

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

March/April 2023

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

OPENING UP NEW AVENUES

Sarah & Steve Law of Cutting Edge Machinery tell us about recent history, increasing battery sales and moving into hire

LAMMA SHOW

Industry braces for calm after the storm

CELEBRATING A HALF-CENTURY IN BUSINESS

Ross Agri Services hit 50

BTME '23

Timing, location & content spot on

ONE YEAR ON

How have Hertfordshire Garden Machinery fared following their decision to return to sales and welcome customers back in store?



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ASPEN 2

Letter from the editor
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CONTENTS

- 4 **News**
Latest industry developments
- 14 **New depot, experienced team**
ABA Groundcare expand premises and staff
- 18 **Dealer profile**
Cutting Edge Machinery opening new avenues
- 22 **Celebrating a half century in business**
Ross Agri Services hit 50
- 28 **One year on**
Catching up with HGM a year after reopening
- 34 **LAMMA review**
Industry braces for the calm after the storm
- 38 **BTME '23**
Timing, location and content spot-on
- 42 **View from across the pond**
With Sara Hey
- 43 **Diary of a season**
With Winchester Garden Machinery
- 44 **Business monitor**
Winter servicing '23 survey results
- 46 **SME digest**
Information for small businesses
- 49 **New products**
Coverage of new equipment to hit the market
- 56 **In my view**
With The Sprocket
- 58 **Events**
Shows and industry events update

Welcome to the March /April 2023 edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

This issue is packed with positive stories, featuring dealers from all round the country. All are finding ways of succeeding with their local customers, growing their businesses in the process.

On the domestic machinery side, Cutting Edge Machinery tell us about moving into hire, while Hertfordshire Garden Machinery let us know how they have pushed on since reopening their showroom a year ago.

In the agricultural sector, Ross Agri Services explain how technological advances in the field have meant they have had to adapt the service they offer to their customers. In the commercial turfcare market, ABA Groundcare explain how the opening of a new premises was greatly aided with the acquisition of experienced staff from a neighbouring business that had ceased trading.

We thank all these dealers for sharing their experiences with us, and hope that others reading their stories will relate to their hardwork and determination, perhaps finding inspiration in their tales. Hopefully, this year will be kind to these businesses, and, of course, to all our readers.

There's no denying the prevailing economic situation is tough – but maybe we can take solace from the atmosphere found at the two major industry trade shows that took place at the start of the year? At both LAMMA and BTME – both discussed in this issue – busy halls were found, and there was a real sense that the markets wanted to get down to some serious business this year. Each event drew an impressive crowd from the end-user customers they target. This was clearly good news for the show organisers and the exhibitors on-site, but one hopes that dealerships everywhere will also benefit from the exposure.

THE TEAM

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PEOPLE



BAGMA's new general manager, Nick Darking

BAGMA appoint new general manager

Nick Darking joins from Redexim

A well-known industry name will be taking the reins at the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association (BAGMA), as they have announced Nick Darking as their new General Manager.

Effective from 13th March 2023, the Association say Nick will be building on the legacy of departing director Keith Christian, bringing with him more than 30 years of industry knowledge and experience to the role.

Nick joins BAGMA on the back of more than three decades in the land-based engineering sector working with a cross section of customers and dealers in both the agricultural and ground care sectors. The majority of Nick's career has been with machinery supplier Redexim, where he began in a hands-on role in the workshop, before a long and illustrious track record in a sales and support roles. It is also here that Nick forged many strong and longstanding relationships with partners across the Redexim dealer network.

In addition to Redexim partners, Nick has also had the pleasure of working closely alongside industry associations including BIGGA and the Grounds Management Association (GMA), and has sat on the AEA's 'Outdoor Power Equipment Council' for the last 10 years.

Commenting on his appointment, Nick said, "I am delighted to be joining the BAGMA team, working with a fantastic

group of industry professionals and using my knowledge to further the aims and objectives that BAGMA work so passionately to achieve. Having worked with a number of BAGMA members in my previous roles, I look forward to re-connecting and developing these relationships and taking the next step of my career in the industry which I love."

Keith Christian said, "I am pleased to be handing over BAGMA to a person that has a similar industry background to myself and an understanding of the UK dealer network and their needs in today's ever changing business world."

Ruth Bailey, CEO AEA, added, "This is a superb appointment for us and for the industry. We are absolutely thrilled that someone of Nick's standing and experience will be taking the helm at BAGMA and carrying on with the dedicated and passionate path as set by Keith. I very much look forward to working with Nick in the years to come."

DEALERS



Henton & Chattell's md, Peter Chaloner

Henton & Chattell to part with John Deere

Two-decade relationship comes to an end this spring

the business, and – rest assured – we will continue to look after our existing customers in the future."

Service Dealer asked Henton & Chattell if they would be directly replacing John Deere with any new brands. They said plans were taking shape, and further announcements would be made in due course.

Nottingham-based turf and ground care machinery distributor Henton & Chattell have announced they are to stop selling John Deere machinery this Spring.

The company say they have successfully sold Deere for two decades in the Midlands.

Peter Chaloner, managing director of Henton & Chattell explained: "We have certainly enjoyed working with the John Deere team, and thank them for their support and professionalism. We will continue to work closely with our customers as we develop our professional turf business with other brands. The turf and ground care sector continues to be an important focus for

I believe this shows through consistently within every aspect of our business. Commitment and dedication to go the extra mile, to help our customers, makes all the difference."

Henton & Chattell operates from its head office in Nottingham, and has recently made a substantial investment in a 40,000 sq. ft. warehouse to facilitate its growth plans. The company says that an additional site is planned to open in the near-future, which will be dedicated to its turf and ground care business. Peter Chaloner explained that the new depot will be a 'one-stop-shop' for professional customers, offering parts, service, training and demonstrations.

Henton & Chattell is a family-owned and managed business, established in 1931. They describe themselves as the UK's largest independent garden machinery and parts distributor, with an annual turnover of over £35m and 85 members of staff.

PEOPLE



Tim Farrow

Technical role promotion at Stocks AG

Tim Farrow leading development in the business

Stocks AG has promoted Tim Farrow to the recently-created position of technical director.

In his new capacity, Tim will be leading research and development, as well as heading up technical support

for customers, dealers and OEMs.

Since joining Stocks Ag at the end of 2020, as UK field sales manager, Tim has become increasingly involved in product development at Stocks.

Tim has worked in agriculture for more than 30 years. His new position will see him setting up a technical support department, as well as taking charge of research and development.

James Woolway, MD at Stocks, commented: "It was clear from before I took ownership of Stocks AG that research and proactive product

development needed investment and time. Having experience in aftersales, and being technically-minded, has put Tim in a strong position to lead this exciting development in the business."

"I am looking forward to the challenges ahead," said Tim. "With so much innovation in agriculture bringing product opportunities for Stocks, I believe we will continue to improve our product offering to give farmers and contractors exactly what they are looking for."

Deere extend two dealers' territories

To cover Henton's sales area



Deere golf ride-on

Following the news that Henton & Chattell is to cease being a John Deere dealer, the manufacturer announced that two of its existing dealer businesses are expanding to serve customers in the territory.

Chris Meacock, golf and turf division sales manager at John Deere, said: "We are grateful for the commitment the team at Henton & Chattell has given over the past 20 years looking after turf professionals who operate John Deere equipment, and thank them for their expertise and dedication over this time. We wish them every success in the future."

"Our existing dealership network is already expanding to ensure customers who are currently served by Henton & Chattell experience a seamless transition to our new structure."

The move will see agriculture and turf dealers Farol and Ripon Farm Services - the latter with its recently announced acquisition of F G Adamson & Son – expanded to maintain the excellent level of service customers in the region

currently experience.

James Moore, golf and grass business director for Farol, said: "Farol is a business at the cutting edge of innovation in turfcare, and our staff are experts in providing the products, support and after sales service that groundscape professionals need from a brand like John Deere. We are looking forward to building on the excellent service John Deere customers have experienced in the region."

Geoff Brown, managing director of Ripon Farm Services, said: "It is an extremely exciting time for Ripon Farm Services. We will soon complete the acquisition of FG Adamson & Son to give us the turf expertise required to provide sales and support across this new territory, and look forward to this next chapter in our growth."

DEALERS

Baroness award their dealers

Prizes presented at January's BTME

Baroness UK presented their dealer awards at January's BTME exhibition.

Winning Highest Overall UK Sales was George Browns Ltd. Tim Mason, group sales manager (groundcare), collected the award from Stuart Gray of Baroness. Tim said: "We'd like to thank all our customers for trusting in us, and we hope we can continue into 2023 for another positive year."

Lister Wilder picked up the Sales & Service award, with David Gray collecting the prize on behalf of the team from Baroness's Luke Collins. Lister's sales director, Phill Hughes, commented: "It's always an honour to receive awards. It shows the huge efforts put in by our sales, parts and service departments to ensure that we deliver great customer service across our core franchises."

Presented with the Rising Star Award by Baroness's Andy Darley were Gibsons Garden Machinery (GGM). Chris Gibson, of GGM, said: "The Rising Star Award is presented to the fastest growing dealer for sales performance, and we're very pleased that the continued hard effort put in by the team is being recognised and awarded by a manufacturer as prestigious as Baroness."



Tim Mason of George Browns with Baroness's Stuart Gray at January's BTME

Adam Butler, director of Baroness UK, added: "The Baroness Dealer Awards provide a superb stage on which we can showcase the hard work and dedication our multi branch dealers continue to produce year on year. We are extremely proud of all our dealers, and especially the 2022 winners. We produce world-leading machinery, in which we require world leading backup. That's what we have, and that's what we will continue to do. A big thank you from Team Baroness goes out to all our dealers and customers alike for their continued support."

DEALERS

Mean Green add to network

Rickerby appointed

Overton UK have announced Rickerby Limited as their official dealer in Mean Green electric commercial mowers for Cumbria, the north-east and the Scottish Borders.

Alistair McRobert, horticulture and grounds care sales manager at Rickerby Groundscare, says he has followed the Mean Green range since their introduction. After initial demonstrations to the sales team, Alistair felt that the time was right to move forward.

"We chose Mean Green Mowers because it fills a gap in our portfolio of grass cutting machines," Alistair said. "And, as the years have progressed, we noticed that they were continually improving."



L-R: Alistair McRobert, Rickerby Groundscare sales manager and Steve Barnfather, Overton (UK) ASM

"Knowing Overton have been in business for 35 years – and have been promoting the Mean Green mowers for the last seven – also gave us comfort, and we are looking forward to working with the company."

Stuart Rose of Overton added: "We are pleased to add such a well-respected and professional company to our growing list of dealers throughout the country."

INDUSTRY



New Holland top the tractor charts again

For the most recent year's figures available

The AEA has unveiled market share data for 2021 tractor registrations.

The total number of tractors registered in 2021 was 14,071, including both agricultural tractors (over 50hp) and compact tractors (50hp and below).

Stephen Howarth, agricultural economist at the Association, said: "It is worth remembering that the market was disrupted in 2020 and 2021, due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting disruption to global supply chains and transportation, which may have had an impact on market share."

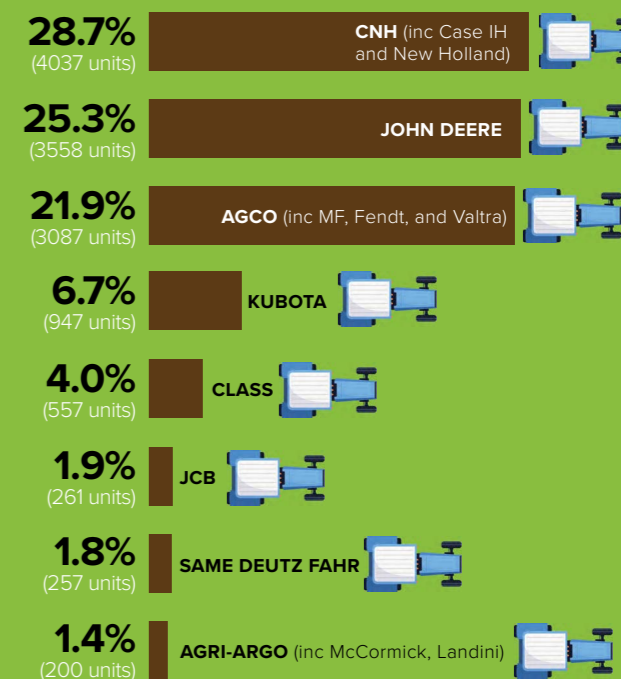
The information below shows the number of machines and the market share recorded during that year by brand. As always, the data is released after a one-year delay, due to competition law restrictions. Figures for 2022 are due to be published in early-2024.

The leading brand in 2021 was the same as in the previous year, CNH, comprising New Holland and CASE IH. They increased their market share slightly, from 27.1% to 28.7%.

After dropping down to second place in 2020 after many years leading the pack, John Deere stayed where they were, with market share contracting from 26.5% to 25.3%.

All the other companies listed on the leaderboard maintained the same position they held in 2020 – except for JCB jumping up a place over Same Deutz Fahr.

The market share data for 2021 was:



1167 units sold by others (8.3%)

DEALERS

Opico add new dealer

Crawfords join their network

Opico has announced that the Crawfords Group will be joining its established dealer network.

Established in 1980 as an agricultural machinery dealership in Essex, Crawfords have since expanded to seven depots, and have extended their reach into Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire. A key AGCO dealer since 2001, Crawfords Group runs the Fendt and Valtra Franchise from their Crawfords depots, and the Massey Ferguson Franchise from their Agwood depots.

