

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

MAY / JUN 2017

CORDLESS MACHINERY

The current state of the market – new products and the views of manufacturers and dealers.



DEALER PROFILE

NEW DEALERS, NEW SUCCESS

- ❖ Focus on Aspen
- ❖ SIMA review
- ❖ Doe Show report
- ❖ SME Digest

- ❖ Credit Card fraud
- ❖ New Products
- ❖ Jim Green
- ❖ Service Dealer Conference & Awards 2017



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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the May/June 2017 edition of *Service Dealer*. This issue we take a look at an area which is still proving contentious among some dealers – cordless products. Based on recent conversations I've had with dealers and indeed through certain comments we received through our 2017 Cordless Survey, there are clearly still some genuine concerns and worries out there. It's probably too strong to claim that there's any real resistance to battery within the network, more so it's this lingering worry about the effect on service levels.

STIHL gave some very interesting statistics in its presentation to dealers attending its spring roadshows. It said currently European cordless machinery sales represent one in 10 machines sold. By 2020 it forecasts that this will change to one in four machines – and by 2025 the company believes that one in every two products sold will be battery powered! That's a quite extraordinary take-up predicted, and if it's anywhere close to being accurate it's clear that specialist dealers can't afford to not be involved.

In all of this though, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that petrol-powered products are not going to disappear. With all the units currently in the hands of users, and indeed with all those which will continue to be manufactured and sold in the future, it would presumably take an awfully long time for cordless sales to have any major effect on workshop levels? And battery machines themselves do not necessarily represent zero service work. Dealers are a clever and adaptable breed. Clearly cordless will be a significant part of their future – and they will no doubt find a way to make it work for their business, on their own terms. All of which ties in neatly with the launch of the 2017 *Service Dealer* Conference which you will also find in this issue – the theme of which is *The Challenge of Change – Embracing & Adapting to a Changing Market*.



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TERRITORY EXPANSION FOR HJR AGRI

McCormick awards dealership

McCormick dealership, HJR Agri at Oswestry, has expanded into West Cheshire and North Staffordshire on the strength of its customer support and sales performance.

Phil Maw, Area Sales Manager at McCormick distributor AgriArgo, said: “We’ve seen HJR Agri go from strength to strength as a McCormick dealer through its enthusiasm and focus on customer service, so we’re delighted to have reached an agreement that rewards the HJR team’s hard work with a bigger territory.

“With years of experience between them, the directors and staff know that to succeed it’s essential to focus on customers and their service expectations,” he added.

“HJR is always quick to respond and on the sales side maintains high stock levels of both new and used tractors to meet customer needs.”

Terry Hughes, Managing Director at HJR Agri, also welcomed the new agreement: “Expansion is always useful for any business so being able to extend our McCormick customer base is a great opportunity for us,” he said. “We already have the resources to serve our extended area well in terms of parts, servicing and repairs, and we all look forward to welcoming farmers as new customers in the area.”

HJR Agri (Oswestry) Ltd took on McCormick for West Shropshire and mid-Wales a year after it was formed in 2008 by colleagues Terry Hughes, who leads the sales activities, his brother Alan Hughes and Melfyn Jones, who run the service side of the business, and Andy Roberts, whose domain is the parts operation and sundries showroom.

In 2013, the company expanded into North Wales with McCormick, from just West of Chester to Conwy in a territory that borders the area covered by Anglesey-based PGF Agri. Now, the dealership’s McCormick territory extends further East to Crewe and Newcastle-under-Lyme, taking in West Cheshire, where it borders a territory looked after by Barlows Agri from a new base at Marton near Macclesfield, and North Staffordshire down to Market Drayton.

“This area is very accessible from our Oswestry base, where we have five experienced and McCormick-trained personnel to call on for workshop and on-farm repairs and routine servicing,” pointed out Terry Hughes.

“As far as sales activities are concerned, I’ll be sharing the extended territory with our North Wales salesman Rob Owen, helping farmers and contractors to find the most suitable McCormick tractor for their needs.”



HJR's Northern Salesman, Rob Owen (left) with Managing Director Terry Hughes

DEALERS

KIOTI APPOINTS SCAMBLERS

For Cambridge and surrounding area

Kioti has broadened its dealer network with the appointment of Scamblers for Cambridge and the surrounding area.

Ed Scambler said, "It's a pleasure to be working with the lads at Kioti UK.

"The Kioti brand has been growing steadily over the past couple of years and now has a fantastic

range. I believe it to be without a doubt one of the best brands out there.

"The UK is now supported by Pols Zuidland in Holland and offers a massive hub to pull equipment and parts. We at Scamblers are looking forward to growing the Kioti brand across the Cambridgeshire area."



L-R: Dan Scambler, Rosemary Scambler, Patrick Desmond (Kioti UK MD) and Ed Scambler

DEALERS

PENN LAWN MOWERS RAIDED AGAIN

Following January break-in and credit card fraud

Dealer Penn Lawn Mowers in Ringwood has been broken into again during March – this time its store was ram raided with criminals smashing through the front doors.

This follows the dealership suffering a break-in in January which saw thieves smash through a brick wall to steal around 14 chain saws, including a rare, valuable one. Not long after this traumatic event it subsequently fell victim to a credit card fraud which hit the company for £2,500 (more details on page 50).

Dawn Smith, who owns the business along with her husband Roland, told *Service Dealer*: "At 12.35am we were ram raided

through our front doors.

"It's hard to believe that you can suffer so much in such a short space of time.

"I know that I'm starting to wonder if this is all ever worth the time and effort that we put into our family business to watch this happen again and again."

The criminals didn't manage to make off with anything, but they caused about £5,000 worth of damage including writing off one lawn mower that was due to go out to a customer that day.

"I guess some good news is that they arrested two guys about an hour after this happened," commented Dawn.



ARTICLE ON JOHN DEERE TRACTOR SOFTWARE HACKING CAUSES A STIR

Picked up by news outlets worldwide

An article featured on the online magazine Motherboard, an off-shoot of the Vice media company, about the apparent phenomenon of American farmers hacking the software in their John Deere tractors to carry out their own repairs caused quite a stir recently.

The story written by journalist Jason Koebler (which can be read in full at tinyurl.com/lg4g5gy) was picked up by mainstream news outlets across the web, including Mail Online and The Guardian in the UK.

The story proposed that increasing numbers of farmers in the U.S, frustrated with Deere's "draconian locks" on the tractors they buy, were turning to illegal downloads of firmware from Ukrainian websites, to 'hack' their tractors – allowing them to perform 'unauthorised repairs'.

It is explained in the article that a licence agreement John Deere required US farmers to sign back in October forbids nearly all private repair and modification to farming equipment, and prevents farmers from suing for "crop loss, lost profits, loss of goodwill, loss of use of equipment ... arising from the performance or non-performance of any aspect of the software".

The agreement applies to anyone who turns the key or otherwise uses a John Deere tractor with embedded software. It means that only John Deere dealerships and "authorised" repair shops can work on newer

tractors - which some tractor owners see as an affront to their freedom to repair their tractor as they see fit.

It leads to larger questions about who ultimately owns the equipment, with Koebler saying "...a fear I heard expressed over and over again in talking with farmers, is that John Deere could remotely shut down a tractor and there wouldn't be anything a farmer could do about it."

At the time of going to press Service Dealer had approached John Deere about their views on the subjects that the article addresses – which we should hopefully be able to bring you next issue.

Your views?

In the meantime, what do our dealer readers think about this? Should tractor owners have the right to 'fix' their own tractor if they so wish – or should it always only be an authorised dealer?

Could Deere's hard-line approach possibly alienate farmers from dealers?

And looking forward, do you think this type of software we see today on large agricultural tractors will begin to spread to groundcare equipment?

Let us know your thoughts by dropping us a line at steve@servicedealer.co.uk



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NEW PREMISES FOR FR JONES

And owner Bob Jones retires

In response to the continued growth of the business and taking advantage of new investment capital, *Service Dealer Dealer of the Year* winner FR Jones and Son has taken the opportunity to secure significantly larger premises.

The company remains in Sydenham, South-East London, but has moved just down the road to a new, higher-profile development less than a mile from its previous location. The new premises offer significantly more space and allows for an even wider selection of products and facilities, bringing a host of benefits for customers and suppliers.

The new property boasts:

- 11,500 sq ft warehouse/showroom space
- 1,000 sq ft office space
- 500 sq ft classroom space

And contains:

- 20m of trade counters
- Over 200 pallet spaces
- Over 200m of warehouse racking
- 1,000m of warehouse shelving
- Up to 10,000 pick bins
- Ample customer parking

Key new features at the new location include:

- Sound-proof machine demo room
- Dedicated classroom facilities
- Climbing frame and demo area
- Splicing room
- LOLER room
- Increased machinery display area
- Increased warehouse capacity

Bob Jones retires

After nearly 50 years as Owner/Director of the Company, FR Jones and Son has bid farewell to Bob Jones as he has left to begin his retirement. The company thanked Bob for his service and wished him well as he set off to start this new chapter.

As Bob retired, a commercial decision was also taken to incorporate the previous partnership into a private limited company. The company is now known as FR Jones and Son Ltd.

The trade of the previous partnership has transferred over to the new company, as have all staff and procedures. Justin Jones continues as Company Director, the management team remains the same and it is effectively 'business as usual' in terms of relationship management with customers and suppliers.



F.R Jones' new premises before the re-opening

APPOINTMENTS

STIHL EXPANDS GROUNDS CARE TEAM

New Development Manager

STIHL GB has strengthened its sales team structure following a successful 2016, which saw the company reach £100 million of sales – its most impressive performance ever – plus the announcement that VIKING products will be merging with STIHL to create an expanded product range.

