

# SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

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**PLANT HIRE &  
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SECTOR**

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May/June 2026

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G&J Pecks on their radical overhaul of operations

## APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING UPDATE

Latest information for dealers

# STRENGTH IN SPECIALISATION

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## INFLUENCING THE INFLUENCERS

Machinery at the Garden Press Event

 Kilworth

## DOE DEVELOPMENTS

Debut of multiple new franchises and staff members at this year's show



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Letter from the editor  
**Steve Gibbs**  
[steve@servicedealer.co.uk](mailto:steve@servicedealer.co.uk)



**W**elcome to the May/June 2026 edition of *Service Dealer* magazine.

Robotic mowing is an increasingly important conversation within the dealer network. Yet, as the latest feedback from you, our valued dealer readers show, the market is far from uniform in its direction of travel.

For a growing number of dealerships, robotics is delivering genuine momentum. Those who have embraced the category are reporting tangible opportunities, particularly as the technology itself has evolved at pace. The shift away from boundary wires to RTK GPS guidance, combined with rapid advances in onboard processing and AI-driven navigation, has fundamentally changed both the installation process and the customer proposition.

This progress is being mirrored in end-user attitudes. In the domestic market, robotic mowing is steadily moving beyond its early adopter phase.

It is within the professional sector, however, that the most notable shift appears to be taking place. What was, until recently, cautious curiosity is in many cases turning into active consideration. Labour shortages, tighter margins and the need for consistent presentation are prompting turf managers and contractors to look more seriously at automation.

For some, robotics is no longer a 'nice to have', but part of a wider strategy to do more with fewer resources.

Dealers operating successfully in this space are adapting accordingly - positioning themselves not just as suppliers of machinery, but as technology partners. The opportunity extends beyond the initial sale into installation, fleet management and ongoing support, creating a different kind of long-term customer relationship. And yet, despite these positive indicators, hesitation remains.

Our latest dealer survey reflects a network that shows marked differences of opinion. Alongside those seeing strong uptake are others who continue to question whether robotics is the right fit for their business or their customer base. Concerns around upfront cost, site suitability and the perceived complexity of the technology are still influencing buying decisions. In the professional arena, questions around productivity, return on investment and operational integration have yet to be fully resolved for some.

In that sense, robotics may be approaching a tipping point - but it has not reached universal acceptance just yet.

For the sector as a whole, this makes it a particularly important moment. The direction of travel is clear, but the speed - and the extent to which individual dealerships choose to engage - remains a key question.

**THE TEAM**

**Publisher:** Duncan Murray-Clarke

**Editor:** Steve Gibbs  
[steve@servicedealer.co.uk](mailto:steve@servicedealer.co.uk)

**Agricultural Editor:** Martin Rickatson  
[jmr.agriculture@gmail.com](mailto:jmr.agriculture@gmail.com)

**Plant Hire & Construction Features Editor:** Dan Gilkes  
[fullbucketdg@gmail.com](mailto:fullbucketdg@gmail.com)

**SME Digest Editor:** Adam Bernstein  
[adam@adambernstein.co.uk](mailto:adam@adambernstein.co.uk)

**Contributors:** Laurence Gale  
[laurence.gale@btinternet.com](mailto:laurence.gale@btinternet.com)  
Keith Christian  
[keith@servicedealer.co.uk](mailto:keith@servicedealer.co.uk)

**Design & layout:** Sarah Allen

**Produced by:** The Ad Plain Ltd  
Howbery Park, Benson Lane,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire,  
OX10 8BA, UK  
Telephone: 01491 837 117  
[www.theadplain.com](http://www.theadplain.com)

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**Advertising sales:**  
Nikki Harrison  
[nikki@theadplain.com](mailto:nikki@theadplain.com)  
Telephone: 01491 837 117

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## INDUSTRY

# Barrus restructure Outdoor Division

And appoint Jack Brown as commercial sales manager



Jack Brown

**Barrus has announced a "strategic organisational restructure" within its Outdoor Division following what they describe as "a sustained period of significant business growth."**

In recent years, the company says the scale and size of the division has expanded considerably. Customer volumes have increased, stock holding unit numbers have grown, and transaction volumes have risen substantially.

As part of its continued growth strategy, the company will transition from a traditional divisional structure to what they describe as a more agile, team-based specialist structure. The move, they say, is designed to better align with evolving market demands and changing customer purchasing behaviours across retail, online and distributor channels.

Barrus believes this evolution is essential to maintaining momentum and unlocking further opportunity within the Outdoor Division. In a statement the company explained, "The available market presents a realistic opportunity to double sales profitably over the next four to five years."

The statement continued, "Despite broader market

challenges, the division continues to benefit from strong brand performance and portfolio development.

"The business is also capitalising on new customer acquisition opportunities across online and mass retail channels, broadening its route-to-market strategy."

As part of the new structure, Barrus has created a commercial sales manager role for the Lawn & Garden category and welcomes Jack Brown to oversee all sales and customer-related activity within the category. Jack has a wealth of knowledge and experience having started his career in a dealership and then with Stiga for the last eleven years as area sales manager, sales manager and sales director.

Working closely with the commercial product manager, Phil Noble will take on greater focus and accountability for product management and development in his role. Both roles have a clear objective: to deliver sustainable, profitable sales growth.

Barrus concluded their statement saying they remain confident in the strength of their brands, the commitment of their people and the long-term growth potential of the Outdoor Division.

## FREE DEALER TOOLKIT

# Forging Ahead

Latest exclusive module now available for dealers

**Service Dealer is proud to have launched the latest volume of our free digital Toolkits for dealers - this time led by inspirational speaker Nick Elston and focusing on mental health.**

Following on from Nick's extremely popular Forging Ahead session at the Service Dealer Conference 2025, we are excited to bring you the *Forging Ahead - Mental Health Dealer Toolkit*, offering all the tools from Nick's mental health playbook and how you can implement them in your day to day and working life.

Service Dealer owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke, said, "Nick has a great ability to connect with his audience about sensitive but important issues. He was extremely popular at last year's Conference, and he has recorded a series of short sessions just for Service Dealer readers. All free in our Toolkit."

If you signed up to our Toolkits before just log-in again to view - otherwise you can sign up for free and access this and all the previous Toolkits at [www.servicedealer.co.uk/login](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk/login)

Nick will be joining us again at our Conference in December looking at Mental Health and Culture in business. You can register your interest in tickets now at [www.servicedealer.co.uk/2026-save-the-date](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk/2026-save-the-date)



Nick Elston speaking at the 2025 Service Dealer Conference

## PEOPLE

# David Withers takes co-owner role at ATT

And company chairman position

**Following the announcement that Advanced Turf Technology (ATT) has been reacquired by original founder John Coleman, the company revealed a strengthening of its leadership team with the appointment of the 'recently retired' and winner of Service Dealer's Lifetime Contribution Award 2025, David Withers.**

A well-recognised name and face of the groundcare industry, David will be bringing decades of knowledge and experience to a new role as co-owner and company chairman.

David's career began as an equipment demonstrator for Redexim before embarking a 25-year tenure with Jacobsen where he held a number of senior leadership roles including six

years as President. The last eight years has seen David spearhead the Iseki UK & Ireland business, where his proven ability to develop brands and drive sustainable growth saw the company more than double its sales.

ATT say his deep understanding of professional turf machinery, manufacturing and brand development makes him a valuable addition to their strategic team at a pivotal point in its evolution.

"David's experience, insights and leadership credentials within the sector cannot be denied," said ATT managing director John Coleman. "His support and guidance will be instrumental to establishing our new manufacturing facility, re-invigorating the Infinicut and



John Coleman and David Withers

TMSystem brands back to their position as leaders in the marketplace and driving the business forward, both at home and further afield, as we embark on this next chapter."

David added, "I am delighted to have the opportunity to work alongside John and the team as we re-establish Infinicut as the go-to mower for golf and sports turf applications around the world. I am looking forward to this new role and continuing to play my part in this fantastic industry of ours!"

DEALERS

# New Holland award their dealers

12 UK and Ireland dealerships honoured

**New Holland has announced that twelve of its UK and Ireland dealerships have been recognised with their 2025 Dealer of the Year awards.**

The manufacturer says these awards celebrate the success of its national dealer network, highlighting outstanding achievement in performance and total service quality.



Overall Dealer of the Year, T H White

**The Overall Dealer of the Year award winners include:**

- Overall UK Dealer of the Year - T H White Ltd
- Republic of Ireland Dealer of the Year - M&S Machinery
- Medium Dealer of the Year - Andrew Symons Ltd
- Small Dealer of the Year - T Alun Jones & Son

**Category Dealer of the Year award winners include:**

- Tractor Dealer of the Year - T Alun Jones & Son
- Combine Dealer of the Year - Russells Group
- Hay & Forage Dealer of the Year - R. Kennedy & Co (N.I.) Ltd
- Telehandler Dealer of the Year - Lloyd Ltd
- Construction Equipment Dealer of the Year - M&S Machinery
- Parts Dealer of the Year - Colemans Millstreet Ltd
- Customer Experience Dealer of the Year - Russells Group
- Precision Technology Dealer of the Year - Lloyd Ltd

David Rapkins, commercial business unit director for UK and ROI said, "Our dealer network continues to set the benchmark for excellence, and these awards reflect their commitment to providing outstanding service to our customers. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to all the 2025 winners. These achievements highlight the strength, dedication and professionalism of our dealer network."

Adrian Lovegrove, agricultural division director from Overall UK Dealer of the Year 2025 T H White Ltd, said, "This achievement is testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, and to the continued loyalty and support of our valued customers."

Paudie Slattery, managing director of Republic of Ireland Dealer of the Year 2025 M&S Machinery, explained, "Our team here at M&S Machinery are our best asset. This wouldn't be possible without them all."

Andrew Symons, dealer principal of Andrew Symons Ltd, awarded Medium Dealer of the Year 2025 added, "This recognition truly means a great deal to us. It represents decades of consistent hard work, dedication, and commitment from every single member of staff."

Hâf Jones, director of Small Dealer of the Year 2025, T Alun Jones & Son, concluded, "We would like to extend a big thank you to all our staff for their efforts, and to our customers for their continued support."

DEALERS



Sam Lewis, general manager of AriensCo with Peter Chaloner, managing director of Henton & Chattell

## AriensCo enter new spare parts-nership!

With Henton & Chattell

**AriensCo have announced that they have entered into a partnership with Henton & Chattell to expand its spare parts supply in the United Kingdom.**

They say this move will increase the availability of original spare parts for Ariens, AS-Motor, Countax and Westwood nationwide, with Henton & Chattell now an official UK distributor for spare parts for the four brands.

AriensCo say dealers in the United Kingdom will benefit from two supply channels in future: spare parts can still be ordered via the AriensCo Exchange portal or purchased directly from Henton & Chattell. Local warehousing shortens delivery times and increases machine availability during the season, they say.

Sam Lewis, general manager of AriensCo UK, explained, "This partnership strengthens our operational support for our dealers in the United Kingdom. Shorter delivery times and higher parts availability help our partners keep machines in operation without unnecessary downtime."



# COBRA

## Why Not Become a Cobra Dealer in 2026?

With over 170 products in the range including premium lawn tractors, VX petrol lawnmowers, 40v cordless machines plus the new ZT ride-on range and Fortis Stadium 34, Cobra is fast becoming a market leading brand in garden machinery. Contact us to join the growing number of Cobra Dealers across the U.K. For information on becoming a Cobra Dealer contact Andy Marvin: 07771 581 296 or call: 01 15 986 6646.

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DEALERS



# Carrs Billington have area increased

By Massey Ferguson

Carr's Billington's Penrith depot

Massey Ferguson has announced changes to its dealer network in South-East Scotland, with Carr's Billington extending its trading area to include the borders and Lothian regions. The move increases the Carr's trading area for Massey products by around 10%.

MF's South-East Scotland area was previously run by Scot Agri, who remains an MF dealer across Angus, Aberdeenshire and parts of Moray. Its Kelso depot will remain active on AGCO's system until 30th June to facilitate a smooth transition for customers.

Tom Jobling, machinery director at Carr's Billington, said, "We've been a Massey Ferguson dealer for over 30 years and already operate with the brand across eight depots in northern England and Scotland. Our existing team is well placed to support the new customers as we take on the bigger area, with further staff additions planned as the changes take effect."

"The business, under our feed and rural supplies division, already has four sites across the new area, so we're already known and can support farmers and growers as required. The machinery sales and support will be handled from the Morpeth depot initially, and a formal announcement on a permanent location in the new area will follow soon."

Tim Walters, brand manager for Massey Ferguson UK and Ireland, added, "Carr's Billington is steeped in MF heritage and is purely focussed on selling the brand, so we're delighted to increase its area and improve MF's visibility in a key location."

DEALERS

# Case IH honours their top dealers

From the UK and Ireland

Case IH has announced the winners of its UK and Ireland Dealer of the Year Awards for 2025, celebrating dealer performance, customer service and commitment across its dealer network.

Farmstar Ltd, covering Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire, was named Overall UK Dealer of the Year, whilst All Ireland Dealer of the Year was Tobin & Cantwell Ltd, based in Co. Tipperary. Additional category winners were recognised across sales, service, parts and precision farming.

**Case IH Dealer of the Year 2025 Category winners:**

- Overall UK Dealer of the Year - Farmstar Ltd
- All Ireland Dealer of the Year - Tobin & Cantwell Ltd

- Farmlift Dealer of the Year - Cotswold Farm Machinery Ltd
- Precision Farming Dealer of the Year - Pontesbury Tractors Ltd
- Parts Dealer of the Year - GCS Agricentre
- Customer Experience Dealer of the Year - Pontesbury Tractors Ltd
- Over 260 TIV best market share growth - T H White ProAgri
- Under 260 TIV best market share growth - R.C. Dalgliesh Ltd
- Data Quality & Sales App Dealer of the Year - Stalham Engineering Co Ltd

David Rapkins, CNH commercial business unit director UK & ROI said, "These awards reflect the exceptional work carried out across our dealer network throughout the year. Our dealers play a vital role in supporting

customers, providing expertise, and representing the Case IH brand with professionalism and passion. We are proud to recognise their achievements and ongoing commitment to delivering outstanding service across the UK and Ireland."



Farmstar were named Overall Dealer of the Year by Case IH

INDUSTRY



STIGA S.p.A. has announced a strategic partnership with US-based technology firm SiMa.ai to integrate advanced artificial intelligence into its robotic lawnmower range.

The agreement will see STIGA adopt SiMa.ai's low-power machine-learning system-on-chip (MLSoC) platform across its domestic and commercial robotic mower line-up. The aim is to enable real-time decision-making on a platform designed to deliver ultra-low latency (meaning the machine can think and act in near real time) and reduced power consumption.

The manufacturer said the

collaboration will provide a "scalable architecture" for its robotic products, supporting more intelligent and adaptive operation without significantly increasing battery demand - a key consideration for consumer and professional machines alike.

SiMa.ai specialises in what it describes as 'Physical AI', embedding machine intelligence directly into devices so they can perceive, decide and act independently in real-world environments. Its low-power hardware and software platforms are designed to allow edge devices (self-contained, intelligent machines) to run advanced

AI workloads efficiently, without the high energy requirements typically associated with such processing.

Sean Robinson, CEO of STIGA S.p.A., said the partnership would allow the company to "push the boundaries" of autonomous machinery. He added that while STIGA retains control over how its robots sense, decide and operate, SiMa.ai's technology enables those functions to be delivered with significantly lower power consumption.

According to the companies, the result will be lighter, more efficient robotic mowers capable of delivering greater performance from the available battery capacity. They also claim the approach will improve precision, responsiveness and overall operational efficiency.

Krishna Rangasayee, founder and CEO of SiMa.ai, described the agreement as a major step forward in bringing practical AI capability to edge devices, removing much of the complexity traditionally associated with deploying AI in consumer products.

# News in brief:

Read these stories, and more, in full at: [www.servicedealer.co.uk](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk)

PEOPLE



## AEA's Ruth Bailey makes the Powerlist

Ruth Bailey, AEA CEO and DG has made the UK Women in Trade Association's Powerlist 2026. This initiative celebrates the remarkable women leading and shaping the UK's trade association landscape, with Ruth describing the award as "a huge honour and very kind recognition."

PEOPLE

## Change at the top for Argo Tractors GB



With Argo Tractors GB announcement that Richard Haines has decided to accept the position of CEO of McCormick North America,

effective July 1, 2026, his successor has now been named. Jonathan Newton has been appointed to take over for Argo Tractors in Great Britain, with the company saying he has "a deep understanding of the sector."