Wes Crawford, managing director at

the Crawfords Group, commented: "We are a family-run business. Maintaining our high level of customer service and company values is as important today as it was 40 years ago. We've found that Opico's vision aligns with our own – and, of course, it helps that they offer a premium machinery portfolio to complement our existing range. Our team are really looking forward to learning about the machines, and can't wait to demonstrate them to our customers."

Charles Bedforth, sales director at Opico, added: "Working with Crawfords

is a win-win situation. A cornerstone in our strategy is to partner with leading dealers throughout the country. In Wes and his team, we believe we will create a long-term relationship for the benefit of both companies, but especially for Crawford and Agwood customers."

Crawfords Group will sell Opico grain dryers, mechanical weeding, arable and grassland equipment, alongside HE-VA cultivation and grassland machines, SKY drills (Agwoods only) and Strautmann forage and feeding wagons.



L-R: Charles Bedforth, sales director, Opico; Wes Crawford, managing director, Crawfords Group; Nunzio Rio, group sales director, Crawfords Group; Harvey Sherwin, territory manager, Opico

DEALERS



Outstanding Dealer award went to Davies Tractors. L-R: Steve Brinkley, Dave Webb (Dave Webb Engineering), Pryderi Gruffyd (Clwyd Agricultural), Paul Luke (Reiver Garage), Kevin Davies (Davies Tractors), Neil Everett

Polaris honour dealers

Prizes presented at manufacturer's conference

Polaris UK & Ireland held their 2023 dealer conference in January, with the event finishing up with the annual dealer awards ceremony.

Awards were given for the Best Newcomer, Outstanding Dealer Service, Forever Forward Award, Three-Star Dealer and Dealer of the Year.

Richard Coleby, Polaris UK's national sales manager, said: "The dealer awards are our way of saying a big thank you to our dealers for all the hard work they have put in over the past year. Bringing our dealers together is a great way to work as a team, taking on feedback and learnings to continue the success that our dealers are providing for the brand."

The award for Best Newcomer went to Stag Environmental, for making huge strides forward in such a short space of time.

The Outstanding Dealer Award was presented to Davies Tractors, due to their forward thinking and rigorous focus on solutions. Polaris said the team embraces all the modules and training courses they offer, and that the dealership has earned a great reputation in the local area, with an extremely loyal customer base.

The Forever Forward Award went to the dealer who was the most proactive, forward-thinking, adaptable and resilient. The was presented to Dalton's ATV, who Polaris said truly excelled in every key award criterion, from huge increase in sales through their proactive and versatile approach, going above and beyond the Star Dealer targets. They also went one step further with content creation on their YouTube channel.

The Polaris UK & Ireland Dealer of the Year award went to Clwyd Agricultural. Polaris said customer-centricity is a key company value, and Clwyd demonstrated this through expectational levels of customer service, aftersales, business development and growth.

Also announced at the Dealer Awards was the Three-Star Dealer Award, which goes to dealers who excel in all business facets. This year's winners were Clwyd Agricultural, Stormtec Vehicles, Turf Machinery Engineering, Linstead Farm and Garden Machinery, Day and Coles Agricultural Ltd., Paterson ATV, Burrow Rutter and Armstrong Engineering Ltd., 4 Dirt, Davies Tractors, and Cherrys Country Hardware Ltd.

DEALERS

Tuckwells expand Yamaha partnership

To additional branch

Yamaha Motor UK has furthered its partnership with Tuckwells by providing the full Yamaha range for sale at the Framfield branch in East Sussex.

Tuckwells has been selected to provide customers with a greater opportunity to view the range of Yamaha products available in the region.

Tuckwells was established in 1954, and now has over 300 staff. Their



L-R: Dan Palmer, Yamaha Power Products manager; James Gibbon, Tuckwells sales manager, Carl Stuart, ASM Power Products (South)

network of dealerships has three dedicated Yamaha showrooms providing the full Yamaha utility and leisure range, including ATVs, side-by-side vehicles, the electric UMX, and the brand's golf cars.

Dan Palmer, power products manager for Yamaha, said: "The partnership between Yamaha and Tuckwells has been established to best serve our customer experience."

Tuckwells sales manager James Gibbon said: "Tuckwells has over 20 years' experience of selling Yamaha products, and this expansion cements our Yamaha partnership."

By stocking the full Yamaha range across its area, Tuckwells say they plan to expand further into the fruit, vineyard and equine sectors.

EXHIBITIONS

Equip promise new experiences for '23

40th anniversary of event



EQUIP stand-on demo

Following the record-setting attendance and sell-out of their exhibit space last year, the organisers of Louisville, Kentucky's Equip Exposition tell us, in 2023, the event will expand on its success by offering new advanced education and entertainment events, including a new arena concert, an expansion into the West Wing of the Kentucky Exposition Center, and improved logistics and food options.

"Equip Expo has evolved into a unique, week-long experience for a range of interconnected businesses, including outdoor power equipment, landscaping, hardscaping, tree care, design, lighting, irrigation and more," says Kris Kiser, President of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, which owns and manages the trade show. "And, just like our industry is ever-evolving, so is the trade show that serves it."

Show attendees each year gain access to the latest equipment, technology and software, as well as education and an opportunity to connect with their peers. "But they should also expect new and improved experiences," says Kris. "So when attendees speak, we listen. Our philosophy is 'same show, new show, every year'."

Also returning for 2023 are education and connection events for dealers and landscapers, live in-tree climbing demonstrations, Mulligan's Fun Run & 5K, the UTV Test Track, the Drone Zone, and Mulligan's Mutt Madness – a national dog adoption event sponsored by the TurfMutt Foundation.

"We sold every inch of both indoor and outdoor exhibit

space last year, and, in fact, had a waiting list," said Kris. "I encourage anyone seeking to participate in this year's show to act quickly. In fact, book your hotel room early. If you're going to fly, book it today. I can't stress this enough."

New 2023 show experiences being planned include:

- A new arena concert at the Yum! Center, featuring headline band Third Eye Blind
- A return of the New Product Showcase
- A Welcome Party at the downtown Kentucky International Convention Centre, with a concert from Expo house band The Crashers
- A keynote speech by polar explorer and master storyteller Ben Saunders, who completed the longest ever polar journey on foot
- The debut of the Equip Exposition Equipment Museum to showcase the evolution of the industry
- The addition of a business lounge, meeting spaces and expanded seating areas at the KEC
- Landscape education for young people, sponsored by the TurfMutt Foundation. Children ages 12 and up may attend the show
- Improved shuttle bus, rideshare and transportation logistics
- More coffee shops and food offerings on-site, including breakfast options

Equip Expo takes places from October 17-20.



Matt Richardson and Phil Everett

PEOPLE

Senior appointment for Boss ORV

Matt Richardson becomes after-sales manager

Boss ORV, the UK distributor of Corvus Off-Road Vehicles, has announced that Matt Richardson has joined as their new after-sales manager.

Boss managing director Phil Everett said: "Matt will join us officially on January 1, 2023, and will lead the restructure of this department to support our aggressive growth plans during the coming year.

"Matt has been operating in this role – and much, much more – for a major OPE distributor, and is, therefore, an absolutely perfect fit for us."

INDUSTRY



STIHL Cosmos factory

STIHL to acquire Cosmos Manufacturing

Maker of mufflers

The STIHL Group has announced they are planning to acquire Cosmos Manufacturing Inc., a U.S. based manufacturer of mufflers.

Cosmos, currently a STIHL development partner and major supplier of mufflers, is headquartered in South Chicago Heights, Illinois, USA, and employs some 200 people in the development, production, and sale of muffler systems and stamped components for small and medium-sized engines.

"This acquisition will deepen our expertise in the development and manufacture of mufflers and other exhaust components," said Martin Schwarz, STIHL executive board member for manufacturing and materials.

"This represents a major step forward in achieving increasingly strict emission standards, and also reinforces our supply chain resilience."

Like STIHL, Cosmos is also a family-owned business. The founder of the company, John Michelon, is withdrawing from the business due to his advancing years. "Cosmos and STIHL have maintained a successful partnership for decades," he said. "I am happy to have secured the future of the company through the takeover, and am confident that Cosmos will be able to operate to its full development and manufacturing potential as a part of the STIHL family."

STIHL say the transaction is set to take place as an asset deal, with the

founding of a new company in the United States called CS COSMOS STIHL Manufacturing. The new enterprise will take over the employees, existing customers and suppliers, and continue Cosmos' business seamlessly and without interruption.

Cosmos Manufacturing Inc. produces 9 million mufflers annually, and supplies manufacturers of hand-operated power equipment, lawn mowers, and tractors. Products also include a range of stamped and deep-drawn parts, such as clutch drums and spiked bumpers.

The parties agreed not to disclose the purchase price.



Model Pictured: Cobra LT86HRL

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The experienced team, plus David Withers, at the new depot in Tiverton



ABA Groundcare's owner Jamie Hutchings, left, next to ISEKI managing director David Withers, with Scott Struthers second in from right, alongside the newly recruited team

New depot, experienced team

ABA Groundcare, based in the south-west of England, have expanded once again, opening a new depot in Tiverton and taking on staff from a recently closed neighbouring dealership.

Following the closure of MST's former Devon agricultural dealership in 2022 – the result of cash flow issues – Jamie Hutchings, the owner of ABA Groundcare, seized the opportunity to expand his business.

As ABA already had groundcare machinery dealerships in Dorchester, Dorset and Chard in Somerset, the firm decided to open up a new branch in Woodward Road, Tiverton.

Jamie explained: "We established the business in 2014 in Dorchester. We built up in that region and then looked to expand. I got to know Scott Struthers from MST, and dealt and traded with him regularly. I offered him a job many times, but he always said no. Then we heard what was happening with MST and stepped in and offered five former members of the staff, including Scott, a job at our new premises in Tiverton. These new, experienced members of our team total over 200 years' experience in the industry."

Jamie believes that employing skilled staff is an issue in every trade, including the outdoor powered machinery sector. He says he was thankful that he could find five new skilled staff members willing to carry on working together at the new depot.

"It was an easy decision to make," Jamie states. "They wanted to stay working together, and very quickly decided they were happy to join my company."

The new Tiverton branch offers servicing and parts, and also supplies garden machinery, agricultural vehicles, and quad bikes from the likes of STIHL, Yamaha, Husqvarna and Stiga – to name a few –, alongside specialist ISEKI groundcare kit.

"We are continuing to offer a service which customers of MST would now be missing out on here in Tiverton," Jamie said. "It's also a great central location, as you can get anywhere reasonably quickly in Devon from here."

Jamie continued: "It's a service-led business, but we sell as well. We are here to look out for our customers; any sales are a bonus. Scott Struthers, previous sales rep for MST, has built up excellent relationships with many customers in the area, and it is great to have him on board to continue offering that same service."

Jamie himself comes from an engineering background, meaning that every product he chooses to sell has been

selected because he regards it as good quality, easy to work on and reliable. "It's not just about selling products," he says, "It's about selling decent products, and that's why we partnered with ISEKI – because I believe there's nothing better."

Challenges faced

Jamie believes that his business has not been especially negatively impacted by the economic fallout since the coronavirus pandemic – although he has noticed changes to the supply of goods.

"People still need the machinery," Jamie explained. "They still want to be in their gardens. So, other than the cost of everything going up, we're in a fairly strong place."

He continued: "If customers are not buying new products from you, they're going to want what they already own to be repaired and serviced. I don't think we will see too much of a problem, but we will try and keep the costs down and look to weather the storm."

Scott Struthers, who joined the businesses when MST closed their local branch, said of the recent changes: "It's the best outcome for myself and my customers. I have built up such good relationships with so many in the Devon area. To be able to continue to build on this with such good

support and service from ABA Groundcare is the ideal outcome for me.”

This enthusiasm for what lies ahead for ABA Groundcare was also reflected by David Withers, managing director of ISEKI, one of the brands the dealership supplies to their local customers. He said: “It’s exciting for us. We’ve been trading with Jamie and ABA Groundcare for many years and have a great relationship, which makes everything easier. We know Jamie – we know he is really customer-focused and dedicated to the service side of the business, which is what customers really want.

“As well as that,” continued David, “You’ve got a group of people whose industry knowledge we would’ve lost, if Jamie hadn’t stepped in to do what he’s done. It’s great for the customers in the area who will get great backup support, and we as a supplier will gain more exposure going forward. It’s excellent for Jamie to be able to expand his business.

“It’s a win for Jamie, and it’s a win for us as a manufacturer. It is also superb for the staff there who could have ended up without roles, or having to do something that they’re not experienced in. It would have been a genuine shame to have lost that.”

Bright future

Andrew Parr, a former MST staff member who is now working at ABA Groundcare, said: “I worked for MST from the year dot, with almost 40 years of employment. It was such a surprise when MST announced it was closing. It was a great shock to everybody, because the company had been a part of Tiverton for many years. The old depot was built in 1962, and started as Twose in Halberton.

“I saw a lot of changes over the years, but now it’s just lovely to continue providing a service to the people of Tiverton - working with five former MST staff and being around familiar faces.

“Jamie is a good boss, he is driven, and we have the backing of ISEKI, which is a great product.”

Another former MST staff member, Sue Westlake, is now ABA Groundcare’s officer administrator. She said: “Having been made redundant at MST, we were lucky enough to know Jamie, who was looking for new staff, so it fitted in nicely with us.

“The end of MST happened very quickly, although it didn’t surprise me. In a way, it was a relief that it happened, but sad. I worked for MST for over 40 years, so seeing what was happening was such a shame.

“However, it’s lovely to be able to come and work here now. We have a great camaraderie, and we look forward to doing well here and the company succeeding.”



Andrew Parr – Service manager



Barry Edworthy – Technician



Phil Edwards – Technician



Sue Westlake – Office administrator

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Opening up new avenues

LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR, visited family dealership Cutting Edge Machinery in Worcestershire, run by Sarah and Steve Law. They spoke about recent history, the increase in battery sales and moving into hire.