Steven Greenup has taken on the new role of Grounds Care Development Manager, providing support to STIHL's Approved Dealer Network.

Steven's 27 years of experience in the industry, which includes nine years at STIHL and even longer with an established North-East dealer, will be harnessed to help increase sales of mowers, tillers, shredders, ride-on mowers and perhaps most

importantly, robotic mowers and lithium-ion powered mowers.

In addition to the appointment of Steven Greenup, the company is also strengthening its Grounds Care team both at its Camberley Head Office and with the recruitment of a Field Support team member in the Midlands or North of the country.

The company said these reinforcements will support STIHL dealers to maximise their iMow sales success, providing assistance with initial installations and practical support.

Robin Lennie, Managing Director said, "Over the last five years, STIHL GB has enjoyed rapid growth due to a number of factors including its Dealership Development programme, a vast expansion of STIHL tools aimed at homeowners,



Steve Greenup

a substantial investment in marketing and training, and most notably, the tenacity of its Approved Dealers.

"As we plan to merge VIKING into the STIHL brand, we have decided to strengthen our Grounds Care team to provide our dealers with increased support for the future."

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DEALERS

NEW HOLLAND'S MAGNIFICENT SEVERN

Dealer appointment in Shropshire

New Holland has further strengthened its dealer network with the launch of a new partnership with Severn Farm Machinery Ltd, based in



Severn Farm Machinery Ltd Managing Director, Chris Willner at the New Holland Basildon HQ with Andrew Watson, Business Director UK & ROI (l) and Anthony Sylvester, Network Development Manager (r)

Pontesbury, Shropshire.

The dealership has operated across the area for a number of years as a family business under Chris, Matt and Mike Willner.

Severn Farm Machinery will supply the full range of New Holland products including tractors, harvest machinery, telescopic handlers and construction equipment. The dealership will also ensure that customers are well serviced thanks to a growing specialist team of Service Technicians, who will now take on the responsibility for supporting all New Holland warranty on existing and new machines moving forward.

Chris Willner said, "We're extremely excited about the new partnership with New Holland. Representing a global brand that is

renowned for its innovative products, it fits well with our desire as a family business to provide products and aftersales support to the agricultural industry in Shropshire and the surrounding area."

New Holland Business Director UK & ROI, Andrew Watson said: "We are delighted with this new partnership. Severn Farm Machinery Ltd brings with it a dedicated team and a long and proud agricultural machinery history. We believe it will be a real asset to our dealer network.

"We're sure customers will appreciate the access to New Holland's full range of products, spare parts and specialist technical servicing and we're looking forward to seeing the dealership develop over the coming months."

INDUSTRY

AGCO TO ACQUIRE LELY FORAGE DIVISION

Deal to be completed by end of year

AGCO has reached an agreement in principle to acquire the forage division of Lely Group.

Lely's forage division is a leading manufacturer of balers and loader wagons in Europe.

The transaction is subject to regulatory approval and is expected to close in the fourth quarter of 2017.

Martin Richenhagen, AGCO's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, said in a statement: "The integration of Lely's industry-leading competence in hay and forage technology will further strengthen AGCO's full line product offering."

However, the *Irish Farmers Journal* reported at the time of the announcement that the sale to AGCO will have an effect on jobs at Lely, including the 95 employees in the Netherlands involved in production of the forage machines. Its report said that production is expected to cease from 31st March 2018. It said employees will temporarily be seconded to AGCO Corporation before this date, but

from 1st April 2018 their jobs will be at risk, with a solution sought for their future inside or outside the company.

Moreover, said the report, 100 people working in Lely's head office in Maassluis, Holland, will lose their jobs, as will 100 people working in the company outside the Netherlands.

Concurrently, 300 people will move from Lely to AGCO, bringing Lely's total number of employees down to approximately 1,300. ●





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CONFERENCE
2017

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

The theme for this November's Service Dealer Conference has been announced

Service Dealer has launched this year's *Service Dealer Conference & Awards*.

Taking place once again at the Oxford Belfry Hotel on Thursday 16th November, the theme for this year has been announced as *The Challenge of Change – Embracing & Adapting To A Changing Market*.

The event will include leading industry speakers and experts, a keynote address, panel debates and breakout sessions.

The conference programme is based around the most commonly expressed concerns and issues identified by dealers – which this year will include, as part of the agenda, an emphasis on the difficulties dealers face in recruiting staff.

Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray Clarke said, "As every year passes, new areas of challenge emerge which have been debated and deliberated on at our annual conferences. Our themes have reflected this and the last couple of years have been based around survival and 'making a customer and not just a sale'.

"This year is no different with the challenges facing large agricultural machinery dealers, the debate around cordless products, as well as the ever-present online retailers. The flip side, of course, is how some dealers are looking for the opportunities that are out there (or just around the corner). Technology is not just throwing obstacles at us but also fantastic opportunities such as drones and the ever-evolving smartphone apps (for domestic ground care as well as precision farming procedures). And, of course, the dealer community still has the ace up its sleeve that online and non-specialist retailers can't touch – aftersales and expert maintenance from a dealer that is based in their local community.

"Of course, the problem that these opportunities

unearth is how do dealerships, of whatever size, go about maximising these opportunities? Changing and evolving as a small business (or SME) isn't easy, which is why we have decided to theme the 2017 conference *The Challenge of Change*.

"Whatever your resources are, our experts will cover some of these "challenges of change" and help turn them into key opportunities for dealers attending the conference. Don't miss it!"

Further information on the Conference is available now on the *Service Dealer* website at www.servicedealer.co.uk

Here you can buy Early Bird Tickets at a special discounted rate, find out more about the day's agenda or register your interest in attending.

Keep an eye out on the *Service Dealer Weekly Update* every Friday, which is where you'll find out about new developments and additions to the Conference line-up as soon as they are confirmed.



DEALER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2017

Could it be your dealership this year?

Entries are now open for this year's Dealer Of The Year competition.

As ever, the glittering presentation ceremony will take place in the evening at the Oxford Belfry following on from the day's Conference.

Similar to last year, the core dealer categories for the 2017 competition are:

- GARDEN MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR
- PROFESSIONAL TURFCARE DEALER OF THE YEAR
- FARM MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR
- FORESTRY EQUIPMENT DEALER OF THE YEAR
- ATV/QUAD DEALER OF THE YEAR

As before, dealers can nominate themselves to enter the competition – with part of the judging criteria once again being the assessment of customer feedback collated throughout the forthcoming season. Manufacturers are also able to nominate members of their dealer network (up to three per-category).

DEALER DEVELOPMENT EXPERT TO FEATURE ONCE AGAIN

One of the definite highlights of last year's *Service Dealer* Conference was the afternoon plenary session run by Simon Batty, MD of Maple Associates.

A leading dealer development expert who has 15 years' experience of supporting dealer teams selling Massey Ferguson, JCB, New Holland, Valtra, Kubota and Challenger brands in addition to a wider equipment portfolio in agriculture, arboriculture and groundcare, *Service Dealer* is delighted to welcome Simon back this year.

Author of *The Dealer Leadership Development Programme*, he has worked with owners and teams of distributors and dealers to identify and deliver significant measurable improvements on profitability, cash flow and balance sheet performance. Using a whole business approach to improvement, Simon is a strong advocate of active prospecting, consultative selling and a customer-focused sales strategy.

Simon's presentation and words of advice will be fascinating and highly relative – definitely a 'not to be missed' session.



We created two new awards last year – Star of the Dealership and Apprentice of the Year – which we shall also be running again in 2017. These categories will open for voting later this year and once they do we want you to tell us who really goes that extra mile to help make your business a success.

However, in the meantime, the five core dealer categories are open for entry via the *Service Dealer* website now.

Visit the Nominations tab in the Conference section of www.servicedealer.co.uk to make sure your dealership is in with a chance of being recognised this year.

OUR 2017 SPONSORS

The following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2017 *Service Dealer* Conference and Awards, including our new principle sponsor – KRAMP. We'd like to welcome all sponsors on board and thank them for their support and input.



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DEALERS MUST EMBRACE THE CORDLESS REVOLUTION



L-R: Steve Roskell and Peter Melrose

That's the view of Peter Melrose, President of Ego Europe. *Service Dealer* editor STEVE GIBBS sat down with him and Steve Roskell, Marketing Director, EMEA, to discuss how Ego is progressing in the UK and how they see the battery-powered market

SERVICE DEALER: How is it going for both Ego and cordless products in general in the UK currently?

PETER MELROSE: There is no doubt that cordless is starting to take a greater market share.

Last year was Ego's foundation year in the UK. Our distributor Henton & Chattell was getting up to speed, we were getting dealers on board, merchandising was going out into dealers' stores and we had two SALTEX's under our belt. We now have our product specialist out in the market, Ian Boler, who's out seeing dealers both new and old every day.

STEVE ROSKELL: Having Hentons on board has been really productive for us as they are very selective about who they'll sell Ego through, choosing only highly reputable dealers. They manage our channel extremely well to everybody's gain.

SD: Are you finding that dealers are stocking Ego on their shelves next to increasing numbers of other cordless brands?

PM: I think you'll find what will start to happen is that dealers won't proliferate with lots of cordless brands. They will find a brand which fits a gap which they have in their business. They won't keep adding other brands – this is certainly what's happening in Europe.

Some dealers may be testing the water somewhat at the moment. But I think that when they have success with a manufacturer, they won't feel the need to keep branching out. When they've found a brand which they can get behind and which they know can get behind them, then things will settle down and stabilise.