PEOPLE



## Award presented to Mower Magic

Mower Magic directors John and Jez Hall, along with national sales manager, Samuel Mant, recently flew out to Shenzhen, China for the Mammotion distributor conference - where they were awarded the Regional Growth Award, presented for outstanding growth and market development in the UK.

# Influencing the influencers

*Service Dealer* editor, STEVE GIBBS, visits a specialist trade show aimed at introducing domestic horticulture brands to the media and finds long-term relationships being forged.

**During February I had the pleasure of attending a small industry exhibition at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London.**

Called The Garden Press Event, it's a show I have been attending for several years now and one that sees the number of exhibitors relevant to our readership decidedly fluctuate. There was a time that amongst the companies hawking their gardening gloves, trowels, seeds and hanging baskets there were machinery brands well into their double figures. Nowadays it appears to have settled into the high single figures who choose to take their place in the North London venue.

And why are these manufacturers in attendance? From speaking to the machinery people there, the eyes that they are especially looking to catch are those of influencers. The right ones obviously. Not just those on the scrounge for a free leaf blower, but those who have real sway over the decisions made by their end-user followers. A well-chosen influencer will have a close and trusted relationship with their followers. The idea being that these end-users can then come through your dealership's doors or visit your website, armed with greater knowledge about what a quality machine can do for their garden.

Also, by positioning themselves

amongst the hanging baskets, I do feel these specialist domestic machinery brands are very much locating themselves at the heart of the wider horticultural conversation. They are placing themselves in the mix alongside design trends, sustainability stories and lifestyle aspirations - and are presenting powered machinery not simply as a boring necessity, but as a means to better outdoor living.

In conversations with exhibiting manufacturers, I was repeatedly told it was not just about meeting individuals with the highest follower count, though. It's important to stress that they were looking for creators who represented the right fit. Those

who genuinely care about lawn maintenance, garden improvement and the tools required to achieve both. Crucially, alongside this, I kept hearing that it was long-term partnerships that were required. Not fly-by-night, flashy team-ups. But people or channels they could build a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship with.

There isn't another show like the Garden Press Event that facilitates this meet-up between brands and influencers. I heard several first-hand anecdotes from representatives of marques that our dealer readers stock, regarding relationships that have been

forged at previous editions of this show. In turn this has led to high-profile coverage and, vitally, to customers arriving at dealerships asking for the machine they'd seen in use on a post somewhere.

For the few machinery brands exhibiting this year, the calculation was strategic. They are there to influence the influencers - and, by extension, tomorrow's customers. Dealers know that we're living in an age where purchasing decisions for domestic kit can be formed on a smartphone before they are finalised in a showroom. For the companies

putting themselves in the sights of the right content creators, the hope is their dealers will see a direct benefit.

It was interesting to observe which brands are actively looking to forge new relationships with the next generation of influencers. Clearly this event isn't the only means of achieving this goal, but as the only trade day specifically geared toward generating these meet-ups, it seems to me like a great place to start. It will certainly be interesting to watch in subsequent editions whether machinery exhibitor numbers begin to creep back up again.

## What were the machinery companies saying and showing at the Garden Press Event 2026?



STIHL MS 500i limited

**STIHL who always have a significant presence at the event, told me that last year a contact made here led to them becoming the official supplier of outdoor powered equipment to the Gardening with Alan Titchmarsh YouTube channel.**

On the stand were plenty of products powered by the smaller AS batteries, including the HLA 40 long reach hedge trimmer and the HTA 30 pole pruner - both light in weight and popular with an older demographic.

Later, at an aftershow event, the company revealed that 2026 is set to feature their biggest TV promotional campaign yet, designed to tie-in with their 100 year anniversary. A new advert was revealed for the first time ahead of it going live across multiple stations, that leant heavily into the

company's professional heritage.

Also teased was a special limited centennial edition of the MS 500i, its flagship petrol chainsaw designed for professional forestry applications. The centennial edition retains the full specification of the standard model, however it is finished in an exclusive black design with distinctive centenary detailing. The invited press were told that the limited-edition model will be available in restricted numbers through selected specialist STIHL Approved Dealers.



The 2026 Garden Press Event once again took place at the Business Design Centre, Islington

**STIGA** featured two ride-ons and two robots on their stand, illustrating both their domestic range and their newly made move into the professional sector. New UK md, James Gordon, explained it was an exciting time for the company with new product launches and several new staff members joining their team. The message they were wanting to convey to the press and influencers was the conversion from petrol to battery - stressing that the power to price ratio was more attractive than ever to new buyers.



Brand-new robot mower models made their debut, all equipped with Vista technology, an AI-driven camera that enables the mower to 'see' and understand the garden as it works. There are eight of these new robots in the range.

Also on show, a well-known model in the company's range for over fifty years, the ePark Pro, has been completely re-engineered for the electric era. This has resulted in what the company described as a zero-emission front mower that pairs their articulated steering system with the silent, sustainable strength of proprietary ePower Pro battery technology.

**Mammotion** robotic mowers were on show from Mower Magic who have been dealing in these machines for around two years now. They told me their dealer network is growing for the brand with around 30 across the UK, but with gaps in their coverage for the right dealers to join in the right places. New for 2026 is the introduction of Tri-Fusion - described as an integration of 360° LiDAR, NetworkRTK and AI Vision for precision, adaptability, and stability. By using these technologies, I was told the robots deliver precision within 1 cm.



Models on show included the LUBA 3 AWD, the more compact Luba Mini 2, and for gardens that don't need the rugged all-wheel-drive there was the Yuka Mini 2.

**Makita** said the visitors to their stand were interested in everything they had on show - which included a new snow blower - as they liked their UK-built story. Their XTG range had experienced a lot of traction due to a successful Europe-wide promotion across the past year they said, with more to come in 2026.



**Husqvarna** were displaying some robotic mowers and handheld products on a stand that was also branded with Flymo and Gardena. Interestingly, they included one of their top-end professional blowers within their display to illustrate to the gardening influencers their commercial heritage - getting the message across that their domestic products come from the same technical know-how that the demanding commercial practitioners use.



Of the Automowers on display, new for 2026 was an example of a 300 series at a new lower price point than the range has featured before. The company told me their dealers were keen to get their hands on this model, due to customer demand.

**Webb** were promoting their new 40 volt Eco-X series, that will all be available from April. They said the range covers all major categories of garden care - from lawnmowers and grass trimmers through to hedge trimmers, blowers, vacuums, chainsaws and scarifiers. The series has been engineered as a complete cordless ecosystem rather than a single-tool offering. Brushless motor technology is utilised across the range to offer improved efficiency, longer runtimes and extended product life. Powered by two interchangeable 20V lithium-ion batteries working together, I was told the Webb Eco X-Series combines the convenience customers increasingly expect with the strength and runtime needed for more demanding tasks – which the company believes positions it as a “natural next-step purchase for households upgrading their garden equipment.”



**Bosch** were debuting their new cordless and robotic lawnmower range. This included the VISIMOW18V robotic mower which they described as a wire-free, camera-based approach to robotic mowing. Also on show was the ROTAK8V cordless mower that offered 36V-level performance via 2 x 18V batteries (on selected models) and the PKE18V-30-28 cordless chainsaw that they said used OptiCut Technology to automatically adjust motor speed and torque to ensure continuous, effortless cuts, even under load.



**The perfect partner at work!**

**STIGA**  
Garden care.



Ross Sheach (right) showing off the Bad Boy Mowers at January's LAMMA exhibition

# Backing dealers through change

Change at manufacturer level can have far-reaching consequences for distributors and dealers alike. Here, ROSS SHEACH, commercial sales manager with Henry Sheach, shares in his own words an honest account of navigating a challenging transition, the importance of aftersales support, and what independent dealers value most when partnerships evolve.

Nine years have passed since my father's article appeared in this very same publication. At the time, it focused on our involvement with Bob-Cat zero-turn mowers, then owned by Schiller Ground Care.

The article outlined the many benefits of zero-turn mowing, highlighted our rapidly expanding dealer network, and detailed how successfully we were promoting the machines at more than 20 county shows across the UK.

What followed was a highly successful nine-year relationship with Schiller, during which we worked directly with the factory in the United States. The product range available to us was extensive, highly competitive, and widely respected for its exceptional build quality. Equally important was Schiller's aftersales support, which was second to none - covering parts availability, warranty handling and technical assistance. This level of backing allowed us to grow the business consistently, reaching annual sales volumes in excess of 250 Bob-Cat machines despite not having stand-on machines at that time.

In the original 2016 article, my father was asked a question that arose frequently:

"Do these Bob-Cats have anything to do with the Bobcat company that specialises in loaders and skid-steers?"

His answer was unequivocal:

"There is no connection at all. We share the same name and a similar logo, but there is a legally binding

agreement that stipulates they will not cut grass, and we will not shovel earth. They are entirely different companies, and should not be confused."

At the end of 2019, it was announced that Schiller Ground Care would be selling its mower and specialist lawncare range, Ryan, to Doosan Bobcat, the global manufacturer best-known for skid-steers and loaders. We, alongside other distributors at the time - which included those in Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands - continued to import and distribute the products through our established dealer network. This transition was formalised in June 2021, when we signed a new distributor agreement with Doosan Bobcat EMEA, their European division, transferring all aspects of the business from the United States to Czech Republic.

The years that followed working with Doosan Bobcat EMEA have left us exhausted, frustrated, and deeply disheartened. When my father was given a tour of their European facilities,

and invited to share our thoughts, we acknowledged that the facilities were impressive, and the staff welcoming. However, we also expressed our concern that we had yet to encounter anyone with genuine experience in groundcare. That observation was met with silence.

As time went on, there were no meaningful signs of improvement in any department. We experienced significant price increases - up to 25% in one year. 500 warranty claims between 2022 and 2025, mainly to do with factory build issues. Parts lead times became unacceptable for our customers. EMEA had effectively taken over the business, with no plan to support the existing customers. One by one, distributors in the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand chose to step away from the Doosan Bobcat brand. After five years, we have now made the same decision.

With well over 2,000 Bobcat mower customers in the UK, we remain fully committed to providing parts and aftersales support, just as we have done for the past 15 years. It is only through our knowledge and expertise that we have been able to shield our customers from Doosan's shortcomings over the last four to five years - and we will continue to stand by them.



Ross Sheach, commercial sales manager, at Bad Boy's annual dealer conference in Florida, October 2025



Ross Sheach talking his staff through the new 27 models now available in the UK



Christmas came early at the end of last year for the team at Henry Sheach's, as the first delivery of Bad Boy Mowers arrived



Alistair Sheach and son Ross Sheach. Saltex 2021 - When green became white. The first year displaying the new colour scheme for the Doosan range.

## Here comes the Bad Boy

A trip to Louisville for the GIE Equipment Expo in October 2024 – undertaken to meet with Doosan Bobcat in an effort to resolve our ongoing issues – also led to an unexpected and welcome encounter with an old friend, Bad Boy Mowers, a company we had not done business with for over 12 years.

Our relationship with Bad Boy Mowers began in 2006, when we imported their diesel zero-turn mower with great success, selling in excess of 50 units per year. At the time, we were also the importer and distributor for Great Dane Mowers, and therefore had no requirement for Bad Boy’s petrol models. Since then, the growth of Bad Boy Mowers over the past 12 to 15 years has been nothing short of remarkable, and today they offer one of the largest and most comprehensive zero-turn mower ranges on the market.

Founded in 1998, Bad Boy Mowers has always set out to build the best

and highest-quality zero-turn mowers in the world. The company built its first mower in 2002, and unveiled it at the GIE Expo in Louisville, Kentucky, where it won Product of the Year. From an original workforce of just 20 employees, the company has grown to more than 1,000. Over the past two decades, Bad Boy has become the fastest-growing zero-turn mower manufacturer globally, with over 1,200 dealers across the United States, Australia, Canada, Puerto Rico, South America, and now the United Kingdom.

Our intention at the 2024 Expo was not simply to find another zero-turn mower. As a business, we needed to return to the extensive product range, competitive pricing and genuine groundcare expertise that we had previously enjoyed with Schiller Ground Care, and which was then lost by Doosan Bobcat EMEA. Bad Boy Mowers met - and exceeded - all those requirements.

We are, therefore, delighted to announce that we have been officially appointed as the UK importer and

distributor for Bad Boy Mowers.

We now offer the largest and most comprehensive product range we have ever represented, featuring 11 ride-on models - including a diesel option - with cutting deck sizes from 42” to 72”. The range also includes six stand-on models with deck sizes from 34” to 61”, as well as what we believe to be the best walk-behind machines we have encountered in over 30 years, available with 36” to 54” decks.

Danny Finch, international accounts manager and government sales for Bad Boy Mowers, said: “Bad Boy is thrilled to reintroduce its residential and commercial mowers models back into the UK. Returning to the market with a new sleeker and bolder look, Bad Boy prides itself on strength, ease of ownership, comfort, power and value.”

I personally believe that this extensive lineup has returned us to a highly competitive position in the market, enabling our dealers and end-users to access higher-specification machines at a lower cost than ever before.

March 2026 will see us enter our 80th year in business - an enormous achievement for our family company, with two of the three generations still actively involved. The last five years have undoubtedly been the most challenging in our history, and the impact of dealing with Doosan Bobcat EMEA has been severe.

Our longstanding involvement with zero-turn mowers has given us invaluable experience and an extensive customer base, which we remain fully committed to supporting. That history will always be part of our story.

As we look to the future, our focus is firmly on providing our dealers and customers with the best possible machines, support and value. Bad Boy Mowers enables us to do exactly that. With a stronger range, better specifications, pricing and renewed momentum, we are excited about what lies ahead - and confident in the path we have chosen.

# Bobcat statement on opinion piece from Ross Sheach



Bobcat's senior product manager, ground maintenance equipment, Federico Fernandez-Ayala Novo

To hear views from both sides of the story, here Federico Fernandez-Ayala Novo, senior product manager, Ground Maintenance Equipment, Doosan Bobcat EMEA, shares his opinions.

At Bobcat, our aim is to help people get more done,

and that has shaped how we have developed our ground maintenance equipment (GME) business over the past few years. Since adding GME to the Bobcat portfolio in 2019, we have expanded the range to cover mowers, turf renovation equipment, compact tractors and small articulated loaders, with the intention of offering customers a more complete and practical solution from a single supplier.

As the business has grown, we have also taken on broader responsibilities for the GME segment, including product compliance, marketing, parts distribution and other operational areas required to support long-term brand development. This led to aligning the GME operation more closely with how Bobcat works in its other segments. As part of this, we built a dedicated GME team within Doosan Bobcat EMEA and continued to invest in parts availability, service and technical support, which we see as critical for dealers and customers alike.

Any major transition brings challenges, and this one was no exception. Despite ongoing discussions, we were ultimately unable to reach a mutual agreement with Henry Sheach on the future direction of the business and the steps required to further professionalise the GME network in the United Kingdom. Therefore, we notified them several weeks ago that the partnership will be brought to a close in July, in line with the contractual framework.

Aftersales support will continue uninterrupted. Importantly, this change does not represent a pause, but a continuation of a strategy that is already well underway. We are now in the final stages of putting in place the next steps of our United Kingdom GME plan (see box item)

At Bobcat, we are accustomed to working with long-standing partners in the UK, some of whom we have worked with for more than 30 years. We highly value these partnerships, as they have played a key role in building the Bobcat brand into what it is today. We remain fully committed to supporting customers and dealers, and our focus is on continuing to strengthen the ground maintenance range, providing dependable aftermarket support, and building a stable, long-term business that works for partners and customers across the United Kingdom and Europe.



The Bobcat GME family of products

## Bobcat appoints Barrus as new national importer

Bobcat has appointed E P Barrus Ltd, based in Bicester in Oxfordshire, as the new national importer for the company's ground maintenance equipment (GME) range in the UK.

Ewen Gilchrist, channel development manager UK & Nordics at Doosan Bobcat EMEA, said, “We are delighted to be working with such a well-connected and respected company like Barrus as National Importer for the GME range in the UK. Barrus will take over as the UK National Importer on 1st July 2026. As well as developing the UK market, Barrus will support Bobcat in achieving our aim of being within the top-three GME manufacturers in Europe.”

Will Timmis, head of outdoor at Barrus, who has been leading the project behind the Bobcat GME appointment, said, “We will be opening a new channel of dealers for the Bobcat GME range, specialising in commercial groundscare and agriculture.”

Will continued, “This increased breadth of our offering will serve to expand the Barrus business. In the first year, we would be aiming to appoint 8-12 new dealers across the UK and recent moves in the market will help us with this. Over a three-year period, I would expect us to engage 35-45 new dealers for the Bobcat GME range.”