A recent trip to Tardebigge, a small village in Worcestershire most famous for the Tardebigge Locks, enabled me the opportunity to meet up with Sarah and Steve Law, who own and run Cutting Edge Machinery. This local machinery dealership serves Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

Cutting Edge Machinery moved to these new premises in 2018, having previously been situated in Redditch since the business' establishment in 2008. Steve, a trained mower mechanic who had previously worked for established local dealerships ETB and T H WHITE, thought that the time had come for him leave and start his own mower repairs business.

Sarah, who is a trained accountant, agreed with Steve, and believed that, between them, they had the necessary skillset to start up their own business.

2008 was a busy and memorable year for them both. After getting married in June, they finally started their new business venture in October, when they rented their first unit in Redditch. Initially, Steve was working

on his own, whilst Sarah continued in her full-time employment to help with bills and running their new home.

I asked Steve what inspired them to name the business Cutting Edge Machinery. "It came from a wooden hand tool I was given when I was learning the trade," he tells me. "It had the inscription Cutting Edge Training embedded on it, so that inspired me."

Over the years the business has grown organically. They haven't borrowed huge amounts of money, just enough to move them forward, but not too much to compromise the business. "It was all about financing at the right time and for the right things," Steve says. In 2010, they received the support of EP Barrus, which helped to develop their product range. Since then, they have attracted other leading manufacturers, such as Stiga, Cub Cadet, Hayter, Toro, Stihl, Cramer, Westwood, and, more recently, Iseki.

Cutting Edge Machinery can now offer anything from entry-level domestic handhelds, mowers and robotics to professional landscape

equipment. Steve and Sarah believe this gives them a comprehensive, fine range of products and services to sell.

Including themselves, they now boast five full-time staff and two part-timers. Steve is still very much hands-on with repairs and demonstrations. Offering fantastic support, they have Daryl Cave as a full-time mechanic, who has been with them for eight years; Liam Sullivan, who has just started working as an apprentice mechanic; and, in 2021, they employed Ben Tullett, who looks after sales and parts. Ben is no stranger to the industry, having worked for his father, Dave Tullett - himself a machinery dealer in the midlands who retired from the industry in 2019.

Completing the team are part-timers Emily Finney and Frank Pountney, who come in two or three days a week and help with admin support and driving duties. Steve and Sarah say they are currently looking to employ a new salesperson and mechanic in the near-future to help cope with their ever-increasing work load.

Recent history

I asked Sarah and Steve how they have managed to cope with

everything that has been thrown at dealers these past few years, especially during Covid. "We feel that the pressures Covid brought was actually a bit of a blessing," Sarah said. "I know that sounds strange, but it grounded us in the sense of some issues going on internally in our business. It focused the mind as to where we wanted to go."

Sarah continued: "Pre-Covid, customers were very aggressive, wanting things straight away. Since Covid, though, we have all learnt some patience. During the height of it, we scaled right back to just Steve and I and one employee working. Everyone else was on furlough.

"Obviously, the bounce-back loan, furlough and local authority loan all helped us cope. It wasn't until September of 2020 that we had all the staff back. Shortly after, we had a restructure of our team, which has led us to the people we have with us currently - which is working really well."

I ask Sarah about the issue that all dealers have faced in recent times - stock availability. "We also have found it hard to get certain items during and since the pandemic," Sarah confirms. "We can safely say we have lost sales through this, but, also, it has opened



Sarah and Steve Law at Cutting Edge Machinery in Tardebigge, Worcestershire



The Cutting Edge Machinery team. L-R: Ben Tullett, Sarah Law, Liam Sullivan, Daryl Cave and Steve Law

up other avenues, as we have gone out and found alternative products to supply to our customers.

"Waiting for spares slowed us down in the workshop too, meaning we were keeping machines for longer than we needed. Again, we have tried to see if we can find a way around the problem by doing something else, finding a new supplier or modification."

It was all about adapting and finding ways to get around given problems for Cutting Edge Machinery. "We were helped through the tough time by customers being supportive and understanding," Sarah said. "Like everyone, we just had to learn to live with Covid."

Future growth

Sarah and Steve say consumer interest and confidence in robotic mowers has definitely increased in the last couple of years. "But we can't really say they are our most popular product," Sarah says. "However, battery products on the whole have seen a huge spike in interest. We are selling a lot more battery machines both online and direct from the shop than ever before. We have probably sold well over 200 robotic mowers since 2019."

I was interested in hearing from Sarah and Steve where they saw the

business changing in the next few years?

Sarah replied: "We could do with employing a few more people. Also, we will continue to grow. We feel that the lower end of the market, entry level mowers, are not where we want to be. Screwfix and B&Q have that area sorted.

"During the last six months we have significantly moved into Toro Siteworks and LCE. We have done LCE over the years, but we feel now is the right time for us to take it further and put all our resources into it. We are moving into the hire side, so we are talking about the bigger machinery and bespoke. We'll be looking at this being compact utility loaders and commercial zero steer machines. We are also currently looking at being able to offer finance through a third party."

To help sell these products, Cutting Edge Machinery have invested in a new showroom, commissioning a local graffiti artist to design a set of murals that depict the role of grounds professionals. I personally found this addition to be a refreshing way to brighten up a dealership showroom.

For the first time, the company will also be selling a range of Iseki products, having already purchasing a SXG 324 cut and collect mower for demonstration purposes.

I asked about online sales and am told that they have invested a lot of time and effort into it but have found it to be quite unrewarding as margins are so tight. "We are expected to back up a lot of third-party online sales of machinery," explained Sarah. "There really needs to be better warranty rates given on these after sales repairs." I'm also interested if Sarah and Steve feel that dealers are receiving the support levels they require from manufacturers?

"Yes and no," Sarah tells me. "Some of them we have. Others we feel could do more, especially with communication. Covid obviously elevated the situation, but we do feel that a few of them could be a little more mindful of what the dealer has to cope with, being at the receiving end from the customer. Especially now when we are expected to service a lot of third-party online sales of machinery. There really needs to be better profit margins given on these after sales services."

It was also interesting to hear how seasonal working had changed. Steve explained: "We are now busy generally all year round, with perhaps our quietest time being August and September.

"Our workshops are flat-out, with plenty of work coming in from our

wide range of customers. In terms of obtaining spares, most of our suppliers have been successful in meeting our needs. Some customers may have waited a little longer for certain products, but, in the main, we have managed to cope and keep up to speed to meet customer expectations."

As mentioned, Sarah and Steve believe that, for the future of their business, they see growth potential in hiring out machinery. "We will be hiring out a larger range of machinery this year," Steve says, "and, with a new financial partner, we are now able to offer a range of financial options for our customers."

It was great for me to see the drive and ambition of both Sarah and Steve, who, without a doubt, are both dedicated to pushing the business forwards, constantly improving the service and range of products that they can offer to their ever-increasing customer base.

As ever, I do find it remarkable how many of our machinery dealers are founded on the dreams and desires of individuals who, through hard work and determination, end up running a successful family business.



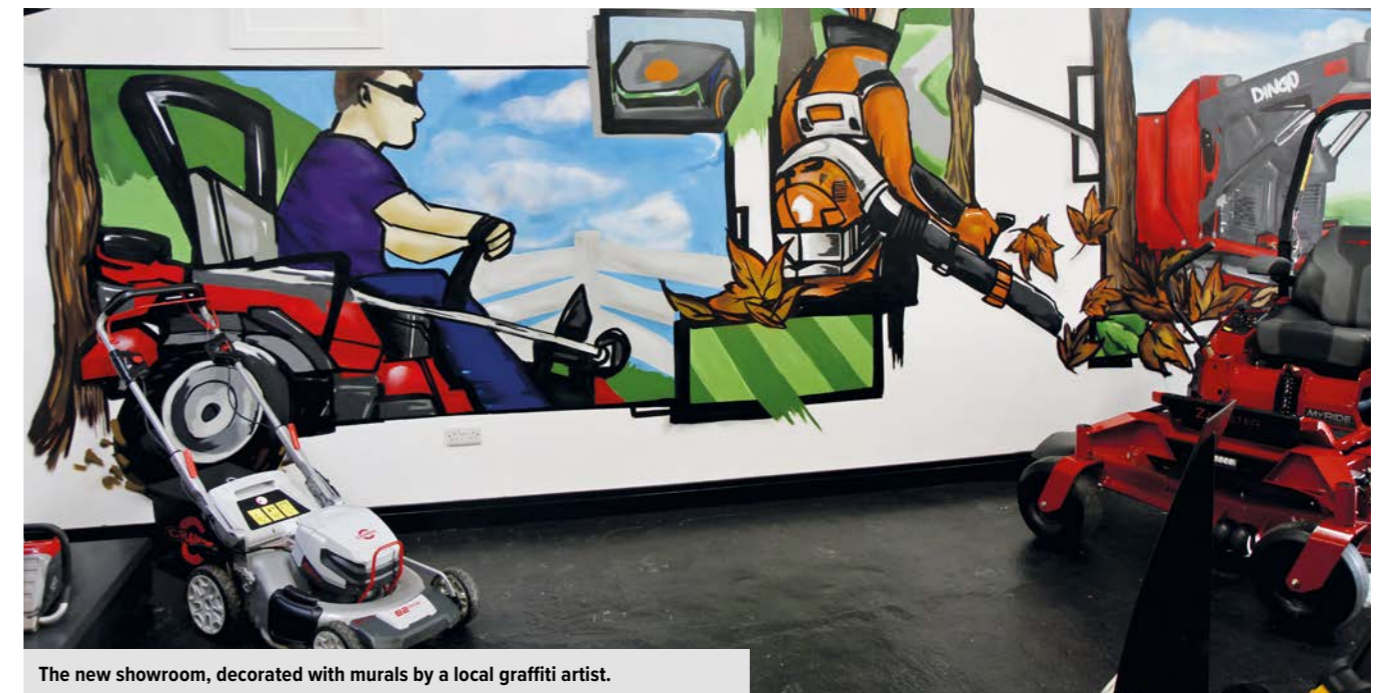
Laura Jones, marketing and PR coordinator



One of Cutting Edge Machinery's liveried vans



Display of STIHL products



The new showroom, decorated with murals by a local graffiti artist.



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50 YEARS
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Ross Agri, which last year celebrated a half-century in business, today operates from its main depot in St Cyrus and another at Turriff

Celebrating a half-century in business

One of Scotland's largest dealers of AGCO's Fendt farm equipment brand, Ross Agri Services, last year celebrated 50 years in business. MARTIN RICKATSON went to learn more about the company's early history and more recent past.

At a time when the names above the doors of many of the nation's agricultural dealers are changing, a 50th company birthday celebration is a reasonably rare occurrence. For Ross Agri Services – a northeast Scotland-based firm which marked a half-century in business back in 2022 – the achievement was underlined by the amount of that time it has been a dealer for its core tractor franchise. Established by husband and wife Bill and Ethel Ross

as a partnership in 1972, Ross Agri Hire Services – as it was then – was founded as an agricultural machinery hire business, focusing on products such as muck spreaders for farmers in the Montrose area. Its activities soon expanded to cater for customers who were also seeking operators with their equipment, resulting in the establishment of an agricultural contracting business in 1976. This concern grew rapidly, largely through forage harvesting and baling work. The move was followed by further diversification, via the acquisition of a spare parts business.

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In addition to an extensive demonstration programme, Ross Agri supports local shows and last year held its own indoor event to mark its 50 years in business



Farming, machinery and technology have all changed vastly in the 50 years Ross Agri has been in business, notes Martin Ross



Founder and chairman Bill Ross and his son Martin, managing director, are pictured with their 1975 Fendt 104s, part of the company collection of vintage Fendt tractors

While contracting had become the largest element of the Ross business, by the early 1980s farmers were increasingly investing in their own equipment, as the cost of key machines began to fall. In response, the company diversified further, branching out into sales and service of tractors and equipment. In 1984, it secured its first tractor franchise, signing with Volvo BM Valmet, the forerunner of today's Valtra.

After a successful period retailing the Scandinavian tractors, Bill Ross was visiting the Royal Smithfield Show in 1987 when he entered into conversation with Bill Bennett Engineering, then the official UK importer of Fendt tractors, about opportunities for dealers. The discussions led to the Ross business being appointed to Fendt's UK dealer network.

In 1997, Fendt – primarily a low-volume but high-quality independent tractor producer – was purchased by AGCO, which began to invest in and expand the German maker's activities.

That included ramping up investment in its dealers. In 2000, amid an increased push by the firm into the tractor market

and other sectors, Bill and Ethel's son Martin left the engineering firm he had been working for and joined the family business. In addition to taking responsibility for sales and administration, one of the particular things he instigated was investments in the machining and engineering side, with Ross Agri having purchased a local fabrication business and branched into precision-machining of parts for agricultural engineering, oil and gas and shipping businesses. More recent investments include the latest 3D Solidworks design software to complement the business's CNC machine shop, to provide the full range of services required by the agricultural, oil and gas sectors from initial concept through to completion.

With machinery sales growing, and with Fendt registering particular success as a core brand as its product line simultaneously grew, the opportunity arose for the company to expand its trading area into Aberdeenshire. A site was found in Turriff, and a second depot was opened in there in 2005. Three years later, the business appointed Caithness-based Raymond Henderson as a sub-dealer. As a result, the three depots now cover more than half of Scotland for Fendt. Recent investments have included new workshops at the main depot in St Cyrus, built in 2017.

Adapting to technology

Today, with Fendt having expanded into combines, balers and grass equipment, Ross Agri offers a wide product

line from its core supplier, serving the needs of both arable and livestock farmers. Supplementary franchises include trailers from Broughan, livestock equipment from Portequip, and forestry machinery from Kesla. In the past three years, major additions have included Merlo telehandlers, Väderstad drills and tillage equipment, and muck spreaders, diet feeders and hedgecutters from Shelbourne Reynolds.