SD: Are you finding less resistance among dealers to cordless now than perhaps there was initially?

PM: There is still this perception that if I sell cordless, I'm not going to get any more revenue. I personally think that's a little short-sighted. I think manufacturers will start to create opportunities for dealers to start to offer service.

One of the key enablers for that will be the Internet Of Things, because products like ours are uniquely suitable to take chips, memory and sensors. So once the tools start to generate data and information then there are lots of opportunities for dealers to engage with the analysis of that. Concepts such as predictive servicing can come to the fore. The dealers will be able to monetise this data which the equipment is generating.



The new Multi-Tool hedge trimmer

The benefits of these developments will be obvious to everybody. The user doesn't have any downtime because they had their product serviced in good time, the dealer has a revenue stream because he's doing the servicing and the manufacturer gets information which helps to improve the reliability and quality of the product. This is where we'll see these machines develop.

SD: Is it still battery run time which sells these machines?

SR: It's a question that's always asked, along with recharge times. And those areas are where we're market-leading. The whole Ego system started in North America and what they wanted to bring to market was 'infinite use'. What was required was long run-time and fast charging. Therefore, if a user owned two batteries, they could go ad infinitum. Ego achieved this with a run-time of 45mins versus a recharge time of 30mins. As soon as that was cracked, that's what really started selling it in the US.

Ego has been in cordless products, not just outdoor power equipment, but power tools, for a long time. That specialisation is what we feel gives us a real competitive advantage. We know lithium-ion inside out.

PM: At the same time as this, you have to build the tool and the cordless-ness together. You can't fit a cordless motor on to an existing lawnmower deck and expect to get the best performance and run time from it. If you don't manage your airflow and everything properly you'll end up with runtime anxiety.

Our steepest learning curve has been getting the product itself to a certain level of performance and functionality. Lawn and garden equipment is without doubt a more challenging market than power tools as the machines get used a lot more.

SD: Is the range of different voltages available in the market from different manufacturers confusing for customers?

PM: One of the challenges that the consumer has in front of them is how do you decide the battery platform and the voltage level that you want to choose?

Our focus is always going to be 56-volt. We pledge to consumers and dealers that all batteries will fit all tools for all time. Consumers must question is a higher voltage necessarily more

powerful than a lower voltage?

There are many different voltages of equipment now available in the market. Some lower, some higher than our 56v. It's now up to us to explain to users why we believe that 56v is the best option for them.

We believe it basically comes down to a combination of the portability and compactness at one end of the scale which allows you to work with things like hedge cutters and blowers, offering a lighter product. Versus the fact that we can offer the highest energy capacity in the market on a portable battery because we can jump up from one set of cells, to two sets of cells, to three sets of cells, not having to rely on an overly large battery that can only be fitted into a backpack.

SR: We spend a lot of our time explaining the technology advantages of our product. It's not just the voltage, it's the phase change material; it's the arc lithium layout of the battery; it's the fact that they are fitted externally rather than internally; the heat management, which is such a critical part of lithium-ion. We really try to focus on being the cordless specialist. The voltage number is just a number.

SD: Is there a perception that a higher voltage means a more powerful product?

SR: I guess from a layman's point of view there is that perception, that's the challenge. But it doesn't necessarily equate. We spend a significant amount



Like all Ego machines the mowers are powered by a 56volt battery

of our resources getting that message across – and it's a difficult message as there isn't just one answer to it. We believe it's because our battery is simply a superior product, that's why our products succeed – not because of their voltage level.

SD: How do you see Ego and cordless in general progressing in the UK?

SR: I personally think that the professional users will bring the cordless movement on. Legislation will dictate this, whether it's noise, emissions or vibrations. Whilst the owners of professional grounds care companies will factor in the cost savings to be made on fuel. You will see more and more cordless machinery being used professionally in the street – and then the consumer sees it and adoption will increase.

PM: From the dealers' perspective, I would see the cordless emergence as a disruptor to the regular replacement cycle. When someone comes back to them to replace their petrol lawnmowers after five or seven years, there is an opportunity to break into that replacement cycle, saying this is what you should be using today.

We would like to hope that dealers start to think beyond the service issue and take on board the fact that once a customer makes that initial purchase of a tool and a battery, there are often supplementary purchases.

It all comes down to the entrepreneurship of the individual dealers. We're hearing of young guys taking over from the older generation of dealer principals who are selling hand over foot. They are not interested so much in the workshop. They are wanting to sell clean machines that don't come back.

In terms of Ego, I think this year's range is a step-change in what we're able to offer the dealer. New lawnmowers, the new multi-tool, new hedge trimmers – there really is quite a breadth of additional tools for them to offer customers.

SD: When will you be able to offer a ride-on?

PM: You'd think that would be a massive challenge, but it's in the plan. I can't say much more than that at this stage though.

SD: Are you still looking for more dealers?

PM: Yes, there are gaps in our geographic coverage. We've identified the regions with Hentons which we need to focus on. We've got Ian out on the road

now, visiting those areas and those dealerships which we're looking to target. There definitely seems to be a North/South divide currently – with the North lacking coverage.

SD: What's your message to dealers regarding Ego?

SR: We're committed to the dealer network. We're really looking to support the dealer and help them sell our cordless products. Everything we do is committed to being a major player in the dealer channel.

PM: What I would say is we need dealers to embrace this whole cordless revolution.

It's key that dealers engage with the products, because if they choose to finally not to, there are other channels to market. Manufacturers who have invested in these products will need to see a return on that investment and they will have to look at other options. It's the way of the world.

But for us it's very much about the dealer network. We do want more on board, but the decision about who that will be, ultimately lies with Hentons.

Where dealers are invaluable to the cordless revolution is in convincing end-users that battery powered products are the right choice for them – and that takes time and expertise. ●



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CORDLESS MACHINERY SURVEY SPRING 2017

Dealers are stocking in increasing numbers, but some lingering doubts remain

We had an excellent response from dealers this year who wanted to let us know their thoughts on the current state of the cordless machinery market. There appears no doubt that dealers accept the products are coming in increasing numbers, but for some there are still legitimate concerns that once their retail shelves are filled with battery-powered products, their workshops might see work dwindle.

Nobody at all responded this year saying they didn't hold any cordless brands. The majority (36%) said they held products from two companies. What is significant though, is that when asked how this compared with the number held last year, 57% said they had increased their stocking; no one had decreased.

Encouragingly the majority of dealers who responded were either quite or very confident in the products they

stocked (40% and 38%), although more underwhelming are the responses that customers are only demanding these products occasionally (43%) and additional purchases are only happening some of the time (60%).

Dealers who responded to the survey, on the whole seemed satisfied with the support they received from manufacturers for cordless products with 'mostly' (41%) and 'very much so' (39%) being the most common answers.

Asked what the most important factors were in the sale of cordless machinery and battery run time (40%) and ease of use (29%) came out on top.

Again though, similar to last year, dealers are in the main still not seeing service work off the back of cordless sales. Most said none at all (52%), although those saying 'a little bit' had crept up this year from 40% to 48%.

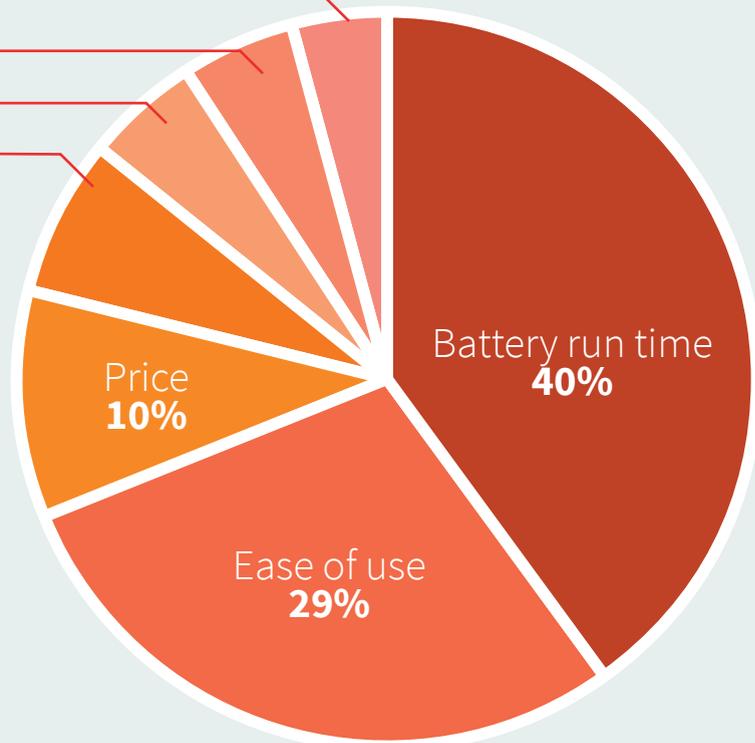
What is the most important factor in the sale of a cordless product?