# Core commitments



Eastern England agricultural equipment dealer G&J Peck this year celebrates 180 years in business.

Celebrating its 180th birthday, eastern England dealership G&J Peck has recently adapted to the evolving agricultural market by radically overhauling its operations, with a new HQ and changes in some mainline franchises. MARTIN RICKATSON learned more at a February open day.

The past three years have seen some significant changes at G&J Peck, the eastern England agricultural and groundcare machinery dealer, investing in new premises and taking on major franchises while parting ways with others. Considering that Pecks has a history stretching back to 1846, though, this period wouldn't be the first in which the business has evolved to adapt to new circumstances - and its core franchise partner remains at the heart of the company after almost four decades.

The firm was founded as a blacksmith and ironmonger in the Cambridgeshire cathedral city of Ely by George Peck and John, his son. As the business grew over the following decades, it moved three times within the Ely area, before latterly settling in purpose-built facilities at in the city's business park.

The company developed a long history with New Holland and its harvesting equipment, selling its first of the then Claey's-branded combines in 1963. Over time, Pecks would go on to sell the Clayson, Sperry New Holland, Fiat,

Laverda, Hesston, Ford, Ford New Holland, New Holland and Case IH brands.

## Franchise moves

Pecks' CNH relationship lasted until the recent downturn in the farm machinery market and the latest round of restructuring by manufacturers responding to it. The decision by CNH in July 2024 to end the relationship between the two parties came in the wake of a number of other dealer changes on the borders of Pecks' CNH territory.

"Pecks has a forward way of thinking and sees the current landscape having provided us with a chance to reflect on our business, our staff and our customers and to plan for the future," said a company statement issued at the time. "We have been delighted with the support we have received from staff, franchises and our customers."

Pecks has long had another particularly strong and well-established agricultural franchise, though, having been a JCB agricultural products dealer since 1988. The statement went on to say:

"As one of Europe's leading JCB Agriculture dealers, JCB sits at the heart of our newly restructured business. Building our operations around JCB and our strong machinery franchises is already proving to be a success. We're committed to strengthening our sales and aftersales support across all our brands as we work hard to reward their continued loyalty."

## Management changes

By this time the business had grown to six depots across Lincs, Cambs, Norfolk and Suffolk, with outlets in the latter two majoring on JCB and not selling CNH products. Before beginning a restructuring to adapt to the CNH split, management changes were also underway to adjust to senior management retirements, says Jon Wareing, now managing director.



Jon Wareing, G&J Peck managing director (left), with Rob Steele, area sales manager at the firm's Rendlesham, Suffolk, depot.

"In 2023, Ian and Judith Loversidge, directors and majority shareholders in the company, stepped back and we transitioned the business structure into an employee ownership trust.

"Latterly, following the financial difficulties encountered by CNH Lincs dealer Burdens, Ernest Doe took on the former Burdens area for CNH, and with some of our CNH area lying between this and existing Doe territory, the CNH notice period was perhaps unsurprising. We were given 12 months' notice, which ended last August."

## Branch developments

The business's management then re-examined how best to cover its south Lincs, Cambs, Norfolk and Suffolk territory for JCB and other key franchises.

"We started examining how our customer base of farm sizes and types was changing, and the ability of our remaining depots to best serve this," says Jon.

"We had conversations with JCB and agreed to relinquish the top of our territory and close our northernmost and smallest depot at Mareham-le-Fen, near Boston, Lincs.

"We then concluded that a

three-depot solution best served customer needs."

"Our Cambs depots in Ely and Ramsey were well-established, but neither made a good single site geographically, representing another half an hour travel for a lot of customers. We therefore identified Chatteris in Cambs as a good central point, and found excellent premises we could convert to meet our needs, opening there last autumn, a site which also serves as our new headquarters."

In the meantime, restructuring of the Kubota dealer network around the Peck area of south Lincs, Cambs, Norfolk and Suffolk led to conversations with firm's management in early 2025. With a range of conventional tractors up to 170hp, its product offering dovetailed nicely with the more specialist 160-335hp JCB Fastrac range, but offering the two franchises was something no other UK dealer was doing.

"We talked with Kubota and were excited by the opportunity. Cambs was open territory for Kubota ag tractors, whilst southern Lincs had become available, and the Norfolk dealer, who had had good success with the products, decided to scale his business, having established a good

park of ag tractors for us to support and build on. Kubota also then needed a new ag dealer in Suffolk. The prospects were good right across our area.

“The two companies obviously compete in some other areas, but not in the tractor products we are offering. I talked with JCB and explained how I saw it could work, and they understood our vision,” says Jon.

“They saw it positively, and understood how the combination of the distinct tractor ranges would help us offer a full line of Pecks products to our customers, for the benefit of everyone. Since December, we have the agricultural franchise for the area.

“Our grassland and arable equipment suppliers, Krone and Amazone, subsequently also decided to change their dealer strategy in our area, and this then led to discussions with Kubota and its Kverneland subsidiary about implements, as the former Kverneland dealer in this area had had to relinquish the Kverneland franchise to take on our former Amazone products. Consequently, we now supply Kverneland equipment across Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, and Kubota-branded implements throughout our territory. We had good sales success with arable and grass equipment last year, and now want to build on that with our new partners.”



Visitors to Pecks' open day at its Suffolk branch were able to examine examples from the Kubota implement range.

Most recently, an agreement was signed with Hardi as the Danish sprayer maker's dealer across the full Pecks area, following its decision to restructure its national network and focus on fewer, larger dealerships.

“I like the fact Hardi is a sprayer specialist, its people are long-serving, and an existing park means spares and service to be had immediately. It's a challenging market, but this is a major manufacturer with strong products. This gives our customers further choice and access to a full range of self-propelled, trailed and

mounted sprayers. Alongside Standen Engineering root crop equipment, Larrington trailers and Teagle livestock machinery, we can cater for the needs of farmers across our region.”

### Settling into Suffolk

While Chatteris is the firm's newest branch development, its Suffolk depot - founded after the JCB territory to the south of Pecks' existing area became available - is also fairly fresh, having been opened in autumn 2023, nine months after taking on the area. While a prominent edge-of-town site was sought for the firm's headquarters branch, helping sustain a strong local trade in domestic grass and homeowner machinery, for Suffolk this was less important, and rather than positioning, the priority was plenty of space, says Robert Steele, area sales manager for Suffolk.

“The company found what we needed north-east of Ipswich, at Bentwaters Parks, a redeveloped former airfield business park only ten minutes from the A12. The plot was ideal, with a good existing building that just required finishing - it was new and hadn't had a previous occupier.

“There is plenty of space, and minimal potential for objections to our daily work or any future expansion.



Other franchises in what is a prime rootcrop-growing area include Larrington trailers.

Geographically, there is a lot of arable agriculture, especially potato growers, with strong sales prospects for tractors, handlers and implements.

“With van parts sales and on-farm servicing, fewer customers actually come to depots nowadays, so our priorities for this branch were good service facilities for bigger jobs, decent parts storage and plenty of space to store and display equipment. Sales-wise, extensive office facilities aren't necessary – via a laptop and phone I can do most of what I need to at home, from my car or on-farm. Time I spend at the depot is generally for catching up with the team, and checking on new machines for delivery.”

Like many dealers, Pecks has found engineer recruitment difficult, Rob notes.

“Currently we have three engineers and an apprentice, and are looking to recruit here to further strengthen our team.

“The strength of our telehandler business means we remain busy despite the agricultural downturn. Pecks has well above the national average share of the telehandler market in its area. JCB handlers have a high rolling sales average in this area, and we have little trouble finding homes for trade-ins.”

Since beginning its Suffolk operations, Pecks has not only supported the existing JCB handler and tractor park with service, parts and replacement sales, but made some good conquest tractor sales, says Rob.

“Taking out four conventional tractors in a fleet of eight in one business and replacing them with four Fastracs was a particular highlight.

“We have some great products to sell, with the larger four cylinder Kubota tractors of up to 170hp ideally complementing the JCB Fastracs of 160-335hp. And then of course we have the full range of smaller tractors down to 25hp and the Kubota RTV. Being then able to add the Kubota grassland, livestock and arable implement lines has worked out really well.”



The needs of the area's potato growers are catered for with equipment from local manufacturer Standen.



Jon Wareing and Rob Steele believe the Kubota and JCB tractor lines complement each other well.



The Kubota product line offered by Pecks includes compact tractors and the Japanese firm's RTV.



# Apprenticeship and training funding update

As the LBE sector faces an ageing workforce and a shortage of new entrants, updated apprenticeship funding rules could play a crucial role in attracting and training the next generation says KEITH CHRISTIAN

The funding of apprenticeships is one of those subjects that I have always struggled with despite my years in BAGMA and as a director of LETEC, (The Landbased Engineering Training and Education Committee).

LETEC did a huge amount of work on apprenticeships for the Land Based Engineering sector funded by the LETEC partnership of the AEA, BAGMA and IAgRE and developed the current apprenticeships used in the LBE sector.

The problem with understanding how all this works is that us mere mortals cannot possibly keep up with the ever-changing rules and regulations surrounding

apprenticeship standards and funding. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) are the government body in charge. IfATE ensure quality through employer-led standards, funding compliance and end-point assessments ensuring skills meet industry needs.

If memory serves me well, it took LETEC's industry group and its specialist advisors in this matter nearly three years to get through the constantly evolving tangle of regulations to produce what is one of the most robust and best funded apprenticeship schemes in the system. A credit to all those involved.

In April 2026, changes were due to

be made to the funding system for apprentice training and how the funding from government and the training levy would be used. The following is an extract from an article in *Service Dealer* in September 2024 that explains how the Training Levy is put together –

*“In April 2017 the National Training Levy was introduced along with other reforms for apprenticeships. There were more changes made in 2019. The Levy applies to all the UK nations, but it is dealt with differently in terms of distribution in the devolved nations. The levy is a 0.5% tax on UK companies that have a pay bill over £3 million a year (an annual*

*pay bill is all payments to employees that are subject to employer Class 1 secondary National Insurance contributions such as wages, bonuses and commissions. Not to be confused with pay role as some report it). It is currently used to fund apprenticeships only.*

*All sectors must pay the levy if they have an annual pay bill of over £3 million. The apprenticeship levy funds almost 650 different types of apprenticeships to train people for a huge variety of jobs.*

*Levy funds can only be used to pay for apprentices to achieve qualifications that are set out in their approved apprenticeship training programme and are deemed necessary to being effective in the job. The levy is there to fund apprenticeship training for all employers. Any unspent levy funds are used to support existing apprentices to complete their training and to pay for apprenticeship training for smaller employers.*

*Levy funds can be transferred from a levy paying company to fund training for a non-levy paying company through an approved training provider under specific rules for the transfer.”*

In the same article it was reported that the government was going to replace the Apprenticeship Training Levy with a **Growth and Skills Levy** allowing employers to spend up to half their levy on training outside of apprenticeships. The Growth and Skills Levy is a UK government initiative designed to replace and reform the existing Apprenticeship Levy. It aims to provide greater flexibility for employers in how they spend their training funds, allowing them to invest in a wider range of skills training, such as modular courses and bootcamps, alongside traditional apprenticeships.

This may well be a good thing as it was reported elsewhere in 2023 that around £3.3 billion of levy funding had gone unused. I am not sure where this all ends up or if it is still within the levy

pot and to be used within the new rules. The original levy fund was ring fenced for apprenticeships but the government's estimate at the time, that the funding would encourage up to 600,000 new apprenticeships, fell far short of this figure to nearer 330,000. Hence this huge pot of unused funding.

## Staff shortages

The reason that SD and myself keep bringing all of this up, is the dire shortage in the LBE sector of new entrants at a technical level and the ageing population of current technicians. Whilst the bigger agricultural machinery dealerships are usually linked into manufacturers' apprenticeships schemes which are well managed and well populated, there is an increasing need for the smaller dealerships in the industry to reach out. They need to encourage new blood, support apprenticeships and take advantage of what is available by way of funding - especially as the new funding rules allow for more flexibility.

Around 40% of all apprenticeship starts are with small and medium employers, which accounts for more than 100,000 apprenticeship starts each year. Smaller dealers in the LBE sector can benefit from employing apprentices.

In March 2024 in SD again The Sprocket wrote about 'Where have all the people gone?' It was an article to encourage dealers to look harder at employing apprentices and look to the future. The Sprocket wrote –

*“Don't be frightened by investing in an apprentice or a trainee. Make it a part of your longer-term strategy and accept the cost of it as a longer-term investment in the future of your business. Some may not work out but if you don't try, the future may be bleaker than you think. If you need help, check out Government websites for apprenticeships or contact one of the industry trade associations, BAGMA, IAgRE or the AEA and try*

*your local college as well as they may have suitable candidates at some point in time.”*

## What is changing?

Changes were being bought about in April 2026 essentially to offer more flexibility and to help more people get into training.

The Government is launching the Growth and Skills Levy to offer greater flexibilities, for employers and learners, to help more people get on the path to a rewarding career, support employers to take on new apprentices and increase the skills of their current workforce.

The changes include:

- New foundation apprenticeships from August 2025 to help young people get started and meet employers' skills needs
- Shorter minimum apprenticeship duration (8 months instead of 12) from August 2025, so training matches what the industry actually needs
- More flexible English and maths requirements for apprentices over 19 - they won't always need to achieve these qualifications if employers agree they're not essential to their training
- New short courses to help employers fill skills gaps more quickly
- Increased flexibility so assessments focus on the skills being tested.





Levy funds can't be used to pay apprentice wages or qualifications that are not already approved as part of the apprenticeship. Levy funds also can't be used for travel expenses, or costs associated with setting up an apprenticeship. The LBE apprenticeships set up costs were funded by industry through LETEC.

When one looks at the information available it can seem like a minefield and help may be needed to navigate it for a first time unless you are working with an existing training provider. There are benefits to the employer when engaging an apprentice such as no national insurance contributions for an apprentice under 25 years old. Up to £2,000 can now be paid by the government to the employer to take on an apprentice. Importantly a 100% of training costs, up to the funding band maximum for a particular apprenticeship, are paid for.

Businesses do not have to be a levy payer to take advantage of the funding for an apprentice. Companies who pay into the levy can allocate some of their levy fund to a company that does not pay into the levy. It is a great way to invest in the future of your business and to encourage young people to seek out a career in the LBE sector. It should also be remembered that training and apprenticeships are not limited to just technicians. Other staff can benefit from the many courses that are available to enable them to

enhance their skills level and improve their contribution to a business.

### Key 2026 levy changes

- **Growth & Skills Levy:** The Apprenticeship Levy is being rebranded to offer more flexibility in how funds are spent, including shorter, modular training "units."
- **Faster Expiry:** Levy funds will expire after 12 months, rather than the current 24, requiring faster utilisation by employers. That is for those who pay into the levy and have a levy pot.
- **Level 7 Restriction:** From January 2026, public funding for Level 7 (master's level) apprenticeships is removed for individuals aged 22 and older, except for specific exemptions like care leavers.
- **16–24 Incentives:** A new £2,000 incentive for non-levy employers hiring young apprentices aged 16–24 is introduced from October 2026.
- **Reduced Duration:** From August 1, 2025, minimum apprenticeship duration is reduced from 12 months to 8 months for new starts.
- **Reduced Top-Up:** The 10% government top-up on monthly levy contributions is being removed.

One needs to understand that this is a summary of the changes to the levy funding that may make it easier for

dealers to engage with an apprenticeship scheme and employ an apprentice. It does not specifically cover the two main apprentice schemes that exist within the LBE sector, but the new funding rules will apply to these. Dealers should look at the alternative training schemes that exist and perhaps look at sponsoring a new recruit that is not in an approved apprentice scheme to benefit from the new flexibility the changed rules offer.

There seems to be no question that unless the industry itself recruits new blood and provides the training schemes to support them within the LBE sector there will be a further decline in appropriate staff and a consequential rise in the cost of employing a qualified technician as they become a scarcer resource. Regardless of being a small or large business, dealers need to look at supporting campaigns to recruit new people to the industry, in particular technicians, and provide other types of training for their staff to maximise their contribution to be the business.

There is plenty of help out there for dealers who want to engage with apprenticeships and training schemes and various bodies to help with understanding what funding is available. The internet is full of advice, but the best sources are on the Government websites. Just put a question into your search engine and you should get an AI response as well as websites to study.



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# Strength in specialisation

Following the passing of founder Andrew Parnham, LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR visits Kilworth Machinery to speak with his son Mark, exploring how the family business has evolved into a nationally recognised specialist in compact tractors and niche machinery.