"Farming has changed, machinery has changed, and technology has brought the biggest fundamental changes to agriculture in the 50 years we have been in existence," notes Martin, who is managing director of the business – now a limited company, with Bill as chairman.

"We've had to adapt the service we offer our customers to react to the way technology is influencing the way they farm."

Working with Fendt, he has had to adjust to the speed of change faster than most. On a mission to be at the

"Our customers are having to run tractors for longer hours to see the return on the ever-increasing investments they are expected to make"

technological forefront of agricultural engineering, the AGCO group premium brand has expected its dealers to keep pace.

"When I started, there were three

questions I would ask the customer to specify when buying a new tractor: Do you want front linkage? How many spool valves do you need? And what tyres would you like?

"Now, if I were to list off all the various options that are available to them, I may as well be speaking a foreign language to some customers."

Martin says has no doubt that the development of new technology is helping agriculture to be more sustainable and productive. However, he also recognises the impact this has had on the business, and how it has challenged him and his staff to deliver an ever-diversifying range of services to their customers.

"Our customers are having to run tractors for longer hours to see the return on the ever-increasing investments they are expected to make. It's our job to make sure these hours are as stress-free as possible. We are fortunate to have the Fendt franchise, which offers 8,000-hour warranties, but, with the cost of tractors almost doubling in 20 years, many are looking for fixed costs to help manage their farming enterprises."

Value of aftersales

Used Fendt tractors with as many as 10,000 hours are supplied with 12-month warranties. This, Martin suggests, represents a shared commitment between manufacturer and dealer to deliver on their promises. Meanwhile, the service level expectation has seen the business invest in



Recent investments in infrastructure have included new workshops, built in 2017, at the St Cyrus main depot

staff who specialise in the technology that has come to control the latest machines. However, this is not to the detriment of skilled engineers who offer welding and fabrication at Ross Agri Services' St Cyrus base.

"Selling premium brands is one thing. We are never going to be the cheapest, and we are often unapologetic about being the most expensive. The value is in the aftersales service. We pride ourselves on being able to offer our customers a one-stop shop – everything from manufacturer-trained diagnostics to CNC precision engineering. It is a challenge to move at the speed that technology is pushing agriculture, but we have made it our mission to work with the best brands and give our customers the support they need."

Demonstrations are seen as a particularly effective way of showing customers on their own farms what

the latest machinery developments can do. Last year, Ross Agri Services had a Fendt Ideal 9T demo combine on its books, complete with a 12.2m MacDon draper header. But it is not just field machines that are best shown at work – Ross Agri has also had successful demonstration programmes with livestock equipment, such as Shelbourne Reynolds' Powermix Plus diet feeder. The firm has sold feeders, stripper headers and hedge trimmers off the back of its relatively recent association with the Suffolk maker.

But, with a sales tally totalling in excess of 800 tractors since its appointment as a Fendt agent, the German marque remains at the heart of the Ross Agri company. On average, the business has, over recent years, reported annual sales of over 40 units.

"We also supplied the first elevating-cab Fendt Cargo telehandlers to be sold in the UK, and

are even involved in tractor-pulling with a Fendt, a 612 LSA-based machine called DieselRoss that now produces over 800hp."

None of the business's' success would have been possible without its customers and its staff, acknowledges Martin.

"We now employ a total of 32, with 22 at the main depot in St Cyrus and 10 at our Turriff branch. Many are long-term employees, and some have been with the company for over 30 years.

"Many of our customers have also supported us for a long time. To acknowledge their support, and show others what we offer, last year we held a two-day free-entry indoor show at an Aberdeen venue to mark our 50 years in business. There are few better ways of getting customers, staff and products in one place to build relationships."



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One year on

It's been a year now since Hertfordshire Garden Machinery reopened their showroom after sixteen months of closure during the pandemic.

Editor STEVE GIBBS caught up with the company's sales director, Edward Wall, to discover how the dealership has fared following their decision to return to sales and welcome customers back into their store.

Service Dealer: What are your overall feelings now you've had your showroom reopened for a year?

Edward Wall: In a nutshell, it has certainly not been without its challenges!

Along with every other dealer in our sector, we were immediately hit with the challenges of stock shortages. This

was especially challenging at a time when we were starting with zero stock after the showroom closure during the Covid pandemic.

This was followed by the long, hot nine-week drought that affected not just showroom sales, but also slowed up the demand for servicing and repairs coming through the workshop.

Finally, as the summer ended and

the weather took a turn towards a wet winter, we were hit with huge energy bill increases, which has really had a huge impact on our running costs. Not just heating and lighting the showroom, but across all areas of the business, from workshop power consumption, to running our delivery vehicles, to even security lighting of a night. Many of these challenges continue, but we are



The team at HGM:
 L-R: Tim (director), Lyndsey (director), Edward (sales director), Alan (workshop manager), Ross (apprentice), Dave (workshop engineer) James, (driver and workshop engineer)



Edwall Wall, HGM's sales director

adapting along the way to run leaner, smarter and more energy-conscious - not just at work, but also at home.

SD: Any regrets about reopening?

EW: Absolutely not. It has certainly helped to bring footfall back through our doors, driving sales and, in turn, building on what was already a busy workshop with increased demand for our services we offer to our customers.

SD: Anything you have been particularly pleased with?

EW: We certainly feel like the choices we made in the selection of brands to represent in our showroom has been right for us and our customers at this stage. We chose a good mix of value domestic machines, which we have complimented with a range of heavy top-end domestic / pro machines, such as Hayter/Toro, Weibang and ECHO.

SD: Did you see footfall return to the new showroom?

EW: Footfall did return, especially with our commercial customers, who visit regularly for not just new machine supply, but also to make use of our workshop facilities for ongoing repairs and servicing. Once in the store, we then see them make on-demand, consumable item purchases, normally on a last-minute basis.

SD: What was the reaction of your customers being able to visit you in-store once again?

EW: So many customers have been very complimentary on the reopening of the showroom. They've told us they appreciate its new look and open, bright feel, along with a much-improved ability to interact with the new machines we have on display. The most common response we've received since reopening is people saying: "Wow, this has changed somewhat. I'm so pleased your showroom's back".

SD: In terms of sales, what products have been going well for you?

EW: Sales to professional users have certainly been an area in which we have seen a significant increase. Having the right mix of products that allows us to remain competitive, but at the same time profitable, has been a huge benefit to our business.

SD: When we last spoke a year ago, you were talking about battery product sales picking up. Did this continue?

EW: Part of our new showroom layout and design plan was to focus equally on battery products, as well as traditional petrol tools - so our thoughts were certainly focused on increased cordless sales. Across this past year we have certainly seen more interest in battery tools than when the showroom was previously open in 2020, but not to the level we were expecting. Particularly with the larger items like ride-on and pedestrian mowers - these have been slow to sell. Many of our current domestic customers are traditionalists, and have proven difficult to switch towards the benefits of what battery has to offer against traditional petrol.

Handheld tools, though, have been a much easier sale, due to the lightweight benefits, minimal servicing, and no fumes in the local working area, to convince customers to make the change.

SD: What about robotic mowers? Have you entered that market?

EW: At this moment in time, we have stopped selling robot mowers. This is partly due to the issue of getting hold of stock last year, and partly with the change to wireless technology entering the market, we have decided to wait and see what the best platform is to go with before committing to a particular brand of robot.

SD: Any sales areas not performing quite as you had hoped?

EW: We have noticed the domestic market has certainly changed in our area from previously. We think this could be due to Covid pushing more people toward online purchasing as opposed to showroom-based, consultative sales. We feel this has also made people more aggressive when it comes to price-matching.

SD: Have you kept with the suppliers you reopened with? Or have you dropped any / picked up any new ones?

EW: We still have the same brands that we chose on reopening the showroom, but have also added AL-KO and EGO to our line-up. We added AL-KO for their great value, quality and range of product as well as good stock availability last season.

EGO was a brand we had our eyes on from the beginning, so getting them on-board was always going to be a possibility. However, we decided to take the range on earlier than expected, due to product demand from our professional customers looking for better value and quality when investing in battery for the first time. Battery is a big initial upfront investment, especially when you're switching over from traditional petrol power, and for us it was important to have the right brand to offer our customers, who are looking for a quality tool with universal battery fitment and great warranty and customer service backup.



In the workshop



Stiga machinery



Hayter and Toro display inside the showroom



Ego has been added to HGM's line-up during the past year

SD: After you reopened, did you make any further changes to your retail space?

EW: Hayter/Toro have worked with us to create a great shop-within-a-shop area for the two brands - as well as supporting us with new outside branding and signage for the building and roadside. We have made a slight alteration within our consumables area to give our customers a quicker and easier access to our Aspen fuels cabinet, as we sell such great volume to our domestic and professional customers. And we are always looking at opportunities to grow the business in the future, so, if we needed to make further changes to our layout, this is something we are certainly not afraid to consider doing.

SD: Did your service department hold up to the strong position it was in when we last spoke?

EW: Our workshops are always busy, and are working to capacity 95% of the time - albeit we did see a two-week period towards the end of the drought in the summer when we saw our jobs waiting list drop to a week's turnaround (normally we run at two-to-three weeks).

In fact, we have increased our workshop size to allow for more capacity. We have now added an extra post lift in the new extension for

larger equipment like triple gang units, compact tractors and utility vehicles.

SD: I remember you were wanting to employ further workshop staff – was this possible?

EW: At the beginning of May, we took on an apprentice, Ross, who we are training ourselves with help from across the workshop team. We're teaching him as much as possible in all areas within the range of equipment we service and repair. He particularly enjoys the two-stroke machines - most likely due to his love of motorbikes - but has also been hands-on with pedestrian mowers, ride-on tractors, and even a few cylinder mowers.

We found Ross through word-of-mouth, but, prior to this, we were advertising for some considerable time with little joy. Recruiting is not easy at the best of times in our industry, so we have been lucky on this occasion to find not just an addition to our business, but hopefully an addition to the garden machinery industry.

SD: Has the stocking situation improved?

EW: The new machine situation is much better now, and so far, all the winter stock we have ordered



HGM have introduced the sale of cold drinks and snacks in the showroom area for visiting customers

has been fulfilled - so let's hope mid-season ordering is also an improvement on last season. Spare parts are still challenging and causing delays for our workshop in getting machines out of the door. Rail and postal strikes are not helping this situation, so hopefully we can see an

improvement in this, especially as the workshop continues to become busy with winter service works and repairs heading into the spring.

SD: Have you noticed the cost-of-living crisis influencing your customers' spending habits?

EW: I don't feel it has had an obvious effect yet, but, with the quieter time for our industry of deep winter, reduced daylight hours, and the non-growing season, I feel the real test will be this spring, when everything kicks off again. The one thing the cost-of-living crisis, pandemic and unfortunate events in other parts of the world do not impact is the grass growing! Let's just hope we do not have another drought this summer like 2022.

SD: Are you receiving all the support you feel you need from your suppliers?

EW: In all fairness, all our suppliers have been very supportive where possible in difficult times of stock issues, etcetera. In the main, most have also been helpful with the setting up of our showroom again, as well as with ongoing support during the past year. We look forward to working alongside them all again this season and, fingers crossed, we have an easier time this year than last.

SD: What is currently the biggest hindrance or industry problem affecting you running your business as smoothly as you would like?

EW: I guess stock availability is still probably the biggest thorn in our side at the moment. It has made the job of selling new products in the shop a very different experience to what it was three years ago. Where we used to be able to offer the customer what they were looking for, it is now a case

of checking to see what is available to supply before we can even start to give any prices or guidance.

Dealing with internet pricing is always a challenge, as well. We did notice last season that there was some extreme discounting online, which proved challenging where margin is everything in such a tough economic climate.

SD: Have you tried diversifying into any new areas since you've reopened?

EW: We have begun to offer onsite machinery storage to our commercial customers, especially those who have multiple vehicles on the road. This makes us a central meeting point for their teams which has encouraged more use of our showroom for consumable purchases and service / repair bookings. We see it as an additional revenue stream, with little time management or effort required.

We are also planning to introduce the sale of cold drinks and snacks in the showroom area for visiting customers, especially for our regular gardeners and contractors who are in on a daily basis. To be able to purchase a cold can or bottle of drink, and snacks like crisps, chocolate bars and other items, just adds a little extra to the till at the end of each day - which a lot of these customers are purchasing from garages and shops en route.

SD: Where do you see potential growth areas for your business coming from?

EW: We see our growth coming from more business - both sales and repairs - within the professional user and contractor areas. Our pro customers want a good, reliable and trustworthy business they can use time after time, and that is exactly what we have built our business on. These customers need their equipment to be reliable and up to the job, from which they earn their living. Therefore, us providing that level of service and mix of products, is where we are putting our efforts, making this an area of ongoing success and growth.

SD: And finally, what are your thoughts for how 2023 and beyond will develop for HGM?

EW: We are cautiously optimistic that 2023 is going to be better than the previous years - although how could it get any worse?! Supply issues do seem to be improving, which gives us a more confident feeling in the showroom. The increased business operating costs are certainly a concern, but it has given us the chance to re-evaluate the way that we operate and scrutinise every penny being spent to make sure it's a justified expense. We can only hope that the costs do eventually subside again, and that we will come out of this stronger and more profitable.

SD: Thank you.



Hertfordshire Garden Machinery's showroom reopened a year ago

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Industry braces for calm after the storm

January's LAMMA saw strong attendances on both days, with visitors buoyed by a year that had provided decent yields and an easy harvest to counter the effects of high input costs. But, outside the halls, there were suggestions that the leaden skies and incessant rain of the first day may have been a portent of things to come. MARTIN RICKATSON toured the halls.

