

Over the past month or so, it seems the consensus of a truly great place to donate has been the British Red Cross. One can be confident that

money donated here is making a difference on the ground. As they say on their website, they are part of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), which unites 15 member charities who are experts in humanitarian aid and specialists in different areas of disaster response.

As such, in wanting to play a small part in helping where our industry can, you may have seen that Service Dealer pledged to give 100% of new advertising revenue generated across

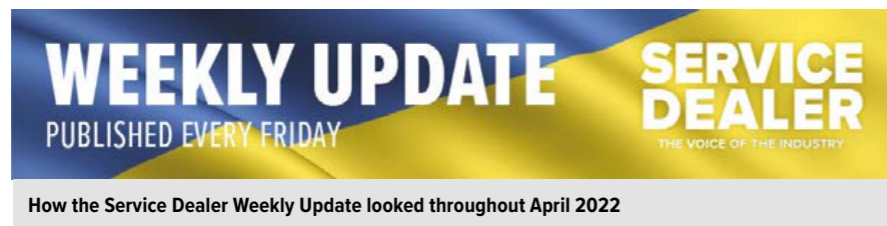
"We felt we had to do something, and thought that by donating all new digital advertising revenue earned in April, it could be a way of our industry coming together to offer some help to the people of Ukraine.

"I know first-hand how friendly and caring this sector can be, so I was confident we could raise a significant contribution."

At the time of going to press I've not been made party to what the final total raised by the initiative was but keep them peeled on the Weekly Update, because I'm sure it will be shared soon.

Of course, the major, multinational players in our sector, also have their own charitable endeavours for Ukraine. I heard of Kubota, STIHL, Husqvarna, CNH and AGCO, among others, all making generous contributions.

So while those feelings of helplessness and utter sorrow for those poor civilians is natural and can become overwhelming at times, some solace can perhaps be taken in knowing that the spirit of human kindness is still very much alive among good people.



all digital titles throughout the month of April to this amazing charity.

This was all additional advertising revenue gained from the Service Dealer Weekly Update, Service Dealer Ireland Update, Service Dealer's website, TurfPro Weekly Briefing, TurfPro's website and the Garden Trader website. All of our digital channels.

Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke said, "We are not political, but what we're seeing in Ukraine isn't a political issue - it's a humanitarian crisis.

**Answer, at the time of writing, is no!*



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