After a recent phone conversation with Ian Collington, Etesia sales manager - whom I have known for many years, and who himself is a keen tractor restorer and collector - I was informed of the sad passing last November of a dear friend of his, Andrew Parnham, owner of Kilworth Machinery.

Ian was keen for me to post an obituary of Andrew, who passed away peacefully with his family around him on 14th November 2025, aged 86.

On hearing this news, I felt it appropriate to do a feature article on Kilworth Machinery. After contacting Andrew's son, Mark, I duly took the opportunity to visit Kilworth Machinery in Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

It was a beautiful spring day in March - always a busy time for dealers as they prepare for the onslaught of the grass growing season. However, Mark was able to spare me a couple of hours to show me around the depot site.

Kilworth Machinery Ltd is a family business run by two generations of Parnhams. The family have been involved in the farm and garden machinery trade for over 50 years. Kilworth became a specialist in machinery for compact tractors over 35 years ago, and the business has grown steadily ever since. It is now

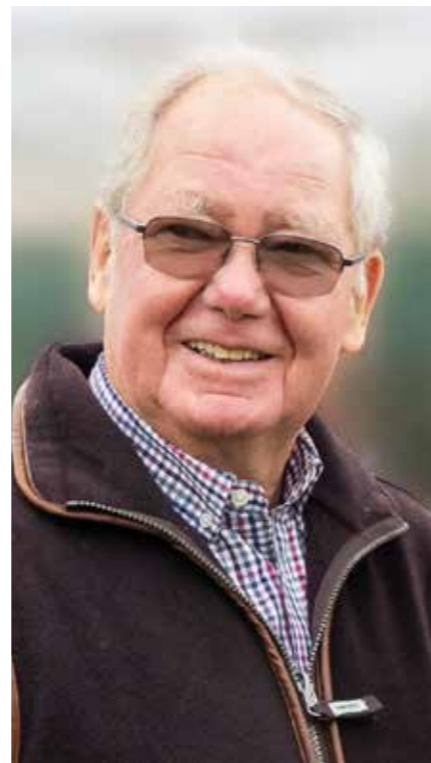
firmly established as a major supplier to the landscaping and groundcare industries.

Andrew was involved with farm machinery from the day he left school until the day he died. After working for others - driving, repairing and selling tractors and machinery - he set up his own business in the late 1960s with Andrew Parnham Tractors.

He never looked back, building strong relationships with many local farmers, many of whom became good friends. He had a particular fondness for Zetor tractors and, wherever you travelled around Derbyshire and Staffordshire, you would invariably see one. In the 1980s he took on the Deutz-Fahr franchise, which also proved to be a great success.

Andrew married Elaine in 1961, and Mark was born in 1966, followed by Sara in 1968 - just at the time Andrew decided to establish his own business. Elaine stood by him throughout, and Andrew always said he could not have done it without her. In the late 1980s he recognised a growing market for smaller tractors and machinery, laying the foundations of what is now Kilworth Machinery - a very successful company that is now run by his son, Mark.

Andrew was a devoted family man and, although extremely busy with the



Dealership founder Andrew Parnham who passed away on 14th November 2025, aged 86

business, he always made time for regular family holidays, both in the UK and abroad. He loved travelling and continued to drive across Europe, with Scotland being his favourite destination.

During my interview, Mark remarked on his father's love for Scotland, noting that even after passing on the responsibility of running the business to Mark following Covid in 2021, Andrew would still volunteer to transport machinery destined for Scotland.

## Not your traditional dealership

Mark was keen to point out that Kilworth Machinery is not a traditional machinery dealer promoting and selling run-of-the-mill grounds



The dealership offers a range of BCS models in various sizes to meet the demands of specialist growers

maintenance equipment such as mowers, strimmers and ride-ons. Since its inception in the early 1980s, the business has specialised in niche products, with around 80% of its range sourced overseas, mainly from Italy.

"All our products are sourced from European suppliers and are manufactured to suit working conditions in the UK," Mark explained. "We are an engineering-based company, and, with our knowledge

and experience, we ensure the products we supply are designed and built to our specifications and standards.

"Many of the machines we sold over 20 years ago are still in use, and we continue to supply spare parts for them. We aim to keep stock of all the machines shown on our website, and all products are backed by high levels of parts availability and in-depth technical knowledge."



Kilworth feature a lot of Italian-made machinery, including brands such as Barbieri

Mark discussed the family's business history, which began with his father Andrew in 1966 as a farm machinery dealer. This business became a Kubota dealership in the 1970s. Andrew spotted a need for compact machinery to compliment the Kubota tractors and by a chance meeting at Smithfield Show he was introduced to Silvio Mayer, MD of Sovema in Italy. Sovema produced small machinery, so Andrew ordered some machines and so it began.

Like many family-run businesses, Mark was involved from an early age, spending his formative years helping out. However, his father was keen for him to gain experience elsewhere. In 1988, Mark enrolled on an engineering degree course at Cranfield University, Silsoe, before going on to work at RECO. He returned in 1992 to help expand the opportunities at Kilworth Machinery.

Mark took me around the site, which is currently undergoing significant development, including the construction of new storage facilities and enhanced yard space. The yard



Kilworth sells a wide range of heavy-duty forestry machinery, cultivators, and flail and rotary mowers

was packed with a wide array of machinery and equipment, including several tractor brands - among them one of their more recent additions, Iseki.

Kilworth also specialises in BCS tractors, offering a range of models in various sizes to meet the demands of customers from groundcare contractors to specialist growers. They have even developed an 80cm-wide model, for which they can also supply a matching 80cm flail or rotary mower, ideal for working in narrow rows.

In addition, Kilworth sells a wide range of heavy-duty forestry machinery, cultivators, and flail and rotary mowers. The company now employs 14 staff, including long-serving employees, some of whom have worked with the Parnhams since they left school. Andrew Finch joined Mark and Andrew when he was 17 and he is now a director of the company. Henry Dowell, who runs the service side of the business, first worked for Andrew when he was 16 so has supported the Parnham businesses with his expert knowledge of tractors and machinery for all his working life.

**Service Dealer: What area of the country do you cover?**

**Mark Parnham:** First let me apologise for the state of the yard. We are undergoing some significant site development to increase indoor storage, so nothing is where it should be at the moment!

Because we deal with a wide range of specialist products, we are not confined to a specific area - we sell across the UK. However, with our two newer franchises, Iseki and Hustler, we are restricted to promoting and selling within the Midlands. The rest of our machinery can be sold nationwide. Having such a diverse product range, supplying a broad spectrum of industries, means our sales are not confined to seasonal trends. In effect, we do not experience significant lulls - we are busy all year round.

**SD: What products do you specialise in?**

**MP:** We supply a range of forestry products including forestry winches, log splitters, forestry trailers and chippers. We are also the exclusive importers of Tajfun (pronounced "Typhoon") firewood processors, used for converting wood biomass into firewood.

We offer a comprehensive range of BCS tractors in various sizes and

engine capacities. The BCS Group operates three manufacturing plants in Italy - Abbiategrosso, Luzzara and Cusago - as well as branches across Europe, India and China. We have worked with them for many years and built a strong relationship; their products are excellent and very well engineered.

This close relationship with our suppliers has enabled us to maintain control of our business direction. It is important to us that these partnerships work for both parties.

Both Iseki and Hustler are new franchises for us and complement our existing range well. They will undoubtedly appeal to both existing and new customers in the years ahead.

We also supply a wide range of equipment from Sovema, Barbieri, MDB, Dragone, BCS, Ferrari, Farma and Fliegl, among others.



The dealership specialises in niche products



Kilworth Machinery in Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Mark Parnham who runs the family business



Mark in the new storage facility

**SD: What challenges do you face when importing products?**

**MP:** There are increased costs and bureaucracy associated with importing, particularly around customs and haulage. However, we have been doing it for so long that it is simply part of our operation now. We also employ an agent to handle much of the customs process.

Despite these challenges, the business continues to grow. We are selling more products and constantly looking for new, unique machinery to diversify our offering. The build quality of Italian and European manufacturers is generally excellent, which is one of the reasons we retain so many customers.

We also handle all warranty work, servicing and repairs for the machinery we supply.

**SD: Are you finding it difficult to recruit staff?**

**MP:** Like most dealers, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit skilled engineers and apprentices. As a relatively small business, we are competing with larger organisations such as John Deere, JCB, Toro and even car dealerships, which can often offer higher wages, better working conditions and greater perceived prestige.

Most of our staff come through word of mouth. As for apprentices, results have been mixed over the years - many lack the work ethic required. That said, we currently have one young apprentice who has been a revelation and is showing great promise.



The scope of machinery that Kilworth specialises in

**SD:** How did Covid impact the business?

**MP:** Like many dealerships, Covid was actually a positive period for us. We closed briefly for a couple of weeks, but due to customer demand we were soon back operating, and within a couple of months all staff had returned.

**SD:** Do you attend trade shows?

**MP:** We used to attend many agricultural shows, but in recent years the APF Forestry show has been the only one. With a small team and a consistently busy workload, shows are not a priority at present, although we do try to visit some European exhibitions, particularly in Italy, to keep an eye out for new products.

**SD:** Do you maintain good supplier relationships?

**MP:** Yes, we have built strong relationships with our overseas

suppliers over many years.

**SD:** Do you carry out machinery demonstrations?

**MP:** Yes, although it tends to depend on the value and type of machine. We used to do far more demonstrations, but most of our customers are experienced professionals who understand what they are buying.

**SD:** Are you embracing battery and robotic technologies?

**MP:** Yes, where appropriate. We offer some battery-powered products,

including remote-controlled slope mowers, and a battery-powered BCS compact tractor. However, around 90% of our commercial machines remain diesel or petrol powered.

**SD:** What does the future look like?

**MP:** We are currently completing a major project to build a new storage facility. We are in the final stages of concreting access roads and improving our external storage areas. The new building will allow us to store more machinery under cover, and we are also refurbishing existing buildings to make them weatherproof.

In terms of sourcing new products, our strong links with European manufacturers keep us ahead of the curve, allowing us to bring in machinery that can often be a game changer for the evolving turf, amenity and agricultural sectors.

As for the future of the company, I believe it is in good hands. We have a strong, experienced team, and who knows - perhaps my children may one day choose to continue the business. For now, I am focused on growing the company and continuing to enjoy the satisfaction it brings to both me and my family.

**SD:** Thank you.



Kilworth are the exclusive importers of Tajfun firewood processors



# Plant Hire & Construction

Latest news for the sector Edited by Dan Gilkes

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**Dan Gilkes**, editor of *Service Dealer's* plant hire and construction machinery section, says there are new opportunities out there for dealers wishing to expand their horizons.



## Dealers maintain an appetite for something new

**T**he construction machinery business in the UK is notoriously conservative and averse to change. Companies have traditionally put their trust in well-known manufacturers to deliver robust machinery and in dealers to provide the back-up and support to keep it working. Despite this, there has often been a sector of the market that is prepared to try something new, especially if the price is right.

Japanese manufacturers were the first to arrive, in the 1980s, with a wide range of equipment that was every bit as good as the machinery already on sale, but often at a more competitive price. As they built factories within Europe and product ranges grew though, so the cost also increased.

Then came the South Korean manufacturers, again offering well-developed machinery at a highly competitive price point and often in

cooperation with more established global brands. As quality and performance have grown though, so these manufacturers have in turn become mainstream and their pricing has risen to be more in line with the traditional brands.

We are now well into a third wave, as Chinese manufacturers compete for European and UK business. In some cases they have acquired European manufacturers along the way, while others have gone it alone. Their ability to develop and to adopt new technologies at speed, is once again appealing to a cost-conscious market.

The one thing that all of these entrants to the UK market have had to deal with though, is finding dealers for their machinery. Good dealer partners, who can provide the level of service and back-up that customers demand, are hard to find and even harder to

attract away from their existing brand deals.

Walk around any equipment show and you will see signs and banners advertising dealership opportunities. Yet profit margins are shrinking, costs are rising and inventory management in particular, is becoming an important consideration. Plus, if you take on a new brand, finding qualified, skilled engineers to provide service and back-up, is increasingly difficult to achieve.

Yet, as the pages of this magazine make abundantly clear, there remains an appetite among dealers and entrepreneurs for something new. It may require substantial investment and self-belief, but there are opportunities out there to be capitalised upon. We at *Service Dealer* raise our hard hats in appreciation of your dedication.

Recently, compact plant manufacturer Takeuchi has announced MSM/DRH as a new dealer working across the West Midlands - whilst Tobin Plant has been appointed as the compact equipment dealer for Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, Herts, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Lincolnshire, by Hyundai Construction Equipment.

# Fuelling concerns

In a hire-driven market, responsibility for fuel efficiency is often blurred. But as costs rise, contractors may need to take a closer look, says DAN GILKES

**Manufacturers are often keen to promote the efficiency and fuel economy of their latest machinery. Electronic management of fuel injection systems, combined with increasingly sophisticated hydraulic controls, continue to drive machine efficiency, when compared to older models.**

Yet, when you visit actual construction and building sites, there is often a far more relaxed view when it comes to fuel use. Certainly, there are some larger sites, quarries and other major projects that have fixed fleets of machinery, where fleet managers can use telematic data to work out fuel consumption to the last percentage of a litre. But many smaller construction sites simply fill the machines at the end of the day, ready for the next shift, with little recording of actual fuel use. Ask an operative on site how much diesel their telehandler uses and they will look at you blankly, though they can tell you exactly what their car will return.

## The true cost of diesel on site

However, as can be seen every time you fill the van or the truck on the way to a site these days, diesel is not an insignificant part of the running cost equation. With construction equipment now required to pay 'white' diesel prices, fluctuations in the cost of a barrel of oil on the global stage can have an immediate, frequently expensive, effect on site bills. But the fuel truck keeps arriving, it fills the central bowser or individual machines, and there is little effort made to compare suppliers, or to search out the lowest cost available.



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One reason for this somewhat blasé attitude to efficiency, is that there is in fact often no fleet manager on site. The site agent or foreman has other more pressing issues to deal with than how much diesel is being consumed by each machine. Another reason is the UK's dependence on the plant hire market, which is one of the most highly developed rental sectors in the world.

Equipment rental companies are perhaps less concerned with fuel consumption when they are buying machinery, as they are not the ones pouring in the diesel on a daily basis. Unless their customers make an informed choice between machines based on efficiency, asking the hire company to deliver a particular make or model, the rental companies have little reason to change their buying habits.

## When consumption starts to matter

If a building site has a few mini excavators, a telehandler and a couple of site dumpers running around, then fuel consumption is perhaps not going to be at the top of the list of concerns. If you have a few 14-tonne excavators though, consuming anywhere from 7-15 litres of diesel per hour, that might focus the mind more.

If the project involves heavy earthmoving machinery, say a 50-tonne excavator using 40-80 litres an hour, loading into a fleet of 40-tonne articulated dump trucks, each getting through 20-40 litres of diesel every 60 minutes? Suddenly you are looking at overall consumption just for those machines, of more than 200 litres an hour. That's more than £300 an hour at £1.60 a litre. At that point idling time and the use of Eco operating modes is perhaps going to become more of a focus for a manager on site.

## Practical ways to cut fuel use

So, what are the options? How can companies drive down their fuel use on site? Operator training and experience remains a major factor in efficient machinery use. Smaller machinery may well be used by multiple people on site, which makes it harder to control individual use, but as the equipment gets larger, it will tend more towards a single operator being allocated to each machine. This could be an operator supplied by the plant hire company, or one employed by the contractor on site.

In either case, having clear engine idling policies, or setting automated engine shutdown systems when machinery is not in use, can save fuel. Operating with an Eco mode engaged can also cut fuel use, as long as the workload permits it. Even running the machine at lower engine rpm can make a huge difference over the working day.

## Maintenance and machine selection

Regular maintenance is an important factor in machine efficiency too. Keeping on top of service work will ensure that machinery remains at its most productive. Again, if the equipment is on hire, the responsibility for regular oil and filter changes will rest with the hire company, but there is no reason not to check that it is being carried out.

Having the right machine for the job is an important consideration. Putting larger, more powerful machines into an operation that can be achieved with smaller, more fuel-efficient models can cause waste. One of the upsides of plant hire of course is that it should be possible to hire in exactly the right machine for a given task, rather than



GB Digger

making do with heavier equipment because it was available in a fleet and not being utilised.

Contractors can use the technology that is available to them. Almost all larger equipment these days, and some smaller machines, will be supplied with advanced real-time telematic monitoring. The plant hire company should be able to provide individual machine reports, showing idling times, power mode use and engine rpm settings. Another benefit to hired machinery is that it will almost certainly be relatively new, using the latest technology and offering the best potential for efficiency and productivity.