Good combinable crop harvest results and higher commodity prices have softened some of the pain from the high input costs which have dominated agriculture since the Ukraine invasion last year. But, while that may encourage some arable farmers to invest in new equipment – and the strong attendance at January's LAMMA suggested there was some window shopping being done – farm business advisers were urging caution to farmers considering a spending spree in order to minimise tax bills.

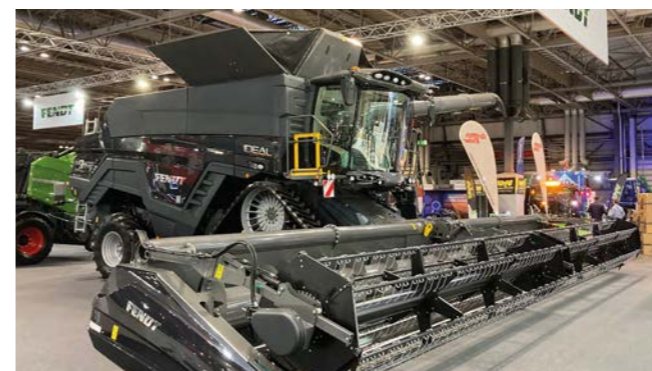
"Machinery and equipment purchase decisions are often driven by desire to reduce tax liabilities," noted Jamie Mayhew, of consultants Andersons. "But decision-making prioritising this can result in production costs increasing rather than decreasing, and, as such investments are often built into the business for the long term, the effects can be long-lasting.

"Cash surpluses may be better used to reduce borrowings, especially with further interest rate increases looking likely," he suggested.

"But one of the under-utilised options many farms are still not considering is the value of pooling machinery, and machinery investment capabilities, via collaborative ventures. The savings from working together, from an informal arrangement to a full joint-venture company, can be can be massive, and may provide the justification for more efficient equipment investment."

Some big names, including John Deere, Claas, New Holland, JCB, Kuhn, Amazone, Kverneland, Horsch and Lemken, continue to spend their marketing money elsewhere, so LAMMA visitors were unable to compare a full array of tractors, combines, handlers, drills and sprayers. There were plenty of other firms in attendance, though, and many had new developments to show.

Upgrades to **Fendt's** Ideal flagship combines for 2023 include VariotronicTI Turn Assistant automated headland turning. In bed mode, the combine works the field in small sections, keeping the unloading auger on the cut side. For smaller fields, there is a 'keyhole' turn mode. If several machines are working on one area, U-turns can be programmed to match work flow, ensuring the combines do not end up on the same wayline.



Areas of Fendt's Ideal combines upgraded for 2023 include unloading augers, tracks and automated turning

New 7.0m, 8.4m and 9.9m unloading augers replace the existing 7.6m, 9.15m and 10.6m units, with respective unloading heights of 4.55m, 4.95m and 5.35m – all designed to ease tractor/trailer placement when unloading. Further upgrades include a heavy-duty drive option for Ideal 8T, 9T and 10T tracked models, with a hydraulic pump and a hydraulic motor that each have greater capacity for hilly ground and for high-speed roadwork, especially when towing a header. Meanwhile, operators benefit from improved noise insulation, new storage options and a new cooling box, while new track and tyre combinations include 76cm (30in) tracks or 800/70 R38 front tyres in combination with 520/85 R30 rear tyres, keeping machine width to 3.49m. Still in development – and likely to be heavily revised before a possible 2024 launch – **Väderstad's** Proceed hybrid drill development uses many components from the Swedish



Väderstad's Proceed hybrid drill is still at the development stage, and likely to feature changes before production, but incorporates components common to the Tempo precision seeder

firm's established Tempo precision seeder, including the hopper and the coulter arrangement.

Designed as a multi-crop drill for everything from cereal to oilseed rape and traditionally precision drill-sown crops, such as maize and sugar beet, the Proceed can be fitted with a variety of quick-change metering discs featuring different hole sizes and spacings. Greater seed spacing precision enables cereals seed spacing within the row to be far more accurately set, with trials suggesting wheat seed rates could be halved for reduced seed cost and greater crop light interception without yield penalties, suggests Väderstad. The company says its trials have shown enhanced plant growth from crops sown with the Proceed.

Row units can be adjusted for 225 or 250mm spacings for cereals, 450 or 500mm for sugar beet or oilseed rape, or 750mm for maize. Each row features a consolidation wheel with hydraulically-adjustable 0-350kg downforce to allow direct drilling where possible or desired, followed by a debris-cleaning wheel and an opener. Seed from the 3,000-litre hopper is metered via a PowerShoot air pressure-based singulation system, similar to that on the Tempo, which is fed to single disc coulters and firmed in by rubber press wheels, followed by angled pairs of closing wheels.



Krone suggests its GX self-unloading trailer is suited to handling root and vegetable crops in particular, but will also work in maize and even combinable crops

Trailer launches at LAMMA included **Krone's** GX, a self-unloading machine available in GX 440 (44m³) tandem axle, and GX 520 (52m³) triple axle versions with an 'intelligent' mechanical or optional electronic forced steering system controlling the rear axle on the former and the front and rear axles on the triple-axle latter. Both models feature standard ISOBUS operation. Unloading is via a hydraulically-powered, chain-driven fabric belt floor to provide gentle discharge, an attribute Krone suggests will appeal to vegetable and root crop growers.

Two hydraulic motors (200cm³ capacity on the GX 440 and 250cm³ on the GX 520) power a pair of flat-link chains (break strength of 25 tonnes) at selectable unloading speeds of 8m/min or 16m/min, with the latter emptying the GX 440 in 40 seconds. Rubber strips seal the sides, and Krone claims the GX is capable of hauling grain and oilseed crops.



Bobcat's new TL25.60 'super compact' telehandler has a maximum lift capacity of 2,500kg, maximum lift height of 5.91m and maximum reach of 3.31m

On the **Bobcat** stand, the new TL25.60 'super compact' telehandler has a maximum lift capacity of 2,500kg, maximum lift height of 5.91m and maximum reach of 3.31m. Powered by an in-house (Doosan) Stage V 75hp engine, it will join the existing TL26.60, TL30.60 and TL30.70 super-compact models, with lift capacities roughly equating to the first two digits, and lift heights the second two.

Austrian bale wrapper and round baler manufacturer **Göweil** is relatively unknown in the UK, but makes the wrapper units for a number of manufacturers' round baler/wrapper combinations. Now it is seeking UK dealers – and a share of the UK baler and wrapper markets – in its own right. The LT-Master F115 it displayed at LAMMA is a revised version of its established baler-wrapper combination, with improvements including hydraulic rather than mechanical power for the bale chamber, helping to reduce noise and moving parts, plus four different selectable speeds during baling and netwrapping to match different crops and conditions.



With maximum lift capacity/height figures of 5,000kg/7.6m, Manitou's MLT 850-145V+ slots in above the MLT 841 and beneath the 961 and 1041 in the NewAg XL range

Manitou showed the MLT 850-145V+ with mini joystick steering system, which debuted at the EuroTier livestock equipment show in Germany back in November. Designed to reduce the likelihood of repetitive strain injury development from repeated steering wheel use on long days, the system is intended only for off-road use. With

maximum lift capacity/height figures of 5,000kg/7.6m, the 141hp 850 telehandler slots in above the MLT 841 and beneath the 961 and 1041 in the NewAg XL range. The hydraulic flow rate is 200l/min. A JSM Autopower system automatically adjusts engine speed according to the hydraulic movements the operator is making, in order to minimise fuel consumption.

Previously imported via Reco and Halse, Spanish plough and cultivation equipment brand **Ovlac** has now had its own UK operation – with Nick Clark as UK sales manager – for some time. The firm reckons to have a largely complete UK dealer network, although Nick says there are still a couple of opportunities for interested dealers. Scotland has proven especially successful for the maker over the past decade, and more recently it reckons to have been building sales in southern England, particularly with the recruitment of more dealers in the Midlands and the south-west.



Ovlac, which is looking to fill some UK dealer network gaps, showed its Mini Chisel, a cultivator incorporating a claimed-unique rubber stone protection break-back

Driven by rising fuel costs, and increased concern around reducing soil movement, the company was reporting greater interest in its shallow plough, for which it has introduced a new point design with flush-fitting shares to enable faster, smoother soil movement soil onto the mouldboards. Designed for ploughing down to 100mm/4in, its 15in furrows are reckoned to have a power requirement of 20hp/mouldboard. Up to nine-furrow mounted and 13-furrow semi-mounted models are available. Ovlac also showed off its new Mini Chisel, a cultivator incorporating a claimed-unique rubber stone protection break-back, similar to that of a short disc. Break-back pressure is 300kg at the point, and claimed advantages include the lack of wearing parts/maintenance versus coil spring protection, no spring noise, and a doubling of trip height up to 32cm.

There is now a new range of auto-steer options for **Kubota's** M-series tractors, resulting from a European-wide agreement with Topcon Positioning Systems. Topcon distributors LH Agro and Topcon Ireland will supply the auto-steering solutions through Kubota's dealer network, providing warranty, service and support, while installation will be responsibility of the dealers. A choice of kits is available to suit the autosteer-ready M7 Premium tractors and non-ready M series.



A new range of auto-steer options for Kubota's M-series tractors comes courtesy of a European-wide agreement with Topcon Positioning Systems

Autosteer kits include Topcon's AGS-2 receiver and – where required – Topcon's AES-35 motorised steering wheel to replace the tractor steering wheel. In addition, customers can choose from guidance screens including the 21.3cm X25, 31cm X35, 17.8cm XD and 30.7cm XD+. Depending on the chosen kit, customers can also customise the task control options available, or choose from pre-configured bundles. Correction signal can be RTK and PPP (Precise Point Positioning), with the latter offering less accuracy than RTK but greater pass-to-pass accuracy than EGNOS.

Reckoning to now have a 25-strong UK dealer network, Indian tractor manufacturer **Solis** showed its largest model yet for the UK, the S90 Shuttle XL. Powered by a 4.1-litre turbocharged engine made by International Tractors, the Solis parent company, it produces 90hp (rated), and 375Nm



Indian tractor manufacturer Solis showed its 26 Electric compact tractor and its largest diesel model yet for the UK, the 90hp S90 Shuttle XL

maximum torque. Stage 5 emissions regulations are met via a diesel oxidation catalyst, particulate filter and DEF/AdBlue system. The new model will be joined later this year by the similar 75hp S75 Shuttle XL.

Standard transmission is a 12F/12R synchro-shuttle with 35km/hr (21.75mph) maximum travel speed, while a 20F/20R option increases this to 40km/hr (25mph) and drops the slowest ratio from 1.22km/hr to 0.25km/hr. While many specifications are identical, the S90 has 500kg more rear linkage capacity than its smaller stablemate, with a

maximum 3,000kg. It can also be fitted with larger tyres up to 420/65 R24 and 540/65 R34. There are cab or open platform/rollbar options.

The firm also showed its '26 Electric' compact tractor development. With a rated output of 24hp, it features a 72V electrical system driven by a 330Ah battery to power a two-range hydrostatic transmission, with a maximum speed of 22km/hr. Implement couplings include an 800kg-capacity Category 1 three-point linkage, 540rpm pto and 25 litre/min hydraulic system.



Weaving's Energiser is a 6m shallow cultivator for seedbed preparation, straw redistribution and soil loosening down to 150mm

With more farmers looking to create a small amount of surface tilth ahead of direct drilling, while encouraging a weed chit, ensuring even straw distribution, and disrupting slug habitats, **Weaving Machinery** introduced a new 9m stubble rake. While its existing 7m model is constructed from box section, the new 9m model is made from tube, for a light yet strong build despite the additional width, says the firm. It folds in three parts rather than the two of the 7m. Both versions feature five rows of 16mm tines. Weaving also showed its new Energiser, a 6m shallow cultivator for seedbed preparation, straw redistribution and soil loosening down to 150mm. It has four rows of coil-sprung tines spaced at 167mm, fitted with 40mm points. A press with V-profile rings follows up, and options include a seeder unit.

Available in 3/4/6m models, **Grange Machinery's** new Preparator cultivator has been designed particularly with maize in mind – but it has other potential crop applications. It works on the strip tillage principle of only tilling the soil ahead of the rows where the crop will be sown, to minimise fuel use and soil disturbance.

Key components comprise hydraulically depth-adjustable straight discs ahead of low-disturbance legs with 30cm maximum working depth and possible spacings of 45/50/60/75/80cm. Two rows of wavy-edged discs follow for tilth creation, again hydraulically adjustable for depth. Güttler rollers then follow to crush any remaining clods, consolidate and preserve moisture. Grange says granular or liquid fertiliser applicators can be fitted to distribute behind the legs.

Timing, location and content

January's BTME exhibition in Harrogate got each key element for a successful trade show spot on, writes *Service Dealer* editor STEVE GIBBS.



January's BTME saw good attendance from both dealers and professional customers

Kicking off a year where there are more professional turf maintenance trade exhibitions in the industry's calendar than in recent memory, January's BTME show was absolutely buzzing!

Honestly, in all my many years attending BIGGA's show in Harrogate, I can't recall one that felt as busy. More importantly, I don't remember one feeling as upbeat, optimistic and – while it feels slightly odd to use this word to describe a trade show – happy.

There were smiles on faces everywhere you looked around the packed halls. Business was being done, connections were being made, hands shook on deals – all in great spirits and good humour. It was a pleasure to witness. There's a great video on Service Dealer's YouTube channel that really captures this mood.