Weight – 4%

Reliability – 7%

Power – 5%

Part of a 'family' of products – 5%



YOUR SAY



WE ASKED YOU: HOW DO YOU SEE THE CURRENT STATE OF THE BATTERY MACHINERY MARKET FOR YOUR DEALERSHIP? ARE THERE ANY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH EITHER GIVE YOU PARTICULAR CONFIDENCE OR INDEED CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

- Battery volume is increasing but manufacturers are putting vast pressure on dealers to take this product area based on the volumes seen in Europe, which are yet to materialise in the UK. Also of concern is how quickly stock can become obsolete due to the rapidity with which this area of the market is developing.
- We find that the manufacturers that have a good walk-behind mower are the ones that sell. Reason is that paying €800 for a good walk-behind is acceptable to most customers, that includes battery and charger. Once they have the battery and charger the body-only hedge-trimmer or strimmer is well priced. If they come in to buy just a hedge-trimmer, battery and charger it's too expensive.
- Modern machines have better run time and power than previous products. It can be argued that it takes service work away, but it is a product that is here to stay and we will deal with change as we normally do!
- It's an important part of our business and will continue to grow.
- Machines still need servicing whether petrol- or battery-powered. They all have blades that need sharpening, motors that need cleaning, sprays to lube or chains to replace and sharpen. It's the approach of the dealer that needs to change and their job is to advise customers about the servicing the products will still need.
- Sales are very much age related, with the ease of use for older customers who are no longer able to pull a recoil, but who don't want cables, appealing. We find having a trial machine available is worthwhile. It's too early days to have any major concerns.
- With emission changes proposed, that can only mean cordless sales increasing over time – EFI petrol engines have to become dearer, surely? And how long before the first economically viable ride-on mower? Haven't been selling long enough to gauge long-term effects on workshop.
- As battery life gets better and cheaper then they will start to take over, certainly against the standard electric corded machines.
- Since the start of this year we have had endless customers asking about cordless lawnmowers. I think it's the future way of thinking. Getting your customers to understand that, especially when they struggle to start a petrol machine, is key.
- Too many choices in makes and pricing.
- We're very keen to see a wider range of battery-powered products. Looking forward to ride-ons coming through. It's progress – bring it on.
- The short life of certain families of products is a concern. We're more confident saying some products will be around for several years than others.
- The market is in total flux, currently – caused by all the different voltages, fittings, etc.
- Presently it's a niche. Better reliability will increase demand, but the likelihood of it remaining a specialist dealer product in volume is limited due to its internet availability and ability to be box-sold.
- Sales are only going to increase, which over time will lead to less service work.

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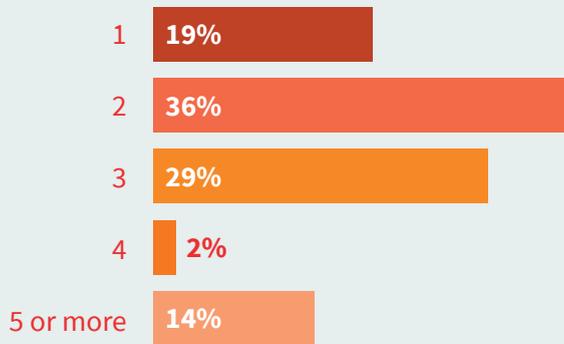
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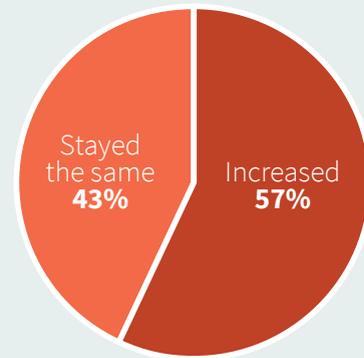
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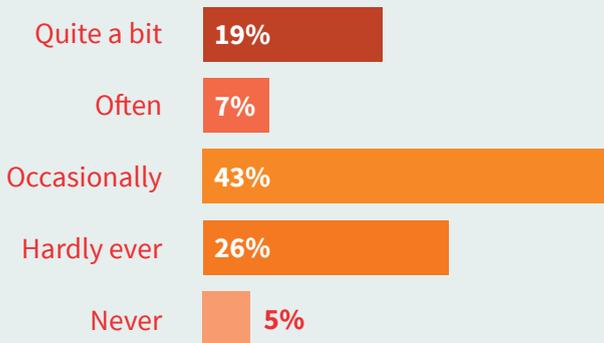
How many brands of battery-powered/cordless machinery do you stock?



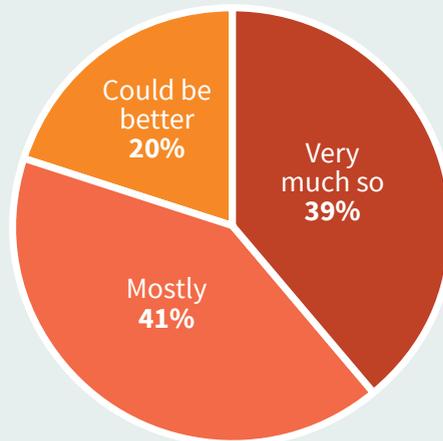
How does the number of cordless brands you are stocking compare with last year?



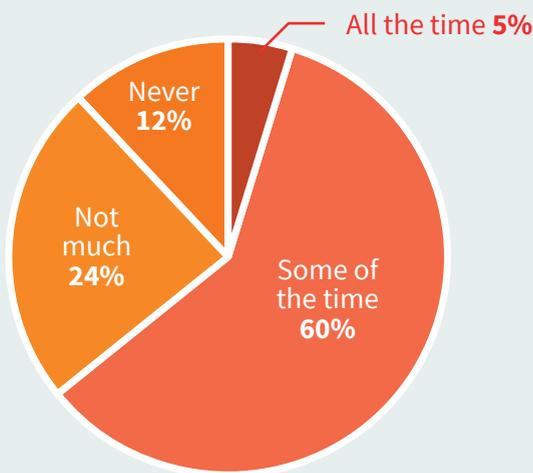
Do your customers demand cordless machines from you?



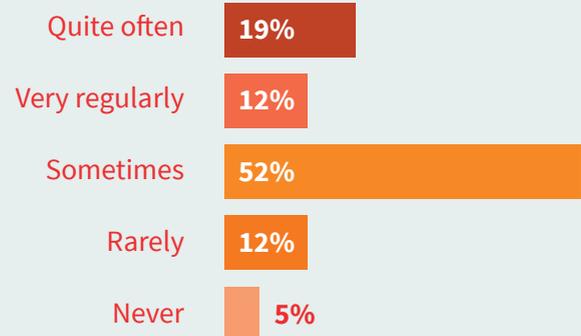
Are you well supported by the manufacturers of the cordless brands you stock?



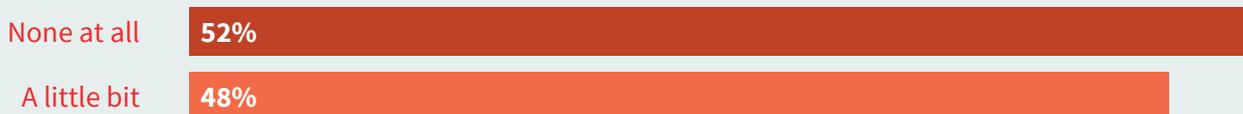
Do you find customers make additional purchases following a cordless machine sale?



Do you recommend a cordless machine over a petrol one to a customer...



Do you get much service work from cordless machinery sales?



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*75 minute run time based on 49cm mower using 7.5Ah battery



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CORDLESS PRODUCTS

LONGER RUN TIME WITH LESS STRESS

New batteries from Husqvarna

This spring Husqvarna will unveil three new lightweight, high performance, integrated batteries designed for a range of professional applications.

The new models target users who are looking to further extend the battery capacity for their Husqvarna Battery Series products. The new 36V models range from a 2.6Ah capacity up to a 9.4Ah; the outcome, according to the company, is more work can be achieved using a single charge.

Fully compatible with the current professional Husqvarna Battery Series and chargers, the new range of integrated batteries give professionals up to 3.5 hours of run time on a single charge with a hedge trimmer. Compared with previous product iterations,

the new batteries have up to an 80% longer run time.

To quantify these developments, the BLi100 and BLi200 batteries offer the same weight as the models they replace yet with up to a 20% increase in capacity, vastly increasing the power to weight ratio and ensuring longer work periods between recharges. The BLi300 offers a class-leading 9.4Ah, and an 80% increase in capacity when compared with previous integrated batteries. The company says the result is that, even in high energy consumption applications, the battery can easily offer a run time equivalent to a tank of fuel.

Battery cells and electronic components have been engineered so they are sealed, preventing dirt and water from entering the battery's internals. This makes the professional range of BLi batteries weatherproof.

New technology, new service opportunities

Husqvarna says that ensuring good battery service revenue for the authorised dealer network is also very important to the company.

In what to many is a new product segment, the Husqvarna Common Service Tool (CST) is a computer program that allows the Husqvarna professional range of products and batteries to be easily maintained by the servicing dealer. The only difference being, it is a computer carrying out the diagnostics rather than conventional workshop tools. The CST allows authorised Husqvarna dealers to be able to diagnose possible issues, report the operating history of both product and batteries, test electronics and update software. In addition, new specific battery Service Checklists outline the service work customers receive.

A spokesperson for Husqvarna said, "Authorised Husqvarna dealers can offer a comprehensive and detailed battery product aftersales service while ensuring that the Husqvarna Battery Series offers an equal if not better service revenue potential for the servicing dealer.

"The Husqvarna Battery Series provides your business with the opportunity to continue to earn profitable sales and service revenue while offering your customers the most efficient solutions on the market."



BLi300

ECHO CHARGE AND GO

New range of 50V lithium ion battery products

ECHO has introduced a new range of 50V lithium-ion battery products, including a hedgetrimmer, a trimmer and power blower that the company says takes on its petrol



counterparts with a wealth of added benefits.

The DHC-200 hedgetrimmer and DSRM-300 trimmer each come with a 2Ah battery as standard and the option of a 4Ah battery for a longer run time. The DPB-600 power blower has a 4Ah as standard. Both types of battery fit other ECHO 50V tools, so there is no need to buy different types of battery or chargers.