### Electric plant: not quite there yet

Electric vehicles are an increasingly common sight on construction and building projects, with management and plant hire representatives often arriving in battery-powered vehicles. For those that are charging mainly at home, there will be a certain satisfaction in driving past those price boards outside a fuel station, knowing that their domestic electric supply has yet to head skywards at such an alarming rate as the diesel pumps.

We are not yet at the point where managers on site can easily choose between diesel and electric plant though, other than at the smaller end of the scale, where electric mini excavators and compact loaders are increasingly available. That said, long-term diesel pricing may prove a more convincing argument than emissions legislation

and corporate carbon reduction targets when it comes to convincing machinery users to give batteries a try. The EV revolution is coming, but not soon enough for this global crisis.

### Hidden costs

It is perhaps worth remembering that the fuel that goes in the tanks of machinery on site is not the only fuel factor to consider. Operators have to drive to site in work's vans and of course, machinery has to be delivered and removed from site when the work is completed. Plant hire businesses are not going to be able to absorb the rise in fuel costs that relate to their truck fleets, so expect additional charges to come that aren't directly attributable to the machinery.

Unfortunately, there is another, less desirable factor to consider. As the value of diesel in fuel tanks and bowsers on site continues to climb, so it will become increasingly attractive to criminals keen to take it from you. Machine and site security will be important to anyone managing a construction project. Now might be a good time to revisit the measures that you have taken to ensure that your fuel remains your fuel.

How long this will last is anyone's guess. But most of us could probably reduce our fuel use if we examined every stage of the process. In a world of increasingly tight operating margins, saving fuel could be a potential easy win.



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Ernest Doe's Ulting headquarters in Essex again hosted the Doe Show for three days this February.

# Doe developments

The Doe Show, the annual three-day event held at eastern England farm, turf and construction machinery dealer Ernest Doe's Essex HQ, this year saw the debut of multiple new franchises, and some key staff additions and movements.

MARTIN RICKATSON reports.

Where machinery - particularly farm equipment - is concerned, it's always an eye-opener when new hues appear at a dealer's premises or on its show stand. The same goes for spotting familiar faces wearing different company colours.

But change - and progression - is as much part of the farm, turf and construction dealership landscape as in any other business sector, so the appearance of new makes and manufacturer-turned-dealer staff at February's Doe Show perhaps wasn't such a surprise.

After 15 years with CNH, the dealer business's primary tractor and equipment supplier, this year's Doe Show was

the first event dealer-side for Ernest Doe's new divisional head of agricultural and construction sales, Mark Crosby. He joined the company in the autumn as part of a phased succession to take over from Graham Parker, sales director since 2004.

"I had no particular wish to leave my role at CNH, and if you'd suggested to me early last year whether I thought I'd have changed roles by the end, I'd have said no," said Mark, speaking to *Service Dealer* at the show.

"But I looked at the role and thought that if I didn't take the opportunity I'd always wonder 'what if'. The chance of a job like this, overseeing agricultural and construction sales

across an incredible dealer group, with 19 branches across 200 miles from Lincolnshire down to Sussex, doesn't come up often - it's a once-in-a-generation thing. And as well as having a long career with CNH myself and supplying Ernest Doe, we are a Doe customer on my family farm, and I've been coming to Ulting and the Doe Show since I was in my pram.

"So I was keen to take up the challenge of continuing to build where Graham has helped take the business. My role focuses on the ag and construction sectors, with Andy Turbin continuing to oversee our groundcare business.

"While my focus at CNH was mainly on agricultural products, I have some experience in construction from my time with New Holland's light equipment, but I'm keen to

build on this and the work Graham has done with the team across the five branches from which we sell construction products, which cover an area from the Wash to the Solent. We're anticipating the investment pause button being released by the construction sector, helped by the extension from January of the 40% first year annual investment allowance to machines bought for hire as well as direct use.

"The ability to supply quickly is crucial in construction. We're stepping up our focus, with Chris Bunn, our Wymondham branch manager, recently becoming our dedicated head of construction sales.

"We have everything the market needs from premium suppliers like Thwaites, Bomag and Atlas Copco, plus the recent addition of Merlo, and are progressing our plans for a new excavator partner following the dissolution of our partnership with Hyundai. In the meantime, we are supporting Case construction equipment users with service and parts since the unfortunate demise of Warwick Ward, its former partner in this region.

"It's always important we listen to our customers concerning what they want from us, especially when it comes to franchises, and Graham has proven this over his 26 years overseeing our sales - understanding the demand and investigating whether we can fulfil it. Our suppliers must be ones with whom we can develop a good partnership, to benefit both parties, and from our side ensure the continuation of the Ernest Doe name. But we're very happy with the relationships we have with the 12 key suppliers we currently work with alongside our core CNH franchise, and it's been interesting for me to learn how other manufacturers work. In addition, staff recruitment, such as that of Paul Coffey from Tuckwells to be our Ernest Doe Power/Case IH brand manager, and Simon Gardner from Haynes to become our new Framlingham branch manager, brings other dealership and franchise perspectives."

## Business confidence

While the agricultural sector - particularly the arable and dairy elements - is in a dip, Mark remains confident there is business to be had.

"The livestock sector generally has had some tough times, and dairy farmers are under pressure, but in areas such as beef things have been better recently, and the livestock sector generally has benefited from lower grain prices. In arable, crops are looking well, so there's reason for optimism.

"We've become used to the challenges posed since the elastic band effect of covid, where demand contracted and there were then supply issues when it rose again. But there are always pockets where people are looking to invest, and perhaps minimise their tax bills. While there's a clear downturn in arable investment, as one customer said to me today 'I may not be making a lot, but I like my machinery and I don't like paying tax.

"This event is much more than open days - it's very much



Mark Crosby has moved from CNH to become Ernest Doe's new divisional head of agricultural and construction sales.



The event was the first for Merlo as the dealer's agricultural and construction handler supplier across east and south-east England.

a retail handshake show, and our sales team are always hyped up to do as many deals as possible. When you talk the industry down then it will stay down, but there will always be around 10,000 tractors sold in the UK, and someone has to sell them. Machinery prices have risen significantly, but we work on showing potential customers the returns created by upgrading technology, and the ability it can offer them to improve efficiency, and perhaps expand their businesses.

"While some areas are challenging, we've had good sales lately in areas such as short wheelbase 150-250hp tractors, ex-hire long-wheelbase models and implements such as hedgecutters. There's trade to be had, but the key is retail finance. Structuring deals to suit individual customer cash flow has helped seal deals, as has the service and warranty packages we offer.

"In this respect, we also have a new scheme, DoePlus, which extends up to seven years/7,000 hours the service contract and breakdown cover on machines coming to the end of their warranty if the owner plans to keep them for longer. Similarly, we are offering harvest 2026 cover



Other new franchises making their Doe Show debut included AVR, the Belgian potato equipment specialist.

packages for customers whose combines are out of warranty but were winter-serviced by us.

"Our scale also helps our sales, and we often have in stock what the customer wants at the right price. And because we've done a good job shifting used stock, we've freed up cash, in turn helping purchase new stock.

"With the CNH Basildon tractor plant nearby, and both New Holland and Case IH mid-range product now manufactured there, we have a great opportunity to show customers exactly what goes into these machines. And with the new larger Case IH Optum and New Holland T7XD models from the CNH St Valentin plant in Austria, we have more opportunity to compete in the 350-450hp sector with a European design. Across the two CNH brands we have different customer bases according to heritage and preference for things like certain control styles."

## Specialist areas

With a lot of diversification happening on farms across the Doe area, in many cases the business's scale and diversity means it can supply the equipment their enterprises may require via existing suppliers, suggests Mark.

"We're also investing particularly in the fruit, viticulture and vegetable machinery areas. Derek Peck, from our Ulting sales team, is driving our specialist focus, advising the wider sales team. With a vineyard at home, and a passion for the equipment, he's ideally qualified.

"Under Andy Wilson, our vegetable equipment division, which developed from our 2024 acquisition of the Burdens business, continues to grow, with huge opportunities from the franchises and from our branches in Lincolnshire, surrounded by some of the UK's best farmland. We're especially excited about new products such as the ARA

Field Sprayer from Ecorobotix, which uses AI-driven precision spraying to target weeds with accuracy that cuts inputs by up to 95%. There's now also the ALBA, a compact, AI-driven sprayer from the same maker for turfcare and amenity applications."

Ernest Doe's vegetable equipment offering has been bolstered by its recent appointment to Belgian manufacturer AVR's dealer network.

"This is the first show for the franchise, with a Puma 4.0 self-propelled potato harvester on display," says Mark.

"We were previously involved in potato equipment some years ago with Reekie, and are really pleased to return to it with AVR, with whom we see huge potential. We can offer machinery for growers of all sizes, and for not only potatoes but onions and many other root crops, with good feedback from our first demos.

"We're up against some good competition who are supplying and supporting direct, but we have the personalities in the key areas who know their customers and relish the challenge of providing those customers with more, backed by both manufacturer and dealer. It will be hard to turn every head, but we'll take small steps and learn the sector. It's been a good start, with our first self-propelled harvester already sold following a demo."

## New franchises

Elsewhere, the recent appointment of Ernest Doe as a Merlo agricultural dealer, adding to its autumn signing for the brand's construction machines, has further broadened Ernest Doe's offering, says Mark.

"Merlo have a real energy behind them, with a great team of people, and further new network appointments in addition to ours. It's been interesting to gauge customer interest here. Some visitors perhaps haven't taken a close look before, and so not given Merlo much thought, but this has been an opportunity to change that. We'll have a demo fleet and will have a regional demo programme with perhaps a machine shared between two neighbouring branches, to do as many demos as possible and get people

in the seat. I am also an advocate of the New Holland and Case IH farm handlers, but adding Merlo gives us a wider spread from 6-40m lift height, including large rotating site handlers, our first of which we sold last week."

The other major recent franchise addition, revealed at the show, is that of Pöttinger, the Austrian implement manufacturer. The deal covers the manufacturer's grassland implements but not its arable machines, to avoid conflict with existing franchises, and fills a hole in the Doe offering since Slovenian manufacturer SIP, its former partner in this sector, decided to adopt a different UK retail arrangement.

"We offer some similar product types through other franchises, but the premium Pöttinger range complements them well, giving us a wide offering of different specifications and prices for different requirements, as well as taking us into new areas such as forage wagons," says Mark.

## Adapting to change

"It's all part of the shifting landscape of the sector, which has also driven things like our branch restructuring, with the acquisition of our Lincolnshire sites, the sale of our Ashford branch in Kent to Haynes and the decision to close our Braintree branch, with its customers now served from our Ulting, Fyfield and Colchester sites. As machinery sales have developed into fewer units but larger sizes, branch size and location suitability has changed, and we've adapted."

Ernest Doe itself is a big machine, suggests Mark, which in itself requires servicing and maintenance.

"There are some new ideas I can see we can develop in the areas of electronics, data and streamlining systems. But investment in CRM tools won't mean taking staff off the road - I want to be sure they're still visiting businesses and meeting people. We want to know exactly who our existing and potential customers are, and to rekindle old flames - the basics of ensuring we get down the drives of people we may not have seen for a while and who currently don't buy from us. We are changing, and so are those who buy from us."



Will Orr, parts and retail manager at Ulting, oversaw a new pop-up display area at the show focused on dedicated elements of the showroom.



Pöttinger's Shaun Kent with some of the Austrian manufacturer's grass machinery now sold through Ernest Doe in place of SIP.



Helen Selkin, Merlo marketing manager, with Simon Gardner, Ernest Doe Power Framlingham branch manager.



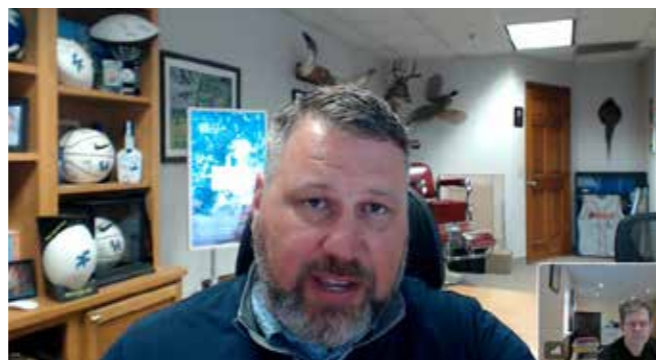
Machines to be services in the yard of Central Equipment

# Are U.S dealer challenges heading our way?

A recent conversation with Kentucky dealer Jason Huber reveals shifting manufacturer relationships, rising pressures and new opportunities - but how familiar does it sound to UK and Ireland dealers? *Service Dealer* editor, STEVE GIBBS reports.

**At *Service Dealer* we're proud of the links we have made with our friends in the outdoor powered machinery industry and dealer trade across the Atlantic.**

A new connection we made this past October at Equip in Louisville was with Jason Huber, owner of Central Equipment based in Lexington, Kentucky. You can watch Jason chat with our owner Duncan Murray-Clarke and with UK dealers Pete and Emma McArthur from Strathbogie Forest & Garden in our most recent Digital Special Report (access via [www.servicedealer.co.uk](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk)) - but Duncan recently reached out and caught up with him again via video call, to take the temperature of the current situation for dealers over there.



Jason Huber, owner of Central Equipment based in Lexington, Kentucky, speaking to Service Dealer owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke in April 2026

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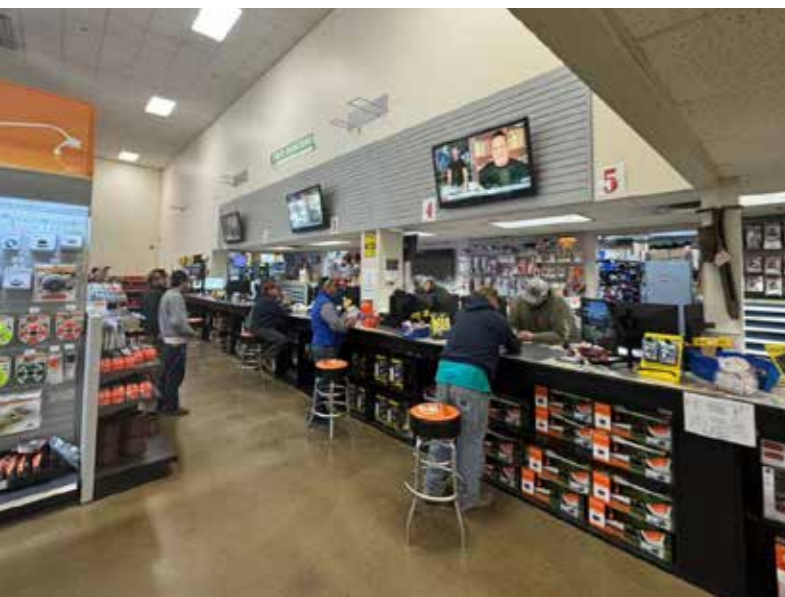
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Speaking obviously from his own point of view, Jason began by stressing just how busy his dealership has been in the first few months of 2026, but also just what an impact tariffs are having on how everyone operates. Just one example of how they are impacting his operation is the fact he needs to completely update his parts prices on weekly basis due to all the changes - a clearly incredibly time-consuming process.

At the heart of the discussion though, was a growing sense of disconnect between certain manufacturers and their dealers. Jason described a shift away by some from the close, relationship-driven approach that historically underpinned dealer networks, towards a more corporate, top-down model.

However, he did stress that sentiment wasn't universal and that other manufacturers have both active and strong communications and partnerships with their dealer base - and indeed those are the ones that are experiencing the



most growth. These manufacturers who are doing it right he said, are placing great emphasis into dealer relations, creating Dealer Advisory Boards and growing partnerships with their brands.

Where there is a disconnect though, with manufacturers not being as proactive as they should, this is being felt most acutely when it comes to product issues and aftersales support. Where certain manufacturers were once quick to engage, investigate and resolve faults, there is now frustration at slow responses and a perceived lack of accountability.

Alongside this, there is a broader structural shift underway. In the US, manufacturers are increasingly acquiring distributors and consolidating control, reducing the independence of the traditional supply chain.

That theme of control extends into dealer agreements too. Jason highlighted growing pressure from some manufacturers for dealers to upgrade facilities, expand locations, or meet stricter corporate standards, often with limited flexibility.

Another area of tension is the evolving route to market. Investment in logistics, data and direct-to-customer capabilities is accelerating. Automated distribution centres and sophisticated fulfillment systems point towards a future where manufacturers could, if they chose, bypass traditional dealer channels more easily.

Yet, the US experience also offers some reassurance. Jason was clear that strong dealerships with deep customer relationships are still thriving. In fact, he described how his business has grown significantly after parting ways with a major brand, underlining that loyalty often lies with the dealer, not the badge above the door.