On the morning of day two, the CEO of BIGGA, Jim Croxton, was clearly delighted with how the event was going when he spoke to the trade press. He said day one felt "outstanding," and that the show was back to how it used to be. "Nostalgic" is how he described it. Official figures are not yet available at the time of going to press, but organisers believe that something in the region of 2,500 came through the



L-R: Ripon Farm Service's Phil Gregg, Andrew Herring and Iain Booth from Farols and Service Dealer editor Steve Gibbs

doors on Tuesday – which would be a record turnout.

Jim said the only complaint he'd heard was that it was "too busy!" Which is, of course, the kind of problem that event organisers don't mind hearing. He believed the numbers showed a genuine desire in the industry to get together in-person once again.

Following the impressive turnout for LAMMA that had taken place a couple of weeks before (and which you can read Martin Rickatson's report from in this issue), this trend must give the showrunners of all the other dates set for this year a hopeful feeling that the appetite for real-life gatherings is well and truly in place for 2023.

As well as being pleased with attendance, Jim also mentioned that behind-the-scenes talks with the AEA and GMA are ongoing – but no further details on what that relationship might offer to the industry were given.

Jim's mood must have gotten even better on day two, because by mid-morning the aisles felt more packed than they had been the day before. It got to the stage where it was actually tricky to move around in certain areas – which hasn't been something we've been able to say about a trade show in quite a while.

Even day three, traditionally a bit of dead-zone, saw decent numbers through the doors.

Good mix of trade and end-users

Talking to the machinery stand-holders who'd be of interest to our Service Dealer readers, they all seemed mightily pleased with the footfall they had enjoyed.

I was hearing most say they'd experienced a good mix of dealer visitors and commercial end-users. In terms of the customers who made the trip to Harrogate, I was told there might have been a few contractors – and the occasional other professional sport – but it was the golf greenkeepers who were truly there in significant numbers.

As you walked around, glancing at people's name badges, you could quickly see that the vast majority were visiting from one golf club or another. BIGGA really have made this event a fantastic draw for their members, what with all the education and seminars that are on offer alongside the exhibition. This pull for the professional practitioners is, of course, fantastic news for the exhibiting manufacturers – and in turn, their dealers.

I was talking to one pleased supplier on the second morning who told me that, by 11am, they had already texted some hot golf-course leads to three of their dealers. When a show delivers the right end-users, it's not only good



Kubota's stand



Milwaukee's stand attracted trade and end-users

for the exhibitors in the room – it should also be directly beneficial to dealers around the country.

BIGGA had made some tweaks to the show after the last couple of editions that had improved things. There was a slightly different hall configuration, and, rather than making everyone enter the exhibition from one end of the convention centre, there were entrances at either end. This meant there wasn't that lag of visitors getting around to stands at the end of the route that some exhibitors had complained about in recent years. What the changes did mean, though, was that a hall upstairs – which had previously been one of the busiest – this time felt a bit forgotten and out of the way.

But that's a minor quibble. I genuinely did not hear any dissatisfaction voiced from the manufacturers on stands I spoke to, nor from the visiting dealers I bumped into on my way round the halls.

So, credit where it's due: BIGGA should be applauded for pitching their show just right for their greenkeeper members. When a show delivers so well for its intended audience in terms of timing, location and content, the knock-on benefits for the wider industry are clearly apparent.

New machinery at BTME

Electric launch from John Deere

John Deere launched two battery-powered, walk-behind greens mowers at Harrogate, with the 185 E-Cut and 225 E-Cut greens mowers shown for the first time in the UK.

The two specialist machines are both powered by a 58-volt, 3.2kwh lithium battery. The 185 has an 18-inch cutting width while the larger 225 takes a 22-inch cut.

The company said the walk-behind machines can cut approximately 50,000 square feet of grass on a single charge. John Deere announced the products in America last year and has been putting them through their paces on courses for the past 12 months.

Visitors to BTME were told greenkeepers in the UK and Ireland will be able to order the machines later this year.

Chris Meacock, John Deere's division sales manager for golf and turf, said, "Battery-powered innovations in the golf and professional sports turf markets have been moving forward apace for the past few years.

"With the introduction of our first lithium battery-powered machines, we are able to provide a solution for our customers who are looking for a more favourable environmental profile, have on-site energy generation, or who are seeking significant reductions in the risk of leaks and spills."



Deere electric 225 greens mower



Price Ventrac 4520

Price lift up new Ventrac

Price Turfcare – the UK and Ireland distributor of the Ventrac multi-implement, all-terrain compact tractor – returned to BTME in a new location, and with a new elevated display stand for the show.

On display was the new Ventrac 4520 compact tractor and attachments. While emphasising it did not make for a radical change from their old models, the company said the new machine featured a whole series of improvements 'under the bonnet,' resulting in 30% more available power.

The machine retains all the features of its predecessor, including its 30-degree slope-climbing ability, but has been enhanced with an all-new hydraulic system featuring larger bore piping, more powerful auxiliary hydraulics and more resilient hoses and fittings, resulting in faster and stronger operation. That, said Price Turfcare, means 30% more available power, improving performance and productivity while providing the operator with a quieter working platform.

Combining a blend of peak power and agility with front-mounted attachments for superior visibility, a pivoting frame for manoeuvrability, and excellent weight distribution for balance and stability, the company said the new 4520 elevates the Ventrac experience to a whole new level.

Industry's first lithium five reel mower

Jacobsen unveiled the SLF1 ELiTE at the show, which, they said, marked a significant step forward in lithium technology, presenting it as the industry's first fully electric five reel mower.

The company boast that users get up to seven hours of operation per charge with their 500 plus amp-hour lithium-ion battery, which is powered by Samsung SDI lithium technology. The machine also offers on-board overnight charging that fits with existing universal electrical infrastructure.

Ransomes said the machine is built with virtually maintenance-free next-gen components, and the introduction of an on-board and remote-ready monitoring system. With this in place, machine diagnostics can be analysed to give solutions to keep cutting.

The control centre, located on an adjustable swing-out console arm, features lockable speed and Jacobsen's frequency of clip controls to offer a consistent finish every time on fairways, large trim, and surround areas or terrain with undulations.

The SLF1 ELiTE has been tested in wet conditions and challenging slopes, and the specialised cutting units allow it to cut in undulations.

Alongside the machine, Jacobsen introduced its new ELiTE Club during the show. This, they said, enables consumers to demonstrate their environmental stewardship, joining a community with valued-added benefits for owning or purchasing ELiTE mowers.



Ransomes Elite



Campey Vredo seeder

Campey introduce new range and products

Campey Turfcare Systems announced at the show that they have taken over the rights to distribute and sell the popular Graden scarifier range.

Alongside this, they were showing off a new handheld Vredo Disc pedestrian seeder (pictured here being introduced by company director, Lee Morgado) and a new 7m-wide tractor-mounted rotary brush system that can be set to windrow debris into lines for easy collection.

The company said these types of powered brushes are becoming popular on golf courses and large sports fields, being used to clean up worm casts, brush off dew, lightly scarify and, more importantly, help present the playing surfaces.



Toro ProCore 648s

Toro add more features

New on Reesink's stand was the Toro ProCore 648s.

The company said the unit builds on the greenkeeper favourite, the ProCore 648, introducing more features to the machine that, as they put it, "changed the way customers aerate." With 10 new patents, they said the technology in this machine defines the 's' in its name, which stands for 'superior.'

With all the primary controls at the operator's fingertips, the machine can be operated single-handedly. Hole spacing and true tine depth can be set and saved in the InfoCentre, and there's a broader range of 5mm (0.25 inches) for the control.

Utilising your product knowledge

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 every issue.



THIS ISSUE: Selling your expertise

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 that we are the experts at what we do, 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, are you 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 premium 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 of 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 sales because they are oversharing specific product knowledge that the customer just doesn't care about. Your customers only have one question when they are 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.



Would a fast-track option be useful?

Jason Nettle, of Winchester Garden Machinery, says that a scarcity of spare parts is holding up business in 2023. Can manufacturers help?



The start of the year has come and gone, and the month of January flew by.

The rain over the Christmas period was followed by some sharp frosts for us in the south, but, with this in mind, I was pleasantly pleased to come back to find the phones ringing and the customer enquiries trickling through. Workshops are filling up nicely, stock is appearing at the back door. Dare I say it – could this year be the year that everything just falls into place? Only time will tell, but I do hope so.

Given the amount of whole goods floating about across the dealer network, and the pipeline of orders coming through the systems, getting machines might not be the problem for 2023. The reports back from the workshop are that spare parts are already holding up the throughput of work. Delving in a little deeper, we have had various items on backorder for over three months now, and this is starting to have a negative effect on customer experience.

This raises the question: can manufacturers help the dealer network to escalate their urgent requirements, as and where needed? I got off the phone this morning after chasing the manufacturer, and they are looking to pull out all the stops to complete the job by sourcing the required part from another European country. This only goes to show the strength of the dealer network when working together, and we can only hope, with a little explanation, that the customer feels this way as well.

This got me thinking. Would a fast-track option be useful, or would this just be abused by the dealer network? I know this is already being carried out behind the scenes, with some manufacturers putting their own layers in place to minimise the stock shortages and the lengthy waits.

We are all experiencing the shortfall and scarcity of battery products, and, often when you go looking to complete an order, you are waiting on one of the items to complete the sale. It's either one of the following: the shell, the battery, or the charger (and in some cases, it's been all three items). What's alarming is just how much cash this ties up in products that can't be sold. Sod's law springs to mind, and I'm sure we are not the only ones experiencing this!

We have had batteries on backorder for over six months, and there really doesn't seem to be a fix. I think 2023 will be much like last year. As soon as they come in, they will go – which is great, but should more be done with regard to the failed batteries? What's greener? Landfill full of old lithium-ion batteries, or the use of fossil fuels? I'm all for the greener option, but it is only greener when things can be fixed or replaced in an environmentally friendly way.

Is this where we, as specialist dealers, can come into play? Could we be given the tools to fix the failed batteries and electrical equipment? Is this the training that is required to move our industry forward?



Can manufacturers help the dealer network to escalate their urgent requirements



BUSINESS MONITOR

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

Staffing holding up winter servicing

Dealers in a similar position to a year ago.

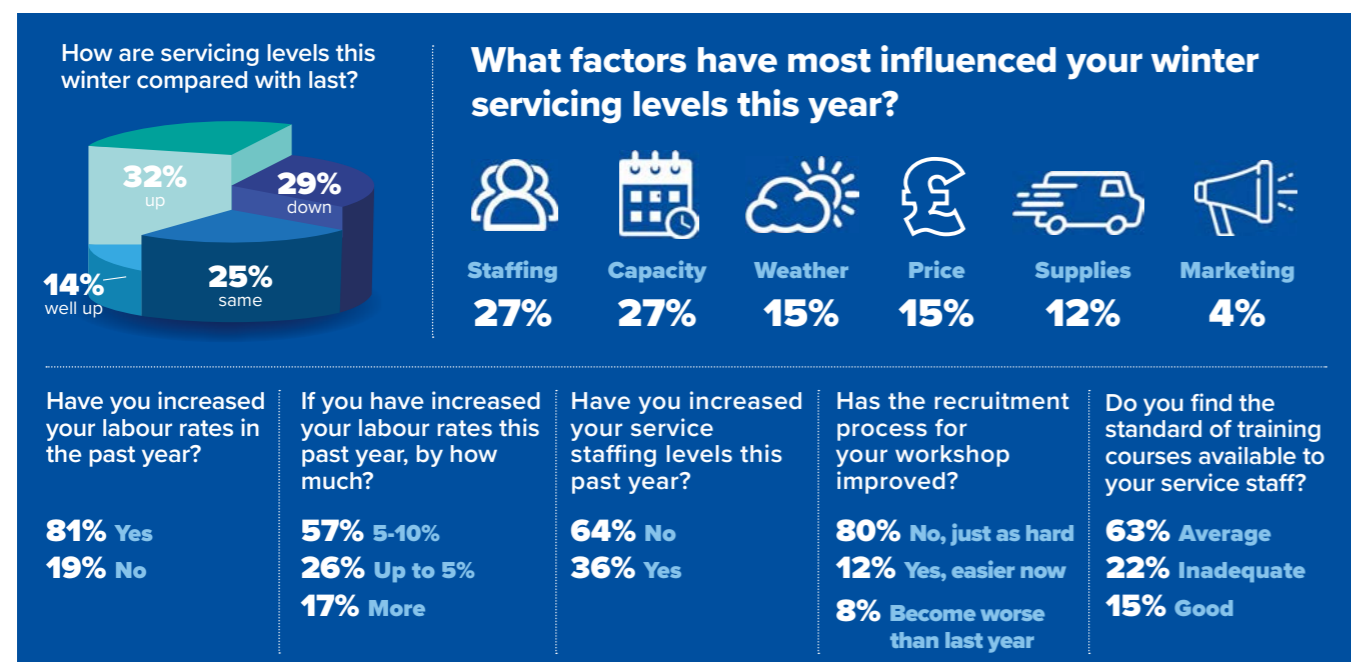
According to dealers who responded to our winter servicing survey – published towards the end of January 2023 – work this year is still being hampered by a lack of staff and delays in the delivery of spare parts.

When asked how servicing levels were this year compared to last, there was a pretty even split between those

telling us it was up (32%), down (29%) and about the same (35%). There was also a dead-even split when readers were asked which factors were most influencing winter service levels. Both staffing levels and capacity were cited most frequently by dealers who responded.

We also heard that dealers were prepared to raise their rates this season (81% of respondents confirmed this).

Crucially, we were told that recruiting new staff for the workshop has not become any easier this past year. Thankfully, however, few respondents believed that the situation had actually become any worse. Readers were, in general, disappointed with the options for staff training opportunities on offer, with only 15% describing the available choices as 'good'.