The company says these 50V battery products produce petrol performance and are professional-grade tools built to the same standards as its petrol range. They are powerful, tough, durable and built to last, but the similarities to petrol stop there. With their easy to use controls there's no recoil start and no fuel-filling – just charge and go. They are low noise and low emission so they are ideal for use around sensitive areas such as schools and nursing homes, amenity and visitor centres, parks

and gardens.

Lightweight and well balanced, ECHO says each tool is easy to control and manoeuvre and can be used for long periods with little user fatigue. Maintenance is reduced because there are fewer moving parts. In fact each product has a brushless motor which is long-lasting and maintenance-free due to non-wearing parts.

Emissions are managed by energy efficient motor controls for speed, power delivery and battery temperature, with the added benefits of improved cutting and blowing performance and longer battery life.

Using a rapid charger, quick charging reduces downtime and there is an option of using 4Ah batteries for a longer run time.

A two-year professional and five-year domestic warranty on all ECHO lithium-ion battery products, including a two-year warranty on batteries, is offered.

MONO MOBILITY

Viking's MA 339 C battery-powered lawn mower

Viking's Compact Cordless MA 339 C battery powered lawnmower weighs 14kg with a cutting width of 37cm, making it suitable for smaller gardens where manoeuvrability is key.

The company says the mower's mono handlebar provides the gardener with extensive freedom of movement with easy access to the grass catcher box. With ergonomics central to its design, the mower's handlebar is adjustable to ensure a comfortable experience for any user. This feature is combined with a sturdy die-cast aluminium

console, which ensures even force application and minimises the strain on your back.

While the mower may be compact in size it can still carry up to 40L of clippings. The grass catcher box can be easily emptied due to the large carrying handle and a hinged cover.

Those wishing to mulch grass clippings can convert the mowing deck quickly and easily using the kit available from Viking's accessory range, which comprises a multi-blade and mulching key.

The cordless lawnmower is powered by a low-noise, 600W

motor, the technology for which was developed by parent company STIHL. Owners of cordless, battery-powered STIHL Compact Cordless System tools can use the same battery in this Viking cordless mower.



CUTTING EDGE LAWNCARE FROM ROBOMOW

New RX model

Robomow is bringing the benefits of automatic lawn mowing to more gardens in 2017 with the launch of what it describes as the smallest and most affordable robotic lawnmower on the market – available to consumers for under £500.

The Robomow RX series is its newest model range and is suitable for lawns up to 200m². The compact machine enjoys the same features and state-of-the-art technology as its larger sister models, including the patented edging system, which cuts beyond the wheel base and over the lawn's edge.

There are two models, the RX12u and the RX20u, which will cut up to 150m² and 200m² respectively and tackle almost any terrain. Featuring a floating cutter deck, 18cm mowing width and adjustable mowing height, the powerful mulching system returns nutrients and water to the lawn.

The Robomow RX20u includes the comprehensive Bluetooth connecting app, which allows users to check battery life, alter settings, set mowing schedules, send the Robomow to mow and drive it manually around the garden.

Mower Magic is the UK distributor of the Robomow. John Hall, Managing Director, says: "People assume that robotic lawnmowers are only for people with huge expanses of lawn to manage and equally large budgets, but this isn't the case. The new RX range allows customers with smaller urban gardens to benefit from the flexibility and time savings that a robotic lawnmower offers – all for less than £500."



PELENC'S NEW ERA

Underway with ULB1500 battery

Pellenc says its ULB1500 battery gives users 50% more stored energy compared with the current largest battery on the market, allowing for a full day's

work without having to recharge.

The ULB1500 battery can be used on the complete range of Pellenc tools. From hedgecutters and hand-held blowers to brushcutters and pedestrian mowers, the company says the battery will complete over 1,200 recharging cycles – which effectively equates to five years use or 7,000 litres of petrol.

There is a full display on the front of the battery that allows the operator to see power consumed, cost of fuel saved in terms of petrol, the tools used and a battery life indicator.

Designed to go into 'sleep' mode after 24 days of inactivity as opposed to three days on earlier models, it is also IP54 water-proof

rated, meaning that the worry some users have of working in the rain with a battery-powered product is no longer an issue.

It also has a completely new harness, designed around operator comfort, which allows the battery to be stood upright when taken off the operator.

Another new feature is that it can be fitted in either direction on to the operator, allowing the cable to come out of the top or bottom, depending on the type of machine being used.

All Pellenc batteries and tools come with a three-year commercial warranty as standard. Pellenc is exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Etesia UK. ●



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FUEL FOR THOUGHT

It took some doing, but with effort from distributor Anglo American Oil Company and help from some key dealers, Aspen fuels are proving profitable for specialists around the UK. Editor STEVE GIBBS reports

Anglo American Oil Company (AAOC) is the UK distributor for Aspen alkylate fuel which is specially designed for small capacity two-stroke and four-stroke engines.

Having started in a small home office in a house in Wareham 17 years ago, the business moved to a trading estate in Poole in 2015 where it now boasts large office and warehouse facilities.

The company was founded by the parents of current Sales Director, Axel Hildebrand. Like Axel's family, Aspen fuels have their heritage in Sweden. There the fuels are long established and extremely popular among users of outdoor powered equipment.

Aspen first appeared in the UK when it was distributed

by Husqvarna in the early 2000s. A few years later, however, when Husqvarna decided to give up the brand, the opportunity arose for AAOC to take on the UK distribution of the fuels.

The Hildebrand family thought they would be on to a sure-fire winner. They knew how good the product was and how popular it had proved among Swedish users. They were convinced that the specialist dealer network would be incredibly enthusiastic about taking the fuels on and selling them to an eager public. But this wasn't the case, says Axel.

He describes the biggest hurdle they faced initially as being the beliefs of many dealers that expensive alkylate fuels such as these simply were not popular. He explains, "We were going to dealers with a lot of enthusiasm, telling them we were all going to make a lot of money. But they were saying to us, 'we've tried that before and we just can't sell them'.

"We were facing a wall of a lack of interest. And for the majority of dealers it was like that up until about five years ago when many started to come around to the idea that this was a product which they could make good profits from."

Ethanol

Why did things change for Aspen? Well one of the biggest reasons was the mandate that all road fuels had to contain 5% ethanol. People were finding that this type of fuel, while fine in their car's 50-litre fuel tank, was starting to cause problems in the small tank in their garden machinery.

Ethanol is hygroscopic which means it absorbs moisture from the atmosphere – this is especially prevalent in a damp environment such as a shed where a lawnmower might be stored.

This becomes a problem when the ethanol is absorbing so much moisture that eventually it settles through the fuel, leaving a pool of water at the bottom of the tank. When this eventually seeps out into the machine, not just as water but as an acidic mix, it causes damaging corrosion. It creates what some people call 'white rust' which can often be found in carburettor bowls. It can go flaky, and can block jets.

With newer machines this type of damage can be much more problematic. Due to the higher emission standards, machines are nowadays tuned much leaner. The jets are smaller so just a little bit of a grime element can cause a major problem.



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Gradually, therefore, both the domestic and professional markets were becoming much more aware of the damage that regular fuel could inflict upon their machines. For Aspen to truly take off in the UK it was subsequently the issue of price which then had to be overcome.

As fuel prices are very noticeable in everyday life, seeing a can of Aspen priced quite significantly higher than regular fuel was still off-putting. It was, as Axel said, necessary to get the thought out of customers' minds of how expensive it would be to fill their car up with the product – not just their small lawnmower tank. AAOC realised the most effective way to do this was through expert dealers promoting the benefits of the product directly to consumers.

Key dealers

Axel admits there were a couple of key dealerships that were integral to really kicking off Aspen's fortunes in the UK. First, Barrie Whittock at Garden Kit in Sidmouth is important to their story.

They signed on back in 2011 and straight away they started selling a lot of fuel. They are a family business, run by Barrie and his wife, with their daughter also working in the servicing department. "Overnight their

sales were shooting up," Axel says, "overtaking dealers who had been selling for a long time. What were these guys doing we asked ourselves?"

It turns out that at work Barrie started to get quite bad chest pains, which were somewhat of a mystery. They were, however, noticeably worse over winter when they couldn't have the workshop doors open. "When he heard about the health benefits of Aspen," Axel says, "he was intrigued to see if changing to these fuels would help."

Barrie started draining all machines in his workshop of any normal fuel and only using Aspen - with a huge difference made to the air quality in his facility. His health problems went away and he became massively pro-Aspen, selling the benefits to his customers.

"Before Garden Kit really took off with Aspen we were seriously considering whether the UK wanted this product at all," admits Axel. "But we saw that this guy here can do it, therefore there's no reason why it can't work around the country."

The other dealer who Axel cites as part of Aspen's turnaround is Stephen Cornell and his daughter Heather at Cornell & Varley, a medium sized garden machinery business based in South London.

They are now Aspen's top retailer, selling almost



Aspen fuel on the left compared with regular pump fuel on the right

ASPEN HAS TAKEN OFF WITH DEALERS AROUND THE COUNTRY QUITE SIGNIFICANTLY THESE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS

20,000 litres last year, having started selling the company's products in January 2013.

Axel says, "Stephen and Heather were very quick to understand the potential of our products, both in terms of profit to his shop and how it could increase his business's footfall. They were the first shop to start providing customers one-litre bottles of Aspen with each new machine sold and with everything serviced. By sticking to this concept and recommending Aspen to all their customers, they've managed to build a great business in four years."

Retailing success

It is this retailing concept which AOC now fully advocates to all its dealers. Proving the value of the fuel, by clearly illustrating to customers that it's the best for their machines by using it both in servicing and by giving it away with new purchases.