There are also clear opportunities emerging around digital marketing and data utilisation. US dealers, particularly larger operations, are investing heavily in tracking customer journeys, measuring campaign performance, and automating communication. The focus is shifting from simply generating enquiries to understanding conversion and lifetime customer value.

Finally, a more universal concern we heard was the future shape of the dealer network itself. With an ageing dealer base and questions around succession, there is unease about how many independent businesses will remain in the years ahead. As numbers potentially decline, the balance of power could tilt further towards manufacturers.

A key question for our UK and Ireland dealer readers, is inevitably can you recognise any of what Jason is talking about in your own businesses? Are there direct parallels to be drawn or are circumstances markedly different over here? If you have any comments or thoughts on any of the subjects raised, please drop me a line at [steve@servicedealer.co.uk](mailto:steve@servicedealer.co.uk)

It was a fascinating conversation and we thank Jason for his time and hope to continue our dialogue on a regular basis - perhaps in the future with some UK dealers on the call.



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International viewpoints

It's so valuable for us here at *Service Dealer* to have these transatlantic connections, as they allow us to offer a global perspective on the industry to our readers.

Jason agrees that this sharing of thoughts and ideas between dealers in our two countries is valuable. Writing on LinkedIn after speaking with Duncan, Jason said, "One of the aspects I value most about this industry is the relationships it fosters. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to build meaningful connections and lasting friendships with dealers, distributors, manufacturers, and industry partners across the United States.

"A more recent relationship - one I take great pride in - is the opportunity to share insights from a U.S. dealer's perspective with dealer principals in the UK and Ireland. This has been made possible through their industry's leading publication, *Service Dealer*, where I've been able to contribute to broader conversations about the current landscape of OPE and agriculture dealerships in the United States."

Jason continued, "I'm especially appreciative of the relationship I've built with *Service Dealer* owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke. Through our conversations, I've gained valuable insight into global industry trends - not just what's happening in our own backyard. Duncan and his team have built a strong, dealer-focused publication that delivers meaningful information while fostering a true sense of community among the dealers they serve.

"Recently, Duncan asked if I could provide a quarterly 'state of the union' perspective on the U.S. dealer landscape, and I was more than happy to oblige. I take sincere pride in being asked to represent the voice of U.S. dealers to our friends across the pond. It's an opportunity I don't take lightly - and one that carries a sense of pride in representing our industry.

"At the same time, I firmly believe that while our markets may differ, there is tremendous value in learning from one



another as our industry continues to grow and evolve."

"Thank you again to Duncan, and the entire *Service Dealer* team for the opportunity. I look forward to working together again in the future whenever called upon. Wishing all the dealers in the UK and Ireland a successful year ahead."

As well as hearing from Jason, *Service Dealer* has of course, established a great relationship with the folks at dealer training experts **Bob Clements International** - with Sara Hey contributing a column to this magazine each issue. Sara keeps us up to date with the advice they are imparting to their U.S. dealer clients, covering universal topics that our readers can learn and benefit from.

On top of this, we truly value the strong connection with have made with the organisers at **Equip**, the world's largest trade show for outdoor powered equipment. The team at the **OPEI** who put together the awesome event each October, are so helpful and open with us when we visit, making sure we have full access to the show and its surrounding events - and instrumental in the compilation of our **Digital Special Report**.

And at the show last year, *Service Dealer* held for the first time an on-stage discussion in the huge main arena with **NAEDA**, the North American Equipment Dealers Association. These guys represent dealerships large and small across the USA and Canada, so they truly know what issues businesses are facing at the sharp end of the industry.

We believe that it's through these relationships that we're able to bring real-world insights back to our pages - not as distant observations, but as practical, relatable experiences that UK dealers can both find fascinating, but importantly also learn from. While details may differ, the core challenges and opportunities are often remarkably similar on both sides of the Atlantic - and it's in sharing that knowledge that we aim to benefit you, our valued dealer readers.



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# BUSINESS MONITOR

## Robotic sales increasing for many

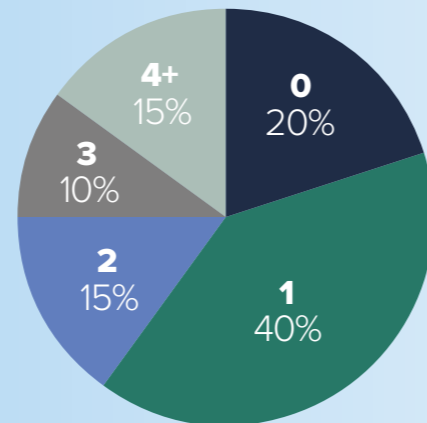
Although some dealers still unsure the technology is right for their customers

**F**eedback to our latest survey on the robotic mower market produced a healthy level of engagement from our dealer readers. In line with what we've been hearing informally, those who have committed to the category are identifying genuine growth potential within their existing customer base. That said, a proportion of dealers continue to approach the technology with a degree of caution.

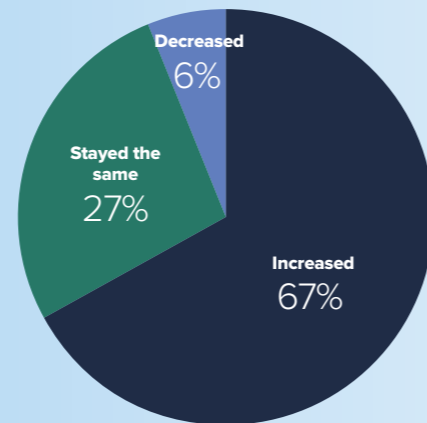
Positively, 67% of respondents reported that their robotic mower sales have risen over the past year – with only 6% saying it had decreased. When asked how they view the role of robotics within their business, the most common response (55%) was that these products now represent “a vital part of my offering.”

Despite all that we've been hearing from manufacturers in recent times regarding professional users taking up robotic mowing solutions, according to our respondents, domestic customers still out-weigh their commercial counterparts significantly.

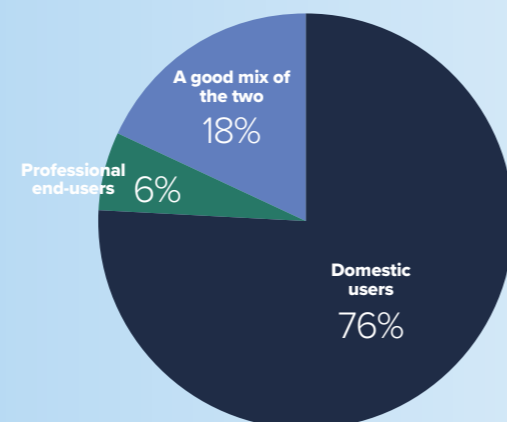
How many brands of robotic mowers do you stock?



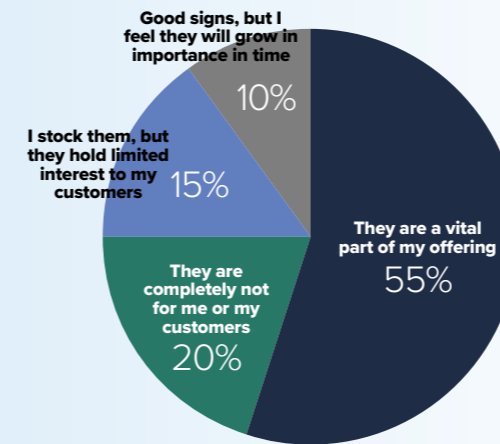
Have your sales of robotic mowers over the past 12 months ...



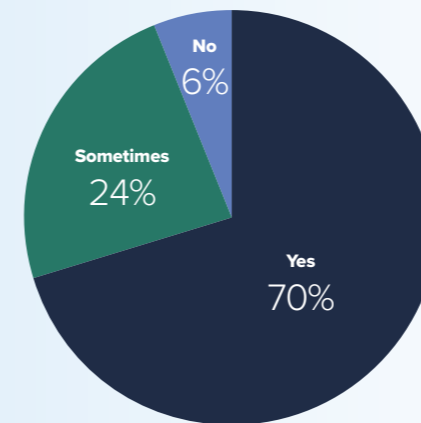
Who in the main are your customers for robotic mowers?



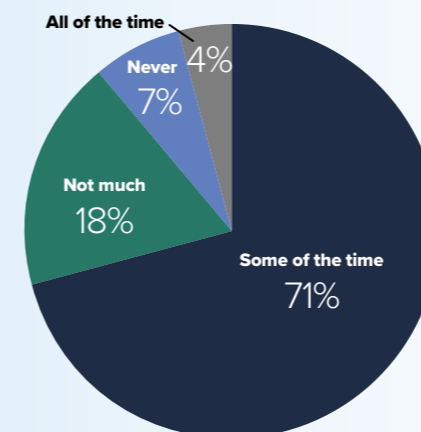
Which of these comments best sums up your dealership's attitude to robotic mowers ...



Do your robotic mower customers return to you for service work on their purchases?



Do customers who purchase a robotic mower from you make additional purchases?



## Your say...

We asked you how do you feel about the robotic mower market today and how it relates to your dealership?

*“We have currently have a team of 4 dedicated to robotic servicing and installing and their diary is always full with a two month lead time on installs and call outs simply due to demand. We also have 4 other sales staff trained on selling robotic mowers from the retail outlets. It's now a major part of our machinery offerings, from golf courses to gardens.”*

*“A good portion of our sales are now with robotic mowers and as the technology in them improves we feel they will become even more popular.”*

*“I feel like it is a distraction from the main core of our business. I am not sure if it is the brand or if it is that we are not trained enough, but they seem more hassle than they are worth and do not seem profitable. The warranty claims for robots seem to be a lot more than any other product.”*

*“Sales margins are too low considering the back-up - often over the telephone and most purchasers are in the more mature bracket. Less service work than petrol engined machines. Also, it puts more pressure on everyone at busy times providing back-up.”*

*“It is now a large and vital part of our operation. Percentage wise we get far more robotic mowers back for winter service than we did conventional machinery. The golden years I fear are over as we have many more brands (some extremely low priced with low margin) and more competition from other sources both dealers, online and even from the manufacturers who supply us!”*

*“Pro users are much more receptive to automated grass cutting and the trend is growing. Every demo and trial results in more as groundsmen talk to each other.”*

*“Boosted sales and showroom footfall.”*

# Why don't your salespeople close more deals?

**Sara Hey**, president of business 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:** Sara considers common mistakes that lead to sales being missed.



**W**hat we're talking about here is the most common mistake in dealership sales. Your salespeople aren't closing because they're selling equipment. They need to start solving problems. Let me explain.

## Here's what's really going on

Your salesperson walks up to a customer looking at a compact tractor with a cab, loader, and backhoe.

"Nice machine, right? 35 horsepower, hydrostatic transmission, climate-controlled cab. Want to demo it?"

The customer nods. Takes the demo. Says thanks. Leaves.

Two weeks later, you see that same tractor sitting in your competitor's showroom with a SOLD sign on it.

What happened?

Your salesperson sold a tractor. The other guy solved a problem.

Most salespeople think their job is to list features and hand over spec sheets. They talk about horsepower, hydraulics, and cab options. They walk customers around the machine, pointing at things. They're basically human brochures.

But customers don't care about horsepower. They care about digging a trench for their new waterline before the ground freezes. They care about moving gravel without their back giving out. They care about working in February without freezing their fingers off.

When you sell equipment, you're competing on price and features. When you solve problems, you're the only option that makes sense.

## The best salespeople ask better questions

The best salespeople don't start by talking. They start by asking. Not "What

are you looking for today?" That's lazy. Real discovery questions sound like this:

- "What project brought you in today?"
- "What are you trying to get done that you can't do now?"
- "What happens if you can't finish this project?"

These questions do something most dealers miss: they get customers talking about their actual lives. Their projects. Their frustrations. Their deadlines. Their back pain.

One of our dealers had a guy come in looking at compact tractors with backhoes. The salesperson asked what he was working on. Turns out the customer needed to install a drainage system around his shop before spring or he'd be dealing with flooding again. He'd been renting equipment and was tired of the hassle.

The salesperson didn't sell him on digging depth and bucket capacity. He sold him on solving his water problem once and for all and never having to rent equipment again.

Sold a \$42,000 tractor with cab, loader, and backhoe in under an hour.

## Here's how to fix it

### Step 1: Stop pitching. Start listening.

Train your salespeople to ask at least three discovery questions before they say anything about the equipment. Make it a rule. If they can't tell you what problem the customer is trying to solve, they don't get to talk about solutions yet.

### Step 2: Connect the dots out loud.

Once you know the problem, repeat it back to them in their own words.

"So you need to dig that drainage system before spring, and you're tired

of dealing with rental equipment that's either not available or breaks down halfway through. Do I have that right?"

This does two things. It shows you were listening. And it makes the customer say "yes" before you've even shown them a machine.

### Step 3: Sell the outcome, not the specs.

Now, when you walk them to the equipment, everything you say ties back to their problem.

"This 35-horse tractor has the digging depth you need for that drainage system. The cab means you can work in any weather without freezing. And the loader up front means you can backfill and move materials without switching equipment."

You're not selling a backhoe attachment. You're selling a dry shop and the freedom to work on their schedule, not a rental company's.

## What this actually looks like

One dealer we work with tracked this for 90 days. Salespeople who asked discovery questions first closed 42% of their leads. Salespeople who started with product features closed 18%.

Same leads. Same inventory. Same dealership.

The difference? One group sold equipment. The other group solved problems.

Because here's the truth: your competitors can match your prices. They can stock the same brands. They can offer financing.

But they can't solve your customer's specific problem better than someone who actually took the time to understand it.

Busy showrooms don't always mean profitable showrooms. But salespeople who solve problems? They print money.

# Let the season commence...

From a successful Pro Open Day to gearing up for major shows, the season is already in full swing, says **Kelly Burgess**, md of Buxtons Ltd based in Penkridge, Staffordshire - and with demand surging, the challenge is managing growth sustainably.



**T**he pace of things lately has been something else. Between the day-to-day running of the business and everything happening around it, time seems to be moving faster than ever. But when I stop and think about it, it's not hard to see why.

One of the highlights recently was hosting our second annual Pro Open Day. It was one of those days that reminds you exactly why we do what we do. The turnout was fantastic - seeing so many of our customers there, taking the time to come and spend the day with us, was genuinely appreciated. Events like that don't just happen on their own though, and we certainly couldn't do it without the continued support of our suppliers. Their backing, effort, and willingness to get involved make a huge difference, and it's something we never take for granted. It really was a great day all round.

Of course, no sooner has one event finished than we're onto the next. Planning is already well underway for our local county show. At the same time, we've also started preparations for the APF Forestry Show. It might seem early given that it's not until September, but anyone who's been involved will know just how much goes into it. Building a 540m2 arb showroom in just three days... in a field, is no small task - it takes a lot of organisation, a lot of teamwork, and a fair bit of forward thinking.

Back at base, things have been just as busy. With the recent break in the weather, sales have gone a little crazy. There have been a few standout moments too - one in particular being the delivery of two Ceora robots to a private address, custom wrapped satin

black. I never thought I'd find myself describing a robot as "sexy", but here we are!

With that level of activity comes growth, and with growth comes the need for more hands on deck. We're currently looking to bring in two new members of staff to help support the increasing demand. It's a positive position to be in, but as always, it's about making sure we grow in the right way, a sustainable way, and continue to deliver the level of service people expect from us.

At the same time, one thing I've been very conscious of since taking over is the need to avoid becoming "busy fools". It's easy to fill days with activity, but much harder - and far more important - to make sure that activity is

actually moving the business forward. A big focus for me has been streamlining how we operate and taking the time to review each department properly. It's an ongoing process, but one that's already helping us work smarter, not just harder.

Looking ahead, there's plenty to keep us busy. More planning, more events, and no doubt a few surprises along the way. But if there's one thing this period has reinforced, it's how important the people around us are - our customers, our suppliers, and our team. Without them, none of this would be possible.

So, while things may feel a little hectic at times, it's the good kind of busy. The kind that reminds you things are moving forward.





# SME DIGEST

Advice for small and medium-sized enterprises

Edited by Adam Bernstein



## TECHNOLOGY

# AI, employee grievances, and how employers should respond

Picture this, writes Daniel Rawcliffe, associate at ESP HR, you receive a grievance from an employee. It's lengthy, formal, and packed with references to employment law and case law. At first glance, it seems well put together - almost too well put together - and something about it doesn't feel quite right...

What's more, the detail in the grievance doesn't seem to align with the reality of the situation, and the employee is refusing to meet in person, insisting that the matter be handled in writing.