“Your say”

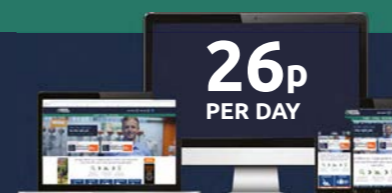
We asked you: what are the key issues currently impacting the service side of your business?

- For me, it is weather. A prolonged cold spell at the end of the year slowed down the workload. It wasn't until mid-January that there was a significant upturn. Spare parts are still a problem, too!
- Our marketing is so successful that we've had to ask customers not to bring machines in until we're ready for them. We don't have the space to store all the machines in our queue. The queue isn't helped by the shortage of spares, with machines awaiting parts taking up space we can't spare. Shortage of spares is also holding up our invoicing – we can't invoice for jobs that aren't finished!
- The lack of trained staff available. We are having to take on apprentices in order to replace fully-qualified, ag-experienced staff. We are also having to recruit from outside of the industry, often from companies where they have specialists for electrics and hydraulics, so the skillset isn't where it needs to be for our industry. In addition, service department wages have increased up to 25% in the last year, but this has led to some staff not wanting to do overtime.
- Lots of different brands coming in, and not enough hours in the day to keep on top of volume of work. We have never been as busy in 30 years. Could be because some dealers in our area have gone? We use Xero accounting, and it is saying we are 107% up on the same period (November 1 to today). So we are all happy bunnies! Hope there is no repeat of the drought of last year.
- Shortage of parts, and we are being led to believe there will still be limited supply of machines. People are shopping around much more, ringing up for prices for servicing and repairs. Some saying they just can't afford it this year.
- Staff levels. Whilst we have increased our technician pool, we could still do with more. Also need administration assistance to proactively chase servicing work for connected machines.
- Volume and costs.
- Customers taking their time to collect and pay for machinery brought in. Trying to ensure we are profitable.
- Recruitment and understaffing. Also, rising costs of utilities.
- It's very hard to recruit staff (i.e. skilled or apprentice). Also, parts supply issues.
- Lack of good staff.

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Recruitment



Lying on a CV - the consequences for all

Lying on a CV can have some serious consequences for both employees and employers, writes Mark Stevens, a senior associate at VWV LLP

It may be that a CV includes inaccurate details around a person's job history or qualifications. It may be that gaps between jobs are disguised.

Regardless, making dishonest claims on a CV can amount to fraud by false representation. The Fraud Act 2006 states that a person is guilty of fraud if they dishonestly make a false representation, and intend, by making the representation, to make a gain for themselves or another, or to cause loss to another. If there is fraudulent information on the job applicant's CV, then not only could this lead to a claim for damages from an employer, but the job applicant could also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Options for employers who discover lies

If a prospective employer has discovered that a job applicant has lied on their CV before the individual's employment has actually started, consideration should be given to revoking the employment offer. Where possible, job offers should be made conditional and subject to satisfactory references or evidence of qualifications.

Serious inaccuracies and lies on a CV and / or during an interview may result in a breach of the duty of trust and confidence that is implied in every employment contract. Lying on a CV could amount to gross misconduct, entitling the employer to summarily bring the employment relationship to an end. Lying on a CV can therefore allow

an employer the right to summarily dismiss the employee without notice or compensation. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that the breach is sufficiently serious to justify summary dismissal - a genuine mistake or minor inaccuracy on a CV, or during an interview, may not be sufficient to irretrievably damage the trust and confidence between employee and employer entitling summary dismissal.

An employer could also pursue a misrepresentation claim to seek compensation for the loss suffered as a result of the inaccurate information. An employer could argue that they were induced to enter into a contract of employment by an inaccurate statement by the employee. If it can be established that the misrepresentation was a

material factor in inducing the offer of employment, then the employer may be entitled to compensation. Potentially this could include the cost of replacing the employee and any recruitment agency fees and training fees incurred.

The consequences and potential penalties for the employee

As stated above, fraud is a crime and therefore a person lying on their CV could be committing a criminal offence.

Lying about skills or qualifications may also mean that an employee will not be able to perform their duties to the required standard. If this happens, the employee may be unable to complete their probation period, or find that they are subject to a performance management process. This could lead to formal warnings, capability meetings, and, ultimately, dismissal.

Lying on a CV could impact the content of an employment reference. There is no legal obligation on an employer to provide a reference in respect to a former employee, but, if they do so, the reference must be true and accurate. This could mean that reference to the inaccuracies could be recorded on an employment reference. This will cause further problems in the future for that employee when trying to secure alternative employment.

R v Andrewes

In the recent case of R v Andrewes (2022), a court found that Mr Andrewes had falsely claimed to have relevant qualifications and experience which were essential to the CEO position he applied for. Mr Andrewes was appointed to the role in 2004. His employment terminated in 2015 when the truth about his qualifications and experience came to light. In 2017 Mr Andrewes was convicted of obtaining a pecuniary advantage by deception and of two counts of fraud. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and the Crown sought a confiscation order against him. The Supreme Court ordered that nearly £100,000 of his earnings should be confiscated.

Although this case is a rarity, it does

show that CV fraud can lead to serious consequences for an individual.

Steps for employers

Firstly, employers should make it clear to job applicants that they will be attaching significant importance to the accuracy of the information provided in the job applicant's CV. The employer can also highlight that it reserves its right to summarily dismiss and or seek compensation if any information provided in a CV is misleading or inaccurate. Employers should make it clear to the job applicant what specific information is being relied upon when discussing and offering contracts of employment to those employees. Employers may wish to go a step further and ask job applicants to sign a written declaration to confirm that their application, and information provided during the course of the recruitment process, is true and accurate.

Employers should seek proof of the job applicant's qualifications and ask to see evidence relating to them. Employers should consider the risk posed by a prospective employee providing inaccurate information, and investigate accordingly.

It would be prudent to make offers of employment conditional on the employer receiving satisfactory references. Further questions may need to be asked of a recruitment agency where necessary - it should not be assumed that background checks have been carried out thoroughly.

Employers should also review the way in which they run a recruitment process - for example, by putting an assessment in place for job applicants.

Consider the data protection issues

Lastly, an employer should think carefully about the information and data that they will be collecting in relation to candidates and employees. The employer should also have good reasons for doing so, and provide candidates and employees with the appropriate privacy notices. Information must be stored securely, in line with data protection laws.

Wellbeing

Mental health awareness & loneliness

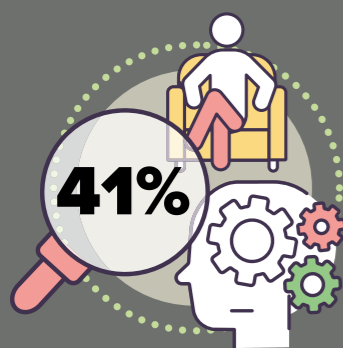
The aim of Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2022 was to provide an opportunity to focus on achieving good mental wellbeing. Each year has a theme. The previous year, it was 'back to nature,' while in 2022 it was 'loneliness,' writes Clare Brereton, a senior associate at employment law firm Brahams Dutt Badrick French LLP

The Mental Health Foundation, which hosts Mental Health Awareness Week, had chosen 'loneliness' as 2022's theme. A spokesperson for the foundation said: "Loneliness is affecting more and more of us in the UK, and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health during the pandemic."

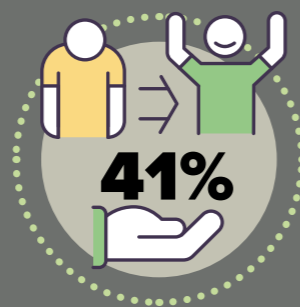
The Mental Health Foundation, which hosts Mental Health Awareness Week, had chosen 'loneliness' as 2022's theme. A spokesperson for the foundation said: "Loneliness is affecting more and more of us in the UK, and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health during the pandemic."

Some studies, including material from the mental health charity, Mind, have found that loneliness increases the risk of certain mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety. While some may choose to be alone and live happily without much contact with other people, others may find this an isolating

Two of these findings are particularly important when considering loneliness in the workplace:



41 percent of people reported that their mental health got worse during the pandemic, but those who worked on-site and felt supported by their employer were least likely to report a worsening in their mental health;



and Similarly, **41 percent of people** found it difficult to remain motivated at work during the pandemic, with remote workers finding it more difficult than those who continued to work onsite.

experience. Mind says that feeling lonely isn't, in itself, a mental health problem, but the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem can increase someone's chances of feeling lonely.

Mind also states that some research has suggested that loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep problems, and increased stress.

A large part of many employment lawyers' practices involves advising clients who are experiencing mental ill health, and the corresponding impact that has on their working life. Therefore, it is important to recognise that loneliness is not just something that is experienced by people in their home life. Many people often feel lonely at work. This is not confined to people who are alone (for example, working from home). It also includes those experiencing workplace issues. For example, people struggling with their workload or relationships with colleagues can feel incredibly lonely and unsupported.

In advance of Mental Health Awareness Week last May, Mind published the key findings of a survey it conducted into how the pandemic has affected people at work. 42,000 staff from 114 organisations across the UK were surveyed as part of the Workplace Wellbeing Index 2020/21, including people who had been furloughed, worked from home, or continued to work on-site.

By the very nature of their work, office workers were the biggest group of people who worked from home during the pandemic. They were also the last group of people to be permitted to return to the workplace.

It might be assumed that workplace loneliness will evaporate now that many of us have returned to the office for at least some of the working week. However, that is not necessarily the case, particularly in workforces where some people work in the office and others from home.

Employers are under a specific duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, but loneliness can affect all of us. Employers need to take care to ensure that loneliness amongst the workforce is not created, or exacerbated, while they adjust to the post-pandemic way of working.

Employers effectively need to adjust workplaces for employees and the new way of working. There are a number of initiatives that can be put in place to help reduce any loneliness experienced in a workplace setting.

These include having a flexible approach to working in the office, which allows staff to choose the days on which they come in and which means that there is a regular rotation of who is in the office and who works from home; circulating a chart throughout the week, alongside a colour-coded diary system (so that all can easily see who will be in the office on which days); setting up a group WhatsApp where staff discuss non-work-related matters; and having

birthday cards and gifts sent to employees homes on their birthday day off.

But there's more – employers could run weekly team meetings where every member of the firm updates the group on how busy they are, what they are working on, and can raise any issues with their workload; hold monthly supervision meetings with a manager to discuss the current workload; set up an open door/phoneline policy where team members can speak to each other in person or on a video call/phone call at any time during the working day; hold weekly communal lunches in the kitchen area for those working in the office, giving the team a chance to socialise during the day; run regular hybrid "know-how" meetings and training sessions where people are able to contribute remotely and in person; and hold quarterly whole-team social events.

Of course, these are just some of the things that employers can do as part of an initiative to promote good mental health. But no matter the approach, it is important to remember that, while Mental Health Awareness Week runs just once a year, the subject is something that should be borne in mind all the year around. Employers should find that a little time spent reducing loneliness within their workforce will pay dividends for all.



Products

DOMESTIC



Crossover to new range of ride-ons

60V models from Greenworks

New from Greenworks is the battery-powered Crossover range of ride-on lawnmowers.

Featuring 24hp equivalent brushless motor technology, and powered by 60V batteries which can be charged in 90 minutes, the new company says the new mowers can cut up to 8,000m² on a single charge, equivalent to two acres. The batteries are also interchangeable with other 60V tools from Greenworks, such as hedge trimmers and leaf blowers.

There are two models to select from: Crossover T with steering wheel control, and Crossover Z adjustable lap bars, which also feature individually-powered rear wheels for a true zero-radius turning circle.

The mowers are equipped with two dual-action steel blades that have a cutting width of 106cm (42"), and seven adjustable cutting heights of 38mm-105mm. Grass cuttings are discharged to the side or mulched. There is also a rear carry tray and tow-hitch for a garden trailer.

Ergonomically-designed, the units include a high-back padded seat with back support and foldable armrests. Safety is further enhanced with the addition of high-intensity LED lights for extra visibility whilst mowing in low light conditions. A robust steel chassis makes for a durable, long-lasting lawnmower that can be used across a range of lawn terrains.

5 SECOND INFO

- Cuts up to 8,000m² on a single charge
- Cutting width of 106cm (42")
- Interchangeable 60v battery with other tools from Greenworks
- LED lights for extra visibility

AGRICULTURAL



Sprinter into compact dimensions

Horsch SL and SC bring features of large-scale drills in smaller format

Horsch say their new Sprinter SL and SC drills integrates the features of the large-scale Sprinter NT drill in a more compact format, suited to UK farming.

The trailed 12m Sprinter 12.25 SC and mounted 6m Sprinter 6.25 SL drills feature 25cm row spacing, and can be folded to the 3m transport width required for movement on UK roads.

The Sprinter 6.25 SL can be combined with the Horsch Partner FT to create a manoeuvrable mounted drill setup.

Both Sprinter SL and SC drills are available with Horsch's latest tine coulters. There are different seed coulters options from the Ultra ThinEdge seed coulters, that provides a 12mm wide seed band to ensure

minimum of soil movement, the ThinEdge coulters with a 21mm wide seed band (ideal for sowing catch crops directly into the stubble), to the WideEdge tine seed coulters that has a 110mm wide seed band.

A more compact version of the Sprinter NT, the 12m Sprinter 12.25 SC, complements a 3m transport width with a 4m transport height to make it more manoeuvrable. It is equipped with a 6,300-litre double hopper, and will soon be available with a triple tank or additional MiniDrill options. The hopper design is based on that of the new Avatar 8.25, and can apply up to four components.

Horsch say the 6m Sprinter 6.25 SL is suitable for working in wetter conditions, and on light and medium

soils. As it is mounted, it is highly manoeuvrable, making it easy to operate in small fields. As with the Sprinter SC, the tines of the Sprinter 6.25 SL are hydraulically pre-stressed and retractable, and are individually depth-controlled with a press wheel. The three-bar tine section and 25cm tine spacing ensure a straw-free and clod-free sowing horizon.