"The main thing when a dealer is selling our product is they have to explain its benefits in a way that is going to be useful for the person buying it," says Axel. "For somebody using five litres a year, the health benefits are going to be nice but they're not going to be breathing in enough toxic emissions for it to make much difference to them in the long run. For them, what will be important is that fuel is going to last them a year, it's ready-mixed if it's the two-stroke and they can put the machine away for a long time, safe in the knowledge that the fuel won't damage their machine.

"Now we have this successful model we've been convincing dealers who've stocked the products for a while to move up to being what we call an Aspen Service Centre. We say why not use the one-litre bottles with every new machine sold and every machine serviced? We find the dealers get happy customers and repeat footfall for return purchases of more fuel – and inevitably further impulse purchases.

"We believe Aspen should be seen as an exciting opportunity to give the customer something new. The dealer is fulfilling their specialist role of giving the customer outstanding service and expert advice – with the reward for them being that customer is going to

remember that extra touch and come back to their shop and recommend them to other people."

Aspen has taken off with dealers around the country quite significantly these past couple of years. When asked how many dealers they boast nowadays, Axel says there are around 350 'pins on the map' due to some dealers being multi-branched. They are still looking for more though, with the North in particular requiring more coverage.

Interestingly, what the company does not do is give dealers exclusive trading areas. "That would be the worst thing we could do with a product like this," believes Axel. "Each garden machinery dealer has their own customers – and that's who they should be selling Aspen to. We've certainly never had the situation where we set up a new dealer near to an existing one and the existing dealer's sales have gone down. That would only



happen if that established dealer wasn't introducing the product to their customers.

"It's a product where if a dealer just concentrates on selling to their own customers, rather than poaching each other's, there's profit to be made for everyone."

Future

After a somewhat rocky start for the fuel in the UK, Axel Hildebrand is confident that the future is bright for Aspen in the UK.

When asked if he is worried that the increased popularity of cordless products has the potential to adversely affect his sales, he is honest.

He says, "The factual answer is yes – if someone buys a battery-powered machine they, of course, can't put petrol in it!

"However, sales of these machines are still relatively small and there is actually a positive for us in people using battery. If a professional has converted to cordless for health and emission reasons, it's likely to be just their smaller chainsaws that they've changed. Therefore, it'll be incredibly noticeable just how bad the noxious emissions are which their bigger saws are spewing out if they are still running on normal fuel.

Hopefully they will then consider using Aspen for their existing two-stroke machines."

So far from dying out, Axel sees great potential for subsequent sales of alkylate fuels. He concludes, "We sold 500,000 litres last year, which is a big growth on the 320,000 of the year before. And we're talking about a market where there could be 50-60 million litres of fuel used per annum – so we're still only scratching the surface." ●

Damage known as 'white rust' caused by ethanol fuels



Axel Hildebrand presenting Barrie Whittock of Garden Kit with the Aspen Service Centre certificate

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FRENCH SHOW'S AWARDS POINT TO THE FUTURE

THE KEY LAUNCHES AT FEBRUARY'S SIMA SHOW IN PARIS WERE COVERED THOROUGHLY BY THE MAINSTREAM FARMING PRESS, BUT THE WINNERS OF THE SHOW ORGANISERS' AWARDS SCHEME RECEIVED LESS EXPOSURE. MARTIN RICKATSON HIGHLIGHTS THE PRODUCTS DEALERS MAY BE SELLING IN THE NEAR AND DISTANT FUTURE

While world prices for farm commodities remain under pressure, with good 2016 harvests in many countries resulting in oversupplied markets, over the past year French farmers have arguably had it even tougher than some of their counterparts in northern Europe, a particularly wet summer and autumn having exacerbated their problems. Unsurprisingly, that has had a knock-on effect for the country's farm equipment trade – with a 2016 value of €5.3bn (£4.6bn), it was down 1.8% on 2015.

In its press kit notes for this year's SIMA show, the organising body noted that, following the difficult harvest, equipment sales had been hit particularly badly post-harvest, falling by 15-20% in the Jul-Dec 2016 period, while almost

40% of manufacturers surveyed were predicting further falls of 3-15% during Jan-Jun 2017.

But despite tough times for France's agricultural economy, February's show attracted 232,000 visitors over five days to its seven vast halls and the 1,780 exhibitors within them. Most of the key international manufacturers had something new on display, but there was little in the way of radical new design in terms of machines available here and now. However, concepts entered for the SIMA awards scheme provided plenty of promise for dealers looking for pointers to where future sales trends may lie.

TYRE SYSTEMS

The only two gold medals given this year were both awarded to tyre companies. Developed in conjunction



Case IH suggests technologies from its Magnum-based Autonomous Concept Vehicle could soon find their way into more conventional machines



with AGCO's combine engineers, Trelleborg's Variable Inflation Pressure (VIP) load-based variable tyre pressure system is designed to automatically alter combine front tyre pressures according to the load in the combine tank, to maintain a constant footprint and therefore minimise impact on the soil and maximise traction. Pressures are raised gradually as the tank load increases, governed by sensors that measure tyre deformation, pressure and temperature. The compressor units are mounted to each individual wheel rim. French maker Dangreville used SIMA to introduce a similar system for its muckspreaders, earning an award scheme 'special mention' in the process.

The second gold medal for tyre developments

was awarded to Michelin, for its EvoBib '2-in-1' field/road tread design, with a conventional tractor tyre chevron pattern incorporating a full central band. When inflated to road pressure, the tyre's central band places a relatively narrow tread on the ground, while when reduced to field/working pressure – as low as 0.6 bar – the entire tread is in ground contact. In this way, the system is said to build on the potential offered by remote tyre inflation systems, allowing the full benefits of both the road and the field elements of the design to be fully exploited.

TRACTORS

The autonomous tractors first revealed by CNH Industrial brands Case IH and New Holland at last autumn's US Farm Progress Show were each awarded a silver medal in the SIMA awards scheme. The two tractors, based on the Magnum/T8 platform – although New Holland showed a further T7-based machine at SIMA – differ in that the Magnum is a cabless machine designed to drive itself between fields only on private roads, whereas the T8 version is cabled, and as such can be driven to the intended field on public roads before being left to fulfil its task. Both machines rely on RTK GPS and radar/LiDAR/sensor technology to ensure safety, with remote observation and control via desktop or tablet computer. At a Case IH press meeting

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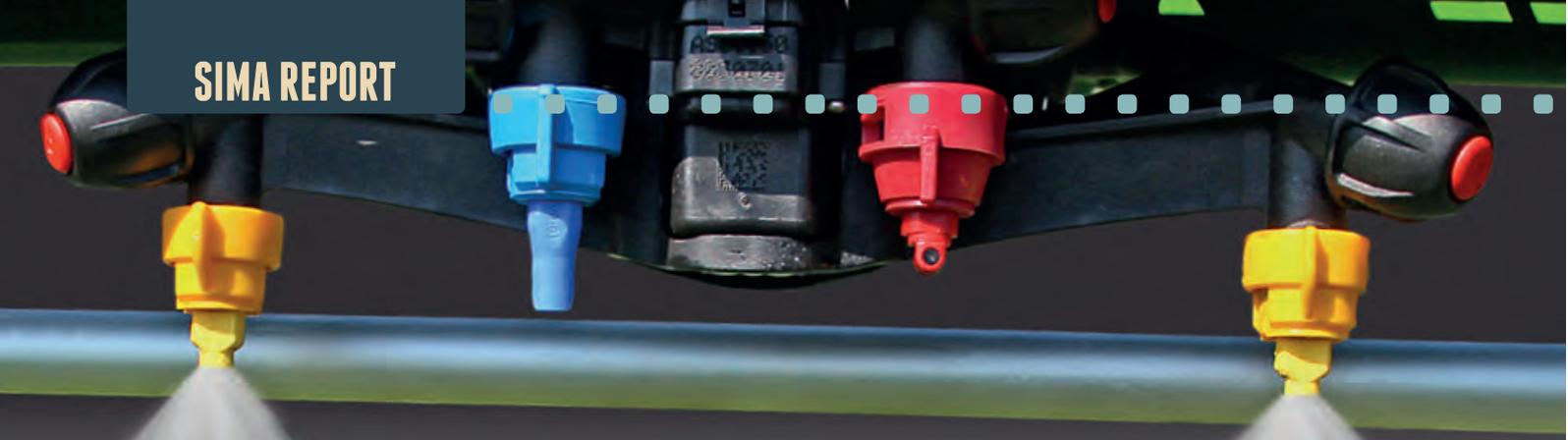
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The Power Behind The Brands



to unveil its version of the concept, speakers pointed towards the likelihood of elements of the machine being incorporated into forthcoming tractors, rather than a leap being taken into immediate production with the model on display. Ultimately, some of the first applications of the technology could be in areas such as orchard and vineyard tractors, where rigidly-formed field/tree systems could allow relatively easy adaptation of tractors for tasks such as spraying.

Electric power was a particular SIMA theme. Having previously dipped a toe in the water, John Deere showed off a further development of its research into battery power with its special mention-earning SESAM (Sustainable Energy Supply for Agricultural Machines) tractor. It produces up to 300kW of electrical energy from two electrical motors via the set of batteries under the bonnet in place of the engine, but drives through a conventional transmission. The PTO and hydraulic pump are also electrically-powered. Weight is similar to that of a comparable diesel-engined model, while the batteries, which have a 4-5 hour recharge time, are reckoned to be good for 3,100 charge cycles and have a three hour life – longer for lighter work.

Deere earned silver for its Smart AutoLube system, controlled by the tractor's CommandCentre display terminal, which allows the driver to choose between auto, custom and manual modes that

govern automatic greasing intervals and quantities depending on tractor usage and loads, as well as the implements used. In addition, targeted lubrication of single maintenance points is possible, and the system also warns if the lubricant level is too low.