If this sounds familiar, you may be dealing with a 'GIT' - a grievance invented by technology. It's just one example of how AI is increasingly being misused in the workplace.

Lawyers are seeing an increasing number of enquiries from clients who suspect their employees may be turning to AI tools such as ChatGPT to draft their grievances. And it doesn't stop there - they're also seeing AI used in appeals, responses to emails, and, perhaps more concerningly, in outcome letters prepared by managers.

### How employers can spot - and respond to - complaints crafted by AI

Many of the enquiries lawyers see in relation to questionable grievances follow a similar pattern. The grievance tends to be unusually long, detailed, and formal. It's often raised in the middle of an investigation into the employee's conduct or performance. And in many cases, the employee is reluctant to attend face-to-face meetings, requesting instead that grievance or disciplinary processes be conducted entirely in writing.

Taken together, these patterns may suggest that the employee has used AI tools like ChatGPT or Co-pilot to draft the grievance.

### Why AI grievances are a problem

A key issue with employees using AI to draft grievances is that minor incidents can be blown out of proportion. Innocuous actions or behaviours may be presented as bullying, sexual harassment, or discrimination, creating a distorted view of the situation.

AI can take minor incidents and exaggerate, embellish, or reinterpret them. As a result, when an employer receives a GIT, it's not always clear which parts reflect what actually happened and which have been 'enhanced' by AI. This creates uncertainty, making it harder to assess the true nature of the grievance and respond appropriately.

What makes this even more problematic is the ease and speed with which AI tools can generate paragraphs of detailed, persuasive text. Employees who might not have otherwise taken the time to raise a formal grievance can now spin up convincing complaints in a matter of seconds, increasing the likelihood that grievances are submitted.

The challenge is compounded by the fact that many GITs are submitted during ongoing disciplinary, redundancy, or other sensitive processes. Employees often turn to AI when they feel threatened about their job, which can result in grievances that are highly detailed and, again, inflated. Employers must investigate these curveball grievances - carefully separating fact from embellishment - while simultaneously managing the original process. Naturally, this increases the complexity and sensitivity of the situation.

The difficulty for employers is that, unless there is a clear reason not to, a GIT must be treated as a genuine grievance and investigated accordingly. Even when a GIT is excessively long and includes references to incidents that either didn't occur or have been overblown, each element still needs to be carefully considered and, where possible, resolved. This, of course, can take up valuable time and resources.

### How to spot AI grievances

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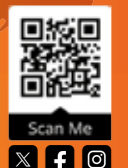
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particularly on social media, many lawyers have developed a sense of whether content has been AI-generated. Of course, not everyone is familiar with AI-generated content or skilled at recognising its hallmarks.

With the rise of employees using AI at work, employers will want to look out for telltale signs that text may be AI-generated.

These include American spelling, such as “behavior” instead of “behaviour”, “organization” instead of “organisation”, and “favoritism” instead of “favouritism” and also, American grammar which places commas or full stops inside quotation marks (“like this.”) rather than outside (“like this”), or treating collective nouns as singular (“the team is” vs British English “the team are”).

Then there is the frequent use of em dashes (—) instead of standard punctuation, such as commas, colons, or semi-colons; the overuse of stock phrases or transitions, such as “in conclusion”, “it is important to note” or “as mentioned above”; and an overly formal or unnatural tone, particularly from individuals who would not normally communicate that way or

an overly balanced or neutral tone, even when the topic might naturally invite opinion or emotion.

Other giveaways are vague or generic content, such as claims lacking specifics, unrealistic examples, or no reference to personal experience or context; conditional or hedging language, such as “this could amount to discrimination” or “this may be a protected disclosure”; and the repetition of ideas or synonyms, where the same point is made multiple times in slightly different words.

Recognising these patterns can help identify when a grievance may have been AI-generated.

### Dealing with AI grievances

To manage the rise in AI-generated grievances employers are going to have to trust their instincts by learning the common signs of AI-generated text so they can spot them more easily, and if something feels off, run it through an AI detection tool to confirm or disprove their concerns.

They should compare notes so that if they suspect a grievance has been AI-generated, it should be reviewed alongside other documents or

communications from the employee to see whether it’s consistent with their usual language/style.

Expert advice is essential; if there’s uncertainty, the document should be shared with a legal or HR specialist for a second opinion.

It makes sense to review and update the grievance policy to ensure that any grievance requires a face-to-face meeting. However, in some cases, a remote meeting may be a reasonable adjustment.

But what is suspected, an employer shouldn’t dismiss a grievance simply because it appears AI-generated. Even if the text has been drafted with AI, the concerns raised may still be genuine. Every grievance should be treated seriously until there is reason to believe otherwise.

### Summing up

AI is here to stay and we’re all going to have to learn how to use it and spot any signs of abuse. One thing is clear, just because a claim has been levelled – with the help of AI, possibly - doesn’t necessarily mean that the claimant is correct in their assertion or may win. Employers will still need to investigate the matter fairly.

performance of tasks which a worker is obliged under their contract to carry out; payments for professional or personal status relating to length of service, seniority or professional qualifications; and payments, such as overtime payments, which have been regularly paid to a worker in the 52 weeks before the calculation date.

And the rules allow accrual for irregular hours and part year workers on a percentage basis.

For these workers, holiday entitlement is no longer based on weeks of leave like other staff but now is based on hours worked and holiday accrues automatically at the end of each pay period, whether that’s weekly or monthly.

The rate of pay is 12.07% of the actual hours worked in that pay period. This figure equals 5.6 weeks’ leave spread over a full year of work. Employers can either pay when leave is taken, or pay a 12.07% top-up each pay period, termed ‘rolled-up holiday pay’.

The law now officially allows rolled up pay, provided that the holiday pay element is clearly shown and calculated correctly.

### How holiday pay should be calculated

Holiday pay must reflect the pay the worker would have received had they been at work.

Consequently, fixed-hours workers receive their normal weekly pay while variable-hours or variable-pay workers should have holiday pay based on the average pay over the previous 52 weeks, excluding unpaid weeks.

The 2024 amendments confirm that ‘normal remuneration’ includes regular overtime, commission; and regular bonuses linked to performance.

### How leave is calculated and taken

There are two ways to calculate holiday entitlement - accrual and pro-rata.

Full-time workers accrue five days/week. This translates to 5.6 (weeks) x five (days) giving a total of 28 days.

Part time workers are given leave

pro-rata. For example, a three day a week worker gets three days x 5.6 weeks which means 16.8 days of leave.

In contrast, irregular or zero hours workers accrue leave at 12.07% of hours worked (5.6 weeks / 46.4, the number of weeks a full-time worker typically works in a year). Leave normally accrues evenly through the leave year.

### Carry over

As a rule, holiday must be taken in the same year. However, carry-over is permitted where the employer agrees and where the worker was unable to take leave because of sickness, maternity or other statutory leave.

### Payment in lieu

When an individual leaves employment and there is unused statutory leave, the worker must be paid for it; employers cannot require staff to forfeit accrued statutory leave at the end of their employment.

It is also important to note that an employer cannot simply pay staff for unused statutory holiday, instead of allowing them to take it during employment. This is only lawful when the employment is ending. Paying “in lieu” of leave during the employment relationship breaches the WTR, because workers must have the opportunity for rest.

### Managing holiday requests

While workers have a clear right to take their 5.6 weeks paid annual leave, employers can regulate when leave is taken.

### Notice rules

Under the WTR, an employee can’t just demand to take leave, but instead, must give the employer notice.

In essence, an employee must give notice at least twice the length of the leave requested, for example, two weeks’ notice for one week’s leave.

However, an employer can refuse or require leave to be taken at certain times by giving counter-notice equal to the length of the leave requested. And employers can also impose their own

notice procedures by policy or contract, provided they do not prevent workers from taking their statutory entitlement.

### Reasonable refusals

It is lawful for an employer to reasonably refuse leave if, for example too many other employees are on leave at the same time; business cover would be inadequate; or it falls within a designated ‘blackout’ or ‘restricted’ period.

However, refusals must be consistent and not discriminatory. Employers should also allow the employee to take the leave at another reasonable time.

### Sandwich leave

Sandwich leave is not a legal term but refers to the practice of employees booking short periods of leave before and after weekends or bank holidays to maximise time off. An example would be taking leave Friday and Tuesday around a bank holiday, enabling the employee to gain five consecutive days off for the price of two.

This can leave an employer short of cover, especially around public holidays.

While it might irritate employees, employers can manage the timing of leave through fair, transparent rules.

They could, for example, codify advance notice requirements which demands more notice for leave adjacent to public holidays, say, one months’ notice for bridging days.

They could put in place rotation or fairness rules by operating a rota so staff take turns having popular periods off.

Alternatively, an employer could encourage early bookings and set deadlines to spread leave more evenly through the year.

### Summary

This area of law is complex and often leads to disputes. Taking time to understand the principles will pay dividends in the long run.

## EMPLOYEE PACKAGES

# Holidays: The law, calculation, and managing leave requests

Apart from pay, one of the most valued parts of any employee’s package is holiday. However, the rules on pay and holiday entitlement are complex and it’s easy for an employer to make genuine mistakes and for an employee to misunderstand their rights, writes **Mark Stevens, a legal director in VWV's employment team.**

### The current legal position

The right to be paid annual leave is set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998 (WTR). This legislation implements the European Working Time Directive into UK Law.

Under the WTR, every ‘worker’ – which includes someone who works for an employer, casually - is entitled to 5.6 weeks’ paid holiday each year. For a full-time, five day per week worker that equates to 28 days.

This 5.6-week period is made up of four weeks of EU-derived leave and 1.6 weeks of additional UK leave.

Employers can choose to include bank holidays within the 5.6 weeks,

or to grant this as additional time on top through the employment contract.

Notably, leave entitlement starts from the first day of employment. There is no length of service someone must complete before they qualify for paid annual entitlement.

### Recent developments

In April 2024, the Employment Rights (Amendment, Revocation and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023 came into force.

A week’s pay for holiday under these regulations now include payments, including commission payments, intrinsically linked to the



# Products

COMMERCIAL



## STIHL reach new heights

Launch of their most powerful battery-powered long-reach hedge trimmers

**STIHL has expanded its hedge-trimmer line-up with the launch of new high-performance long-reach models, the HLA 150 B and the HLA 140 K-B and B. Designed for demanding landscaping applications, the manufacturer says the new machines deliver powerful battery performance for trimming tall hedges safely and efficiently from ground level.**

The HLA 150 B's telescopic shaft allows the user to adjust its length between 207-332cm without the need for additional tools, providing greater flexibility when working at height. Its double-sided, double-edged blades also allows users to achieve a clean cut and rapid progress for maximum productivity, even when working with overgrown hedges or tough material. The tool's cutter bar can be adjusted between 145 degrees, allowing professionals to trim the top, sides and bottom of hedges.

The HLA 140 models' fixed length shafts are designed to provide stability and control for flexible working at low, mid, and high levels, with the added benefit of keeping the cutting attachment away from the user. The shorter, fixed shaft HLA 140 K-B offers a length of 214cm, while the longer fixed shaft model, the HLA 140 B has an overall length of 245cm.

The units' anti-lock function prevents the jamming of blades to maintain consistent cutting performance, while their robust design, including metal mesh air-filters, ensure a long-service life for professional use.

Powered by EC motors, STIHL say the tools' blades are capable of rapid acceleration, helping users to get the best cutting performance. Both models are also easily regulated continuously using their throttle lever, with 3 blade speed settings to choose from with the simple press of a button. The company says this means thicker branches can be cut effectively at lower blade speeds with high torque, while their high-speed modes produce a cleaner and neater cut when trimming finer leaved hedges and shrubs.

All models are equipped with a HMI Advance Plus module with Bluetooth and STIHL Connected to support digital fleet management. Each tool also displays its operating mode on a LED control panel.

STIHL also offer a range of accessories. With the new HLA range, the X-Treem HL/HT shoulder harness combines with the X-Flex Forestry belt to take the weight of the machine and allows the user to focus on guidance and accurate cutting. The battery can also be placed in an external AP battery holster on the belt to save weight.

COMMERCIAL / AGRICULTURAL



## Compact range updated

### Massey Ferguson launches new models

**Massey Ferguson has expanded its compact tractor line-up with the introduction of a new MF 2M series and the addition of larger models to the MF 1M range, taking the total offering to nine machines from 20hp to 65hp.**

The new MF 2M series comprises three models - MF 2M.50 (49hp), MF 2M.55 (54hp) and MF 2M.65 (65hp) - all featuring four-cylinder engines,

selectable four-wheel drive and updated styling in line with the company's latest design. The range offers a choice of transmissions, including hydrostatic and 12x12 mechanical gearboxes, with up to 1,580kg rear linkage lift capacity and hydraulic flow of up to 48.1 litres/min.

Alongside this launch, the MF 1M series has been extended to four models with the addition of the MF 1M.35 and MF 1M.40, replacing previous

models and offering up to 40hp. These join the MF 1M.20 and MF 1M.25, providing a mix of mechanical and hydrostatic transmission options, with cab or ROPS configurations available.

Further updates include the introduction of the MF 1E.40 (40hp) and MF 2E.55 (54hp), replacing earlier E-series models. Designed as cost-effective options, these tractors feature simpler specifications suited to utility, horticultural and municipal applications.

Across the range, key features include revised operator environments with updated dashboards and controls, improved hydraulic systems, and options such as front linkage, PTO configurations and mid-mounted cutter decks on selected models.

Designed for use across agriculture, grounds care, estate management and municipal sectors, the manufacturer says the compact tractors prioritise manoeuvrability, versatility and low running costs.

Production of the new models began in late 2025, with first customer deliveries commencing in early 2026.

COMMERCIAL



## Makita get dressed for work

### Head-to-toe workwear range

**Makita has launched a Workwear range designed by Castle Clothing - the team behind TuffStuff Workwear.**

The head-to-toe collection covers everything from base layers to outerwear, trousers, shorts and safety footwear, including dedicated womenswear sizes.

The company says the difference is in the detail - durable fabrics, high-quality components and smart detailing that improve comfort, flexibility and long-term wearability. Performance features are built in where they matter most:

- CORDURA® reinforcements in high-wear areas
- YKK® zips specified for durability

- Ripstop fabrics for strength without unnecessary bulk
- Durable PFC free water-repellent finishes for reliable weather protection
- Dedicated use of recycled fibres and responsibly sourced 100% BCI cotton
- Work-focused fits designed for movement and all-day comfort

Kevin Brannigan, marketing manager at Makita UK, said, "When researching the UK workwear market, we spoke to several well-known workwear brands and conducted further research with our dealers before deciding on a partner who could provide a range of products and service levels that matched the standards that our customers expect from the Makita brand."

"As a result of intensive market research, the decision to establish a partnership between Makita UK and Castle Clothing soon followed, and we are certain that our dealer and end user customers will appreciate the quality, durability and styling of the new Makita workwear range."

COMMERCIAL



## Remote control mower enters production

New AS 990 Tahr RC rotary from AriensCo

**AS-Motor has announced that series production of their new remote-controlled sickle mower has begun, and the first machines have already been delivered.**

With the AS 990 Tahr RC, the manufacturer is expanding its RC portfolio with a mower featuring bidirectional mowing mode and extreme slope capability.

The company says the machine operates without a conventional direction of travel. They say its sickle mower, which is open on both sides, enables a clean cut forwards and backwards, including even clippings

distribution. There is no need to turn after each pass. This saves time and significantly increases the area coverage. The cross-blade system from the Sherpa family delivers high cutting power. Grass and scrub up to 1.5 metres high are cut at high speed by two pendulum blades and shredded by the cutter bar above. The large-area deposit of the cut material facilitates its rapid decomposition.

The caterpillar design with even weight distribution, large support width and low centre of gravity ensures high traction in every driving situation, uphill, downhill and across slopes. With a

slope capability of up to 56 degrees (across the slope), the machine remains stable and controllable. Only the caterpillar tracks have contact with the ground, which reduces the risk of getting stuck and protects the turf. The low ground pressure of only 0.14 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> underlines the soil-conserving approach.

The manufacturer says the design is geared towards durability, low susceptibility to faults and easy maintenance, with a solid square steel tube frame, the established cross blade system from the Sherpa series, reliable hydrostatic drives from Hydro-Gear and the proven engine from the AS 940 Sherpa. The asymmetrical crawler track prevents the chains from jumping off, and their tension can be quickly checked and adjusted. Easily accessible service points, a hinged engine cover, few wear parts and moderate fuel consumption of around 4.5 litres per hour ensure economical operation. The compact dimensions, weight of 502 kg and sturdy lashing points facilitate transport and handling, even in a van.