5 SECOND INFO

- 6m drill foldable to 3m width
- 6,300-litre double hopper
- Straw-free and clod-free sowing
- Compact format, suited to UK farming

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COMMERCIAL



Hybrid remote control for safe usage

FRC7 commercial mower from Ferris

Ferris proudly introduces the FRC7 commercial remote-controlled mower, with hybrid technology.

The company says the 48V DC drive system provides power to the blades and to the tracks. The unit can drive up to 200m on battery power alone, without having to start the engine.

The mower is designed to improve the operator's safety in use, especially in areas that are difficult to reach. A Ferris spokesperson said: "Mowing banks and other inclined areas can potentially cause dangerous situations for both the operator and bystanders. Using dedicated remote-controlled machinery drastically reduces risk, physical effort and exposure to vibration, noise and emissions."

The FRC7's tracked low-gravity undercarriage ensures stability on steep inclines up to 55°, and provides traction. Both the tracks and mower deck are electrically driven by a hybrid e-drive system, which combines a combustion engine with a battery drive system, resulting in an effective powertrain.

The unit can mow forwards and backwards, making turning on a slope unnecessary. This, say Ferris, will prevent potential damage to the underlying soil.

The Vanguard EFI engine is fuel-efficient, and operates independently from the electrical system. Its load-sensing ability keeps the mower deck performing optimally, and automatically adjusts the mowing speed when conditions get tougher.

COMMERCIAL

Corvus get on track

For snowy, muddy or boggy conditions



Corvus Off-road Vehicles has introduced the Camso 4S1 snow track adapter kit for the Corvus Terrain DX4 range of 4x4 utility vehicles.

The company says this add-on offers owners a Terrain performance for all conditions. Corvus says the track kit offers a unique level of ride quality, performance and durability in any application, including deep snow, swamps, marshes, mud and boggy conditions.

The kit is one of a range of accessories available for the Corvus Terrain.

AGRICULTURAL



SpotSpray adds to new features

On Kverneland's sprayers

Kverneland's range of mounted and trailed sprayers now includes three new optional features.

These comprise SpotSpray, the introduction of a 25cm nozzle spacing option, and the next generation of Boom Guide ProActive boom height control.

SpotSpray technology is an extension of variable-rate application maps. While such maps have been applicable to seed drills and fertiliser spreaders with task control, the same principle can be applied to Kverneland sprayers that are equipped with iXspray software, when combined with iXflow Air/iXflow E individual nozzle control.

The company says SpotSpray uses treatment maps that can be populated with a zero-application rate, in addition to a prescribed application rate. By loading a treatment map into the control terminal, the sprayer automatically operates individual nozzles through the SpotSpray software and GPS, following only the indicated areas on the treatment map.

With the introduction of a 25cm nozzle spacing option, Kverneland say lower boom heights can be achieved to further reduce spray drift to a minimum. Working at a reduced boom height of 30cm – instead of 50cm – has been made possible with the latest generation of Boom Guide ProActive ultrasonic boom control. Advanced sensor technology is able to deliver greater precision and consistent boom control at higher forward speeds.

Kverneland sprayers include tractor-mounted iXter A and iXter B models, plus the ability to add capacity from a 1,100-litre iXtra front tank. An extensive line-up of iXtrack trailed models includes T3, T4 and T6 versions, spanning 2,600-7,400 litres.

FORESTY



Chisel chain enhances cutting performance

Up to 20% says STIHL

STIHL has launched a new full-chisel saw chain, which, they say, offers up to 20% higher cutting performance.

Compatible with any STIHL professional chainsaw with a power output of 1.6 kW – 2.0 kW, the new PS3 Pro chain is available in 3/8 P pitch and 1.1mm drive link gauge, and features a narrow kerf designed to reduce resistance while cutting.

The manufacturer says this new geometry results in a chain that not only cuts faster than the previous 1.3mm gauge chain, but which is less sensitive to pressure, too. For cordless chainsaw models, the increase in cutting efficiency also allows more cuts to be made per charge, improving productivity.

The new 1.1mm Light 04 guide bar has been specifically designed for use with the PS3 Pro chain, offering increased durability and optimum balance. In addition, the drive links on the PS3 Pro sit deeper inside the Light 04 guide bar compared to ¼ P 1.1mm chain, further decreasing the likelihood of the chain de-railing.

Available in 12" and 14" lengths, the PS3 Pro chain and Light 04 guide bar comes as standard with the new MSA 220 C-B, or separately as an easy upgrade for models such as the MSA 220 T and MS 201 TC-M. The PS3 Pro is also compatible with all standard 3/8 P sharpening accessories.

COMMERCIAL

Ventrac get ready for seedbed

Two new attachments

Ventrac, distributed in the UK and Ireland by Price Turfcare, has launched two new attachments for their 4520 all-terrain compact tractor, to help turf managers with seedbed preparation.

The first is the DC520 Soil Cultivator, which prepares bare soil by cultivating a soft and uniform seedbed for the best direct-seeding results. The manufacturer says the attachment reconditions hard, compacted soil into a fine surface for more successful and consistent germination rates.

The Soil Cultivator consists of four main components, which work simultaneously to process high volumes of soil. Cultivator tines pulverize the soil and separate the debris, then separator tines sift and

bury rock and other large debris below the prep surface. The distribution blade carries the sifted soil and distributes it evenly across the working surface, before the perforated roller creates a pocketed surface for seed, pressing small debris below the graded soil.

Also new is the EG520 Primary Seeder, which, Ventrac says, plants grass seed directly into bare soil with a consistent and accurate drop rate for perfect seed placement. With precise application adjustment and a removable calibration tray, easy adjustment for different grass seed types is possible.

The Primary Seeder features five main components for improved direct-seeding capability. The calibration tray is a built-in tray that

catches material during the calibration process. The front packer roller crushes the material to provide a smooth surface for the seed to drop. The rear packer roller is an offset roller that places a fine layer of dirt over the seed.

The seed box has a 142-litre capacity to accommodate a significant amount of seed, and the precision seed funnels allow an accurate flow for a variety of turf seeds. This ground-driven application is consistent at variable speeds, and the offset cultipacker discs are designed to create optimal seed-to-soil contact. Finally, the 142-litre hopper capacity provides efficiency.

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Always something new on the horizon



Our anonymous columnist, The Sprocket, continues setting the industry to rights this issue – with thoughts on shows, batteries and costs!

You lucky people, The Sprocket has returned for another thrilling page or two of old-fashioned views and comment about the land-based engineering industry and what goes on – or has gone on – around us.

The Editor of *SD* must be short of writers to demand the return of an anonymous biker to fill the pages of the mag. It's OK for The Sprocket, as it isn't exactly biking weather out there right now – cold, wet, icy, salty and generally a bit miserable. But spring is on the way. Then, we can dust off the bikes, take them off SORN, blow the tires up and get out there – if we can find space between the caravans and motorhomes that will surely infest the country's glorious biking routes.

Show business

The unending calendar of exhibitions and events kicked off with two big shows in January: LAMMA at the NEC and the BTME show at Harrogate.

I, for one, would not have wanted to be out in the open for the LAMMA show at Newark or Peterborough, its previous homes. The weather on the first day was atrocious, and – judging by the numbers drawn into the relative calm of the NEC – the farming world was keen to leave the wellies at home and crowd the aisles. But, as always, the price to pay was traffic chaos – in the morning, at least.

BTME at Harrogate took me back a few years to the heady days when the aisles were crowded and the bars and restaurants teeming with greenkeeper life. Full, busy, buzzing and interesting this year. Well done, BIGGA, and welcome back! It's a machinery show set in the great spa town of Harrogate, with its plentiful hotels, bars and eating establishments – but, OMG, isn't it getting expensive?! Was great to see it in full swing, though.

So, lots more to look forward to, and I am not going to

list them – but I would mention for all you dealers not to forget your local and county shows. These can be fabulous and very traditional, and, whilst many shows are considered PR exercises, supporting your local area at one of these can be most productive as part of your overall marketing campaign. They can take place at a busy time of year, but they're certainly worth a thought.

There's been lots of commentary about the shows that are targeted at the industry – who is getting together with whom, and so on. Not sure I want to get into the politics of it all, but, whilst few are what they used to be – or even where and when they used to be – there is always something new on the horizon. The bottom line is, this is true of any business, new or old. Show organisers are in it to make money, not out of the goodness of their own hearts. Otherwise, what would be the point for them?

If you are looking for new product or opportunities, you may want to look a bit further afield, and go visit some of the shows in Europe – we are still allowed to go there, despite Brexit! For the more adventurer, sneaking off across the pond may provide some good ideas – and a holiday (sorry, 'business trip') to boot! Be careful, though – our American cousins don't tend to want to alter their products to meet EU or UKCA requirements, if only small volumes are involved. On the other hand, those in Europe, who are still talking to us, generally will have compliant product for the UK.

If you are looking for new or niche market product, you may want to consider chatting with a company that is already involved in importing from different countries. If you find something you like, they may be interested in working with you to bring it in. If you are into small volumes, you don't want to get bogged down with all the administration around importing, VAT returns, and all the umpteen ways of creating an administrative nightmare. That is what importers and distributors do.

Going green?

The march toward greener energy is gaining pace, but one must question if the use of battery technology to power anything from a small pair of clippers to cars, tractors or trucks is really the way forward in the long term? Is it just a phase that will run its course in the not-too-distant future, leaving the countryside covered in rejected vehicles that are not economical to repair or repurpose? Will it leave batteries abandoned in nooks and crannies at business premises, or waste sites that no-one wants anything to do with?

It seems – I am not an expert, nor fully read-up on these matters – that the technology to recycle or repurpose lithium-ion batteries is not really here yet, and that, when electric cars need new batteries and/or new transmissions, they may not be viable to repair, resulting in a huge recycling or waste issue.

It has been reported that more emissions are created in the production of an electric car than a petrol car – but, during the lifetime of the electric car, fewer emissions are created than with a petrol car. But there was no accounting for the emissions or waste created by the recycling of the electric car. The End of Life Vehicle Directive 2015 says that 95% of the mass of every car must be recycled. Things could get interesting, especially when you consider the weight of a battery pack in a modern car ...

Now we have the UK's own flagship electric car battery manufacturer going into administration. The Britishvolt start-up, based in Northumberland, has collapsed before it could build its £3.8bn gigafactory, at a cost of over 3,000 jobs. This may affect the plans for the West Midlands battery gigafactory at Coventry airport, close to one of the UK's big-name car manufacturers. What a disaster for the UK and our own electric car industry! Anyone who is creating new equipment reliant on UK-manufactured batteries should watch out.

Costs, costs, costs

At the time I was penning this Sprocket missive, rumour has it that inflation is on the way down. That may mean coming off the peak by a tiny percentage, or it may be just a blip in this roller-coaster ride. One thing is for sure – my gas bill is still hitting the roof!

But there may be some joy for the importers of this world. I hear the cost of shipping a container is falling fairly quickly. Whilst many will be committed to shipments already, is this a light at the end of the tunnel that may help with improved margins or – dare I say it – price reductions from our importers? One can never be sure if this is going to help, or if there is a need to play catch up and recover some of the losses that may have been incurred when the container costs skyrocketed. Time will tell, no doubt. Let's hope we don't have another massive container ship get stuck in the banks of the Suez Canal!

Better get going now – otherwise, the editor will run out of space, and I won't get my bike cleaned up for the next ride. Before I go, though, I would like to remind everyone – dealers and suppliers alike – that, whatever you want to moan and groan about this year, or get on your hobbyhorse about, please consider that we are a small industry fighting for our share of the labour market. We need a joined-up effort from every corner of the industry to help with recruitment.

Get your message, and an industry message, out there, and help your local schools understand what is on offer in the land-based engineering sector. That way, we can recruit fresh faces from the 16-pluses that will be looking for new careers and exciting positions with dynamic companies in 2023 and beyond!



What's on?

Status of the events correct at the time of going to press, but we advise confirming with organisers' websites and social media channels.

MARCH 2023

Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, London 17/2 - 2/3 www.idealhomeshow.co.uk	Hadleigh Show 20 www.hadleighshow.co.uk
AEA Conference 2023, One Great George Street, London 28 www.aea.uk.com	Fife Show 20 www.fifeshow.com

APRIL 2023

Harrogate Spring Flower Show 20 - 23 www.flowershow.org.uk	Smallholding & Countryside Festival, Royal Welsh Showground 20 - 21 rwas.wales/whats-on/smallholding-countryside-festival
Newark Garden Show, Newark Showground 21 - 23 www.flowershow.org.uk	Chelsea Flower Show 22 - 27 rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show
East Anglian Game & Country Fair, Euston Estate, Thetford 22 - 23 www.ukgamefair.co.uk	Shropshire County Agricultural Show, West Midlands Showground 27 www.shropshirecountyshow.com
	Herts County Show 27 - 28 www.hertsshow.com

MAY 2023

North Somerset Show 1 www.nsas.org.uk	Northumberland County Show 29 www.northcountyshow.co.uk
Nottinghamshire County Show 13 www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com	Suffolk County Show 31/5 - 1/6 www.suffolkshow.co.uk
Balmoral Show, Belfast 10 - 13 www.balmoralshow.co.uk	Staffordshire County Show 31/5 - 1/6 www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show

JUNE 2023

Royal Bath & West Show 1 - 3 www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show

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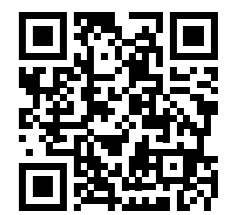


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