AGCO's Massey Ferguson earned a special mention for its Hydraulic Top Link Control system. Designed to maintain implement angle regardless of the slope on which the tractor is operating, its creators point out that a difference of just two degrees can result in a 4m reduction in spread width and disruption to spread pattern when working with a fertiliser spreader. The system compensates not only for working on slopes, but also for the weight of the loaded spreader on the linkage and effects of front axle suspension.

SPRAYERS

Germany's Amazone received a special mention for its HeightSelect option for the firm's trailed sprayer range. Providing automatic height control, the system recognises the nozzle selection made in the AmaSelect sprayer controller, and then lowers the boom automatically to the correct ride height in the field. Horsch took a special mention with its similarly-functioning Autoselect system.

John Deere earned a further special mention for its ExactApply intelligent sprayer nozzle system,



Developed in conjunction with AGCO, Trelleborg's Variable Inflation Pressure (VIP) system automatically alters combine tyre pressures according to load.



John Deere's SESAM project tractor produces up to 300kW of electrical energy from two electrical motors via the set of batteries under the bonnet in place of the engine.

featuring six nozzles on a rotating turret and two electrically-operated liquid valves, allowing switching between two nozzles and independent control of both spray pressure and flow rate at the nozzle. Flow rate is controlled via pulse width modulation for forward speeds of 10-30kph at a constant spraying pressure, or output from 100-300 litres/ha at a constant spraying speed.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

A silver medal winner for another electric drive innovation was Alamo's French hedge trimmer manufacturing arm Rousseau. Its E-Kastor sticks with standard hydraulic ram boom movement, but features a rotor that is powered electrically. It uses the tractor PTO to power a generator – which along with the rotor is water-cooled. As well as being more energy-efficient, the system is claimed to reduce the potential risk for oil pollution when working near watercourses.

Other medal winners came from market-ready concepts announced late last year, including the Dualtech hybrid hydrostatic/powershift transmission for JCB's top-end Loadall telehandlers (silver), and the Shredlage maize chopping technology (special mention) which is now offered exclusively by Claas. The latter also received a special mention for its TurnIn optimised track selection system, which helps automate headland turning based



From French Alamo subsidiary Rousseau, the E-Kastor hedge trimmer sticks with standard hydraulic ram boom movement, but features a rotor that is powered electrically

on driver settings plus the machine's current position, forward speed and steering angle.

Kverneland came away with three special mentions in the scheme. Its 2500 i-Plough features a pivot point at the headstock for improved transport tracking when riding on the land wheel, while its round baler Automatic Feed Control moves the baler position as necessary to ensure an even feed, without input from the tractor driver. Finally, the firm's High Speed Pack system monitors bale wrapper turntable speed to calculate the optimum according to ground conditions during mobile wrapping, to maximise wrap speed while minimising the risk of premature bale ejection. ●

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THROWING OPEN THE DOORS

For shifting stock and trade-ins, linking customers with manufacturers and opening showrooms to a wider audience, little can beat an open day. MARTIN RICKATSON visited eastern England farm, turf and outdoor equipment dealer Ernest Doe's Doe Show for news and views from the firm and its suppliers

Where county shows used to be the places dealers connected with crowds of potential and existing customers, taking along a selection of their wares to be poked and prodded, their metamorphosis into family-based rural fairs has seen their importance as dealership shop windows fall steadily away, albeit with a few exceptions. Whether it's an afternoon/evening do or something lengthier, opening the doors to the dealership and everything it contains has become the preferred and more targeted method of getting current and potential customers in front of goods ranging from tractors to chainsaws.

The Doe Show, the annual early-February three-day event held at the Essex flagship depot and headquarters of eastern England agricultural, construction, turf and outdoor equipment dealer Ernest Doe, is probably the largest of its type, and an annual visit provides a fairly accurate barometer of the state of those industry segments in

south-eastern England. In addition to displays of new equipment from the firm's agricultural, turf, construction and outdoor power equipment suppliers, Ernest Doe puts on working demonstrations spanning tractors and cultivators to excavators and chainsaws. It also gives the opportunity to move on thousands of parts and store items. More than 10,000 farmers, construction workers, professional groundsmen, greenkeepers, arborists and tractor enthusiasts are reckoned to attend, with the firm offering coach transport from its 18 other branches, which stretch from Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Essex down to Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Writing in the company's *Doe News* magazine, issued annually at the show, Managing Director Colin Doe noted in particular the importance of people management to the firm, and the need to celebrate the business contribution made by retiring employees while welcoming the benefits brought to

a long-established company by the new ideas and enthusiasm of their replacements.

"We've had some large shoes to fill with the retirements of Branch Managers Peter Sayers and Stephen Hurren, but David Bush has settled well into his new role, having replaced Peter at Ringmer part-way through 2016, while to help David Gricks, who has moved from Area Sales Manager to Branch Manager within our Fakenham branch, previous incumbent Stephen Hurren has agreed to work on part-time as an Area Sales Manager to support David's transition.

"Les Boniface, Braintree Branch Manager, retired on 31st March this year, after almost 48 years of loyal service with the company while, during 2016, Adam Inward rejoined us as Fulbourn Branch Manager, John McLoone came from Cautrac to take on the Colchester Branch Manager role, Andy Bugg re-joined us at Framlingham as Branch Manager, and Carl Reeder took over as Hurst Green Branch Manager."



Ernest Doe holds its annual open event over three days, attracting around 10,000 people



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Brands on show

On the agriculture side, the firm offers both key CNH brands through distinct networks, branded Ernest Doe and Ernest Doe Power, with farmers thereby able to choose from their preferred New Holland or Case IH tractor or combine platform, with its associated design features, such as twin- or single-rotor combines. This allows both marques to be sold through the one organisation, with each network offering differing complementary franchises alongside them.

In the same way, the Doe Show features separate display buildings for New Holland and Case IH equipment. At this year's show the focus, beyond tractors ranging from the newly-updated T7 line down to Boomer compacts, was a Tech Zone, featuring precision farming equipment including guidance and telematics systems, plus virtual reality goggles that allowed visitors to sit on a seat and 'virtually' drive a New Holland tractor. The Case IH marquee, meanwhile, was this year given an upgrade, and featured a number of recently-introduced tractor models, including the 270-300hp Optum range – the 2017 Tractor of the Year – the revised Stage 4-engined Maxxum line and the new 100-120hp automatic powershift Luxxum.

There was also plenty on show from groundscape and turf machinery suppliers, including



Ernest Doe Power Framlingham Area Sales Manager Graham Goodwin (right) and David Redman of Case IH reported strong enquiry levels at the show

demonstrations by Stihl and Husqvarna, plus new and used domestic and professional mowers from the likes of Ransomes Jacobsen, plus a quad bike off-road demonstration track featuring Kawasaki.

Added to displays of the firm's construction equipment, with franchises including Bomag, Hyundai, Thwaites, New Holland and Manitou, plus working vintage machinery, the organisation behind such an event is clearly comprehensive, but the result is impressive.

Positive yet realistic outlook

"The agricultural industry can tend to dwell on the negatives we face without balancing the view with so many positives we see before us," suggested Graham Parker, Sales Director, writing again in the *Doe News* magazine.

"I'm very much 'glass half full', and tend to feed on the many positive factors of our industry. But I'm also a realist and very focused on the economics of what we all do. Our turnover and profitability is directly linked to farming incomes and the forces that dictate

The Doe Show is also used by the firm as a way of shifting unsold store items ranging from spare parts and tools to workwear and clothing





Alongside its tractors, New Holland's Tech Zone featured precision farming equipment and virtual reality goggles that allowed visitors to 'virtually' drive a New Holland tractor

farming's profitability. In our company sales meetings we often focus on commodity prices as the main factor which drives farmers to spend their hard-earned cash. While wheat prices are not now near their 2012 peak, in December 2016 milling wheat stood at £140/tonne, up 22% year-on-year.

"Rising commodity prices have been driven somewhat by sterling's fall against both the euro and the dollar, but this isn't its only positive

effect. It's boosted by 16% the 'basic payment' subsidy farmers receive for meeting environmental rules, which has been very welcome.

"In our own business, the weaker pound has helped us to export used farm machinery in much greater volumes than we were able to throughout 2015 and early 2016, and in turn, used prices have stabilised – or if not indeed risen. That's of benefit to those looking to

part-exchange used machinery.

"The weaker pound has also had a positive effect on the pricing of the British-built New Holland tractors made at Basildon using British labour and many British components, with only modest price rises.

"Meanwhile, low interest rates are another bonus for the sector at present, with manufacturers offering a plethora of low or even zero interest deals, and offering

“THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY CAN TEND TO DWELL ON THE NEGATIVES WE FACE WITHOUT BALANCING THE VIEW WITH SO MANY POSITIVES WE SEE BEFORE US”

the possibility of locking into fixed payments without the fear of interest rate rises or the banks reducing lending levels. UK farming still boasts a sound balance sheet and has indeed risen every year since 2005. With the ratio of assets to liabilities running at 16:1, according to DEFRA figures, UK farming is one of the soundest UK businesses to invest in and finance companies are falling over themselves to do just that.

“I travel extensively throughout East Anglia, and often think how lucky we are to have such diverse opportunities to boost

farm incomes. In Essex and Hertfordshire, I see huge non-agricultural rental opportunities, equine potential, farm shops and leisure activities. Through Suffolk and up into Norfolk, I see income from coastal activities and tourism and in Cambridgeshire opportunities within the specialist veg growing areas where inputs pose big risk, but equally offer big reward – the farm land and buildings in almost all cases have allowed for diversification into other areas of business, driving additional income and financial stability.