Optionally available LED headlights also improve visibility in difficult lighting conditions.

AGRICULTURAL

## Knight enters applicator market

KA range available in 1,300, 1,500 and 1,900 litre capacities

**British sprayer specialist Knight Farm Machinery has entered the market for liquid applicator systems with a range based on its line of sprayer front tanks.**

The company says the new product offering is designed to provide precise application of crop nutrition and protection products via rear mounted equipment such as drills, seeders and potato planters. Three tank sizes are available - 1,300, 1,500 and 1,900 litres - with a comprehensive standard specification and an array of options to suit customer needs.

All models are built on a heavy-duty steel chassis protected by a two pack paint coating and incorporating parking stand legs for easy storage when not in

use. An integral headstock enables easy mounting to a tractor three-point linkage, and the chassis also incorporates full road lighting and safety markers.

Tanks are corrosion resistant and roto-moulded to a profile that maximises operator visibility. Specification includes a front fill point with filtration screen, high volume centrifugal pump and rear delivery pipe, and electronic transfer with in-cab control. The tank profile incorporates tank wash heads supplied by a separate clean water tank, plus a hand-wash tank.

Multiple options are available to match applicator design to customer needs. These include fully

computerised independent rate and pressure control, ISOBUS connectivity via the tractor's front ISOBUS connection, and an ISOBUS control terminal.

Further specification can include Knight's PRO series whirlpool induction hopper, automated tank fill capability, and a six-cylinder diaphragm pump.



DOMESTIC



## EGO upgrades mower range

4-in-1 functionality offered

**EGO say they have enhanced its portfolio of cordless lawnmowers for 2026, with new upgrades to four of its existing models.**

Two of the company's push mowers and two of its self-propelled models now offer what they describe as "professional-grade mowing with optimal comfort for gardeners."

The LM1710E push mower and LM1710E-SP self-propelled mower provide a 42cm cutting width, while the LM1910E push mower and LM1910E-SP self-propelled models feature a 47cm deck.

All four mowers use the company's 56V ARC Lithium portable batteries. These four models represent the next

generation of EGO's residential lawnmower line-up with added functionality and ergonomics.

Joerg Bauerle, product Manager at EGO, commented, "This new range of mowers is designed to provide ease and high-performance mowing to homeowners with self-propelled mowers taking the risk of physical strain away from customers, they also provide a consistent cut quality, improving the overall health of a lawn."

The mowers feature a redesigned wheel system for smoother movement across all types of terrain, and each boasts an interactive LED dashboard that displays battery life and blade speed, while a fault indicator adds extra peace of mind. Equipped with LED headlights, these mowers also provide improved visibility for shaded areas or evening mowing.

Equipped with a 55-litre grass box, all four models offer a 4-in-1 functionality: mulching, bagging, rear discharge and side discharge.

ATV / UTILITY VEHICLES

## Yamaha's Kodiak moment

Strengthens utility line-up with new models

**Yamaha Motor UK say they have strengthened its utility ATV line-up with the introduction of the new 2026 Kodiak 700 Kiwami and Kodiak 450 Kiwami.**

Developed with the demands of UK operators firmly in mind, the new Kiwami variants - "Kiwami" meaning pinnacle or ultimate - sit at the top of the manufacturer's utility ATV offering. Both models arrive with a premium, UK-ready specification as standard, including heated grips, thumb warmers, hand guards and a durable seat cover, aimed at ensuring year-round usability in challenging conditions.

The flagship Kodiak 700 Kiwami is powered by Yamaha's 686cc MK II SOHC engine, tuned for strong, controllable torque and smooth acceleration under load. It features the brand's Ultramatic CVT transmission, On-Command selectable 2WD/4WD system with diff-lock, and Electronic Power Steering. It features upgraded aluminium front and rear cargo baskets, a factory-fitted WARN winch and KYB suspension enhancing its suitability for hauling and recovery work. The machine offers a towing capacity of 600kg and rack capacity of 140kg.

Alongside it, the Kodiak 450 Kiwami's fuel-injected 421cc engine is described as delivering

smooth low-end torque and strong engine braking, supporting controlled operation on uneven or sloping ground. Despite its more compact chassis, it retains key full-size features including the On-Command drive system and 25-inch all-terrain tyres, while long-stroke KYB suspension and the heated equipment package are designed to support operator comfort over extended working days.

The Kodiak 700 Kiwami and Kodiak 450 Kiwami are available now through Yamaha's UK dealer network, with both models covered by the company's 10-year belt warranty on Ultramatic transmissions.



DOMESTIC

# Cordless cylinder causes curiosity

New 20V model from Webb

British garden brand Webb continues to expand its Webb cordless garden machinery range with the introduction of a 20V Cordless Cylinder Lawnmower.

Building on the success of their WEH12R Manual Cylinder Lawnmower, the new 30cm model has been designed for small to medium lawns and has a recommended retail price from £229.99. Powered by the company's interchangeable 20V Lithium-ion battery system, the cylinder cutting system delivers a clean, scissor-like cut that helps promote healthier grass growth and a neater overall appearance.

A rear roller is incorporated into the design to create the much-loved striped lawn effect, while also improving stability and control when mowing close to edges and borders. Webb say smooth belt-driven performance ensures an even cut across the lawn, helping users achieve a consistent pristine finish with minimal effort.

Lightweight and easy to manoeuvre, the lawnmower has been developed with everyday usability in mind. Adjustable cutting heights allow gardeners to tailor their finish throughout the seasons, from shorter summer trims to slightly longer cuts during cooler months.

The cylinder lawnmower uses the same easily interchangeable battery platform as the Webb Eco range and is supplied with a 4Ah battery and charger.



COMMERCIAL

# TERRA-ific new option from Weidenmann



The company's first walk-behind aerator for greens

The Wiedenmann Group has announced the launch of the **TERRA CORE M6**, the company's first walk-behind aerator for greens.

The company says the unit marks the start of a new era, where they will focus on innovation and the extension of its existing product portfolio for the golf and turf market.

Developed based on feedback from greenskeepers and daily users, they claim the machine combines high area productivity with the precision and hole quality that the brand is known for. The machine is designed for straightforward, robust operation, and service-friendly maintenance.

Michael Rueter, CEO of Wiedenmann Group said, "The TERRA CORE M6 delivers smooth running and consistent performance with a working width of 52 inches at a working speed of more than 2.5 mph, as well as an aeration depth of 6 inches. It is equipped with two interchangeable tanks to support long working days with fewer interruptions and enhanced on-site productivity."

The manufacturer says production is scheduled to start at the end of the first quarter so that the first units will be ready for use in time for the peak season. For the product launch, the aerator will be available in a limited "First Edition" of 30 units in a matte black finish. Customers who order one of the 30 "First Edition" units will receive a 15% discount.

The release is also described as deepening the strategic partnership between Wiedenmann Group and John Deere.

# Consolidation and change

As consolidation reshapes the network, our mystery columnist The Sprocket examines the pressures driving change - and why the independent dealer still has a vital role to play.



**In a recent edition of the Service Dealer Weekly Update (out every Friday at noon, sign up at [www.servicedealer.co.uk](http://www.servicedealer.co.uk)) Steve Gibbs, SD editor, talked about consolidation and change within the LBE sector in 2025.**

Generally, like other industries, we are seeing the big getting bigger, the small disappearing and the medium sized business specialising in one way or the other to stay in the game. This is not unique to the UK and in reality, is probably a global issue as the world itself shrinks in terms of commerce and the influence of the internet.

As I write this, the 'new war' in Iran is escalating with oil fields and gas producing fields being bombed by both sides and the Straits of Hormuz closed as tankers are being targeted. With 20% of world oil supplies using this route it was inevitable that oil and gas prices would rise, at least to us mere mortals - even if certain world leaders may have thought otherwise! The human cost is absolutely tragic and the resultant huge increases in oil and gas prices, almost instantly affects most of the Western economies.

This all adds to increased costs, higher interest rates and invariably lower margins for retailers. With businesses being squeezed on all sides by increases in taxes and the costs of employing people, it is no surprise that they have to look for cost savings and better efficiencies to survive and this changes leads to the need for consolidation.

So, to my friend Chat GPT:

*"Business consolidation is the process of combining multiple companies, business units, or assets into a single, more efficient organisation. This often occurs through mergers, acquisitions, or internal restructuring. The main goal is to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and strengthen market position.*

*"When businesses consolidate, they can eliminate duplicated functions such as administration, marketing, or production, leading to economies of scale. For example, a larger combined company may negotiate better deals with suppliers or operate more efficiently due to increased resources and streamlined operations.*

*"Consolidation can also help companies expand their market share, enter new markets, or gain access to new technologies and expertise. In competitive industries, it is often a strategy used to remain viable and compete with larger or more dominant firms.*

*"However, consolidation also presents challenges. Integrating different company cultures, systems, and processes can be complex and costly. There may also be regulatory concerns, especially if the consolidation reduces competition in a market.*

*"Overall, business consolidation is a strategic move aimed at growth and efficiency, but its success depends on careful planning, effective integration, and alignment of goals across the combined organisation."*

What we have seen in the LBE sector over many years now, is consolidation within the agricultural machinery dealer network. Seemingly starting with John Deere consolidating dealers to create larger, more efficient, and specialised dealership groups. This strategy aims to reduce overhead costs, increase dealer profitability, manage inventory more effectively, and better support advanced technology integration - effectively reducing competition and strengthening control over retail operations.

Certainly, other ag machinery suppliers have tried to follow suit and we have seen the smaller independent ag machinery dealers giving way to forms of consolidation and merger in order to compete with the large 'super dealers'. Some of the problems are due to a lack of succession, economies of scale and a reducing market share due to competition from the bigger consolidated dealers. In some cases, it also reflects on a reduced market share - although in the case of consolidation increasing area sizes it does not necessarily follow that overall market share will increase for any one particular brand.

In the UK the ag machinery, ground care and garden machinery dealers are mostly independent with a few exceptions within the Claas dealer network. Even the John Deere super dealers are privately owned businesses. Their suppliers will have a huge influence on their businesses, but for those with multi-franchises who are less beholden to one

particular brand there is opportunity for more change, less loyalty and less threat to their business from any one supplier.

The issues of consolidation and merger are perhaps less of a threat to the traditional family-owned garden machinery businesses who are lifelong independents and not wholly reliant on any one supplier. They are traditionally more nimble than the ag dealers and in many ways more self-sufficient, yet their individuality and size does not make them great targets for consolidations, mergers or even acquisitions. It does happen though.

## Where are we heading?

Sadly, our traditional family dealerships are getting squeezed by larger dealers, the internet, lack of succession, sustainability, ever rising operating costs and reduced margins. Many smaller dealers lack the resources to scale up or provide the necessary service levels, making merger or acquisition by larger groups necessary for survival if they are attractive enough.

One must expect that the move to consolidating a country's dealer network has its limits both practically and legally. Legally there are issues of monopolies although hard to prove and legislate against. Practically it is a matter of how large an area a dealer can operate in. It may be too much of a generalisation but the consolidation and mergers we have seen over the years rarely sees the loss of a business or site or, indeed, any people. The industry loses a company name, but the number of outlets and people remains fairly consistent. Importantly we still have the variety of brands and dealers that provide, he says hopefully, a level playing field.

It is hard to believe that the smaller independent local garden machinery dealers will be targets for consolidation

and mergers as it does seem to be more targeted at the ag dealerships to ensure the big ag brands maintain their market presence. What could be a threat is the competition from the ag boys who try and grow their ground care and garden machinery businesses at the expense of the traditional dealers - but to do this they do need a different mentality than they have to a farming customer. After all the differences between a £200,000 tractor and a £3,000 ride-on mower are vast - but which one gives a dealer a better profit margin?

The future of dealerships has been long debated and whilst the now real issues of consolidation were reported on years ago, the nature of the LBE sector is such that nearly all dealers, at least in the UK, are independent and privately owned and that means that they still have their own voice and choices. The sector is not shrinking but it has been consolidating and change is inevitable.

We all understand that a manufacturer/supplier wants its products to be promoted above all others and through various distribution channels this can be achieved. The dealer network is part of this distribution channel, and it offers that unique ability to be able to provide a full after-sales services that a manufacturer or supplier is unable to do. This makes the dealer network indispensable to most manufacturers or suppliers and the relationship between them is massively important albeit frayed at times.

Regardless of mergers, acquisitions or consolidations the heart of the LBE dealer network is strong and necessary. Yes, it will change as the market changes and the commercial needs of manufacturers and suppliers vary as business dictates but there will always be a place for forward thinking, adaptable and visionary privately owned independent dealers.



# 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.

## MAY 2026

<b>North Somerset Show</b> www.nsas.org.uk	<b>4</b>	<b>BBC Gardeners' World Live - Birmingham NEC</b> www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com	<b>18-21</b>
<b>Nottinghamshire County Show</b> www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com	<b>9</b>	<b>Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh</b> www.royalhighlandshow.org	<b>18-21</b>
<b>Scotgrass, Slacks Farm, Lochmaben</b> www.scotgrass.co.uk	<b>13</b>	<b>spoga+gafa 2026, Cologne</b> www.spogagafa.com	<b>22-24</b>
<b>Balmoral Show, Belfast</b> www.balmoralshow.co.uk	<b>13-16</b>	<b>Hillhead, Buxton</b> www.hillhead.com	<b>23-25</b>
<b>Hadleigh Show</b> www.hadleighshow.co.uk	<b>16</b>	<b>Royal Norfolk Show</b> www.royalnorfolkshow.co.uk	<b>24-25</b>

<b>Chelsea Flower Show</b> www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show	<b>19-23</b>
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<b>Shropshire County Agricultural Show, West Midlands Showground</b> www.shropshirecountyshow.com	<b>23</b>
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<b>Northumberland County Show</b> www.northcountyshow.co.uk	<b>23</b>
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<b>Suffolk County Show</b> www.suffolkshow.co.uk	<b>27-28</b>
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<b>Staffordshire County Show</b> www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show	<b>27-28</b>
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<b>Royal Bath &amp; West Show</b> www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show	<b>28-30</b>
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## JUNE 2026

<b>Royal Cornwall Show</b> www.royalcornwallshow.org	<b>4-6</b>
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<b>South of England Show</b> www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show	<b>5-7</b>
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<b>Cereals 2026, Diddly Squat Farm</b> www.cerealsevent.co.uk	<b>10-11</b>
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<b>Royal Three Counties Show, Malvern</b> www.royalthreecounties.co.uk	<b>12-14</b>
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<b>Royal Cheshire County Show</b> www.royalcheshireshow.org	<b>16-17</b>
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<b>Lincolnshire Show</b> www.lincolnshireshow.co.uk/	<b>17-18</b>
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## JULY 2026

<b>Groundswell 2025, Hertfordshire</b> www.groundswellag.com	<b>1-2</b>
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<b>TGA Summer Show, Grasslands Turf, Kent</b> www.turfgrass.co.uk	<b>2</b>
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<b>Kent County Show</b> www.kentshowground.co.uk	<b>3-5</b>
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<b>Hampton Court Palace Flower Show</b> www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events	<b>8-12</b>
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<b>Norfolk Garden Show, Norfolk Showground</b> www.norfolkgardenshow.co.uk	<b>10-12</b>
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<b>Royal Isle of Wight County Show</b> www.iwcountyshow.co.uk	<b>11-12</b>
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<b>Great Yorkshire Show</b> www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk	<b>14-17</b>
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<b>Royal Welsh Show</b> www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh	<b>20-23</b>
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<b>Driffield Show</b> www.driffieldshowground.co.uk	<b>22</b>
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<b>Border Union Show</b> www.borderunion.co.uk/border-union-show	<b>24-25</b>
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<b>The Game Fair, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire</b> www.thegamefair.org	<b>24-26</b>
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<b>Mid Devon Show</b> www.middevonshow.co.uk	<b>25</b>
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<b>New Forest &amp; Hampshire County Show</b> www.newforestshow.co.uk	<b>28-30</b>
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## Join the AI robotic mower revolution

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- **Vision AI 2.0** – day and night vision
- **Slopes** up to 42° / 90%
- **Up to 24,000m²** with edge cutting
- **All-terrain capability** – 4 wheel drive and suspension
- **A 'Drop & Go' model** – 1 minute Quick Start



Contact: [robotics@fgmclaymore.co.uk](mailto:robotics@fgmclaymore.co.uk) | [www.sunseekerelite.com/uk](http://www.sunseekerelite.com/uk)

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STIHL BLK CHAINSAW (1954)



STIHL MS 070 CHAINSAW (1968)



STIHL MS 500i CHAINSAW (2019)