“Digging further, there are many more positives within farming; it seems milk prices are at last on the rise, the pig industry is much happier, and even the poultry sector has maintained growth. World banks predict we will need to produce 50% more food by 2050 if global population growth continues at its current rate. Coupled with expert suggestions that climate change could cut crop yields in some parts of the world by more than a quarter, agriculture must have a good heart for the long-term future. The industry has plenty of positives to offer.” ●



Formerly employed by sprayer maker FarmGem, Cliff Buck is now operating independently, still selling FarmGem sprayers, now alongside Knight units and other products



Suffolk firm Shelbourne Reynolds, which sells its hedge trimmers, diet feeders and other equipment through the Ernest Doe branches, was judged the dealer's best supplier of 2016



New and used turf equipment from Ransomes Jacobsen, Iseki and others formed part of a large grounds care display



Lynx Engineering, now supplier of loaders for the New Holland compact tractor range, will also soon be offering a 40km/hr-rated tractor track system from Dutch partner Zuidberg

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CREDIT INFORMATION

LOCKING THE DOOR BEFORE THE HORSE BOLTS

Sadly too many firms work on trust, only to wonder when bills go unpaid and clients go under what they could have done better, writes SME Digest Editor, *Adam Bernstein*.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but it's not as good as foresight and in a commercial context, those that use credit information services will inevitably lose less than those that don't.

Credit information is, in short, information gathered on a company or an individual to allow the assessment and analysis of a particular credit transaction. It lets sellers learn about their clients to see if they are likely to get paid – on time – by their customers both actual and potential.

There are a number of agencies that hold statistics and financial and corporate information on businesses and individuals. These agencies offer access to their vast databases, some on an ad-hoc basis others via a subscription, to clients wanting a better and more balanced view on their customers, both in the UK and overseas.

From official company data, public records and over 30 other good data sources, agencies hold information on company background, credit scores and credit limits, and risk categories. Depending on the type of organisation record, it will have ownership and financial information on the one hand, or company sizing data on the other.

Some agencies specialise in particular types of information and most cover almost all forms of commercial organisation including sole traders, partnerships and companies, as well as private citizens.

Data held includes company address and registration, turnover, profit, bank address and sort code; director name and home details, personal payment defaults, corporate payment history and financial details, company mortgages and charges, share ownership and so on. Naturally, the amount of detail depends on the service offered by each credit company and the amount the enquirer is prepared to pay.

The value of the service follows when the data becomes structured, verified and analysed.

Services available to firms include credit information reports, credit risk checking software, software links for automated transactional decision-making by a firm's own system, and monitoring and alerts of defined client firms.

It's also possible to have a company sales ledger or debtor book reviewed using the latest payment performance data to identify customers that are at high risk of paying late or defaulting.



Edited by Adam Bernstein

See <http://bit.ly/1QSaYOP>



BUYING FOR BUSINESS

Refitting premises puts a dealer into the shoes of a consumer – after all, they're buying in goods and services for their own use, says Matthew Gough, partner at law firm Eversheds Sutherlands.

The question is, what happens when those purchases subsequently fail to live up to the promises made?

Surprisingly, businesses aren't left high and dry. The starting point is to look at the contract.

First off, small businesses do have a degree of protection under the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977* against unfair contract terms being imposed by larger suppliers. The Act regulates the use of exclusion clauses and whether terms are enforceable depends on those terms being reasonable.

The Act deals with areas such as: breach of statutory implied terms, which covers liability for ownership of the purchase as well as correspondence involving description of the item and satisfactory quality and fitness for purpose; breach of contract where a seller claims that he can contractually deliver something other than that which was reasonably expected of him, or which suggests that he doesn't have to complete the contract; death or personal injury caused by negligence which might apply

where a seller negligently failed to maintain a machine that then killed or injured someone; and negligence that applies where there is, say, resultant physical damage to property.

The key point is that for these to be enforceable the Act says that the terms must be reasonable.

Unfair terms aside, businesses also have protection from misleading advertising through the Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008**. These implement an EU Directive and ban advertising that is misleading while also setting out what is acceptable in relation to comparative advertising.

There are two strands to this – misleading and comparative advertising.

Misleading advertising is that which deceives or is deceptive and which changes buying behaviour. It's illegal.

Comparative advertising, on the other hand, is advertising which identifies a competitor or a product offered by a competitor and compares products accordingly. The law here sets out what is acceptable.

Savvy consumers know that section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974*** makes credit card companies jointly and severally liable for any breach of contract,

or misrepresentation, by a seller. Crucially there is no requirement that the purchase must be for individual or non-business related use. However, if the credit agreement is entered into wholly or mainly for business purposes or the amount loaned exceeds £25,000, then section 75 will not apply.

Credit protection can be useful in other ways. Where a borrower has entered into a credit agreement to fund the purchase of specific goods/services, say a van, that costs between £30,000 and £60,260, and the seller had the manufacturer make the credit agreement, then the borrower may claim against the seller under s75A of the Act.

The same applies if specific goods/services are expressly stated in the credit agreement.

As before, if the credit agreement has been entered into for wholly or mainly business purposes the protection will not apply.

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfair_Contract_Terms_Act_1977

** <https://www.gov.uk/marketing-advertising-law/regulations-that-affect-advertising>

*** <http://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/regulation/section-75-of-the-consumer-credit-act>



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SHOWING OFF

SME Digest editor *Adam Berstein* writes, the appearance of staff can never be underestimated; they are the window into your commercial world. You may have concerns about what you can impose, but you need not be worried.

Clothing is relatively easy to discuss and so long as policies and rules apply to everyone equally, aren't discriminatory, and are based on health and safety grounds you should be on safe ground.

But what of the trend for tattoos and piercing? It's true that they have surged in popularity in recent years, but luckily for the employer, the legal position hasn't quite caught up with public opinion and interestingly under UK law, at present, there is little restriction on an employer's dress code and appearance policy, unless it offends the Equality Act 2010, by way of discrimination, or harassment.

Discrimination is only classed as such for the purposes of the Act if it is based on a "protected characteristic" and these are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It's worth noting that one of the few protected characteristics that can relate to physical appearance is that of disability and "disfigurement". However, Part 2 section 5 of the Equality Act (Disability) Regulations 2010 expressly excludes both tattoos and piercings from this protection.

SME NEWS

FSB warns members over potential business scams

Officials have notified the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) about potential business directory scams. These scams target local businesses, asking them to sign documents and confirm their contact details to be included. Small print in the documents means the firm agree to pay for the directory's services. They then receive demands for payment. While the enforceability of such demands is questionable, FSB advises its members to exercise caution when receiving any such requests and to report them to Action Fraud. www.actionfraud.police.uk

Double penalties for motorists

Motorists caught using a phone while driving will now receive six points on their licence and a £200 fine. New drivers face losing their licence if they use their phones at the wheel under tough measures that came into force on 1st March 2017.

A potential problem area for an employer is the protected characteristic of religion or belief. If a tattoo, or a piercing, forms an integral part of a person's religion or belief, the argument could be made that any blanket ban would be indirectly discriminatory.

However, there are hurdles for employees to overcome.

ACAS has guidance on dress code policies (<http://bit.ly/1vDVwR4>), which includes consideration of tattooing and piercing as well as clothing. It encourages employers to strongly consider the reasons behind any dress code and to have such policies written down and clearly communicated to all staff. Emphasis is placed on policies being reasonable and proportionate.

Employees may cross the line and the only option is dismissal. To stay out of the tribunals the dismissal must be fair. On this the Employment Rights Act 1996 sets out five specific grounds for dismissal for it to be considered as fair, one of which is conduct. Issues of conduct can include the refusal of a lawful request, such as the request to cover any visible tattoos or piercings or the need to follow a dress code. In deciding such a claim, an employment tribunal would consider whether the request was reasonable. This will include consideration of whether the policy itself is reasonable, if it addresses a legitimate business need, and if so, if the effect is proportionate to the outcome it wishes to achieve.

Motorists caught using their mobile twice or accruing 12 points on their licence will face magistrates' court, being disqualified and fines of up to £1,000. New drivers, within two years of passing their test, risk having their licence revoked and lorry or bus drivers can be suspended if caught.

www.gov.uk/government/news/double-penalties-for-motorists-using-mobiles

Tax reform timetable a fantasy?

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) believes the timetable set out by ministers in 2015 for digitising the tax system is now totally unachievable after the government released draft legislation recently. The FSB issued a press release saying the programme cannot begin before 2020 without causing considerable disruption to economic growth, investment and employment.

www.fsb.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/tax-reform-timetable-is-now-a-total-fantasy ●



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NEW DEALERS, NEW SUCCESS

Two new dealerships have started up recently, each with quite different teams behind them – but each are off to a flying start

It is always great to hear about new dealerships forming and getting off to a successful start.

During the first months of 2017 two quite different business scenarios have begun in the agricultural machinery sector. One is run by experienced industry professionals, the other by fresh blood, keen to make their way in the market. Both clearly have in common the belief that the specialist dealer market is one where they can forge a profitable and rewarding business.

Recruitment and succession is a perennial issue for dealers. Either looking for staff to join the

company or indeed looking for someone to take over the business if no family or internal succession plans are in place, can be incredibly difficult and stressful.

Stories like this hopefully go some way to proving that there are enthusiastic and entrepreneurial individuals out there, who can see the potential in this industry.

Battlefield Machinery

Battlefield Machinery, based on the Battlefield Enterprise Park on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, in Shropshire, has recently taken over the premises formerly occupied by dealer Ravenhill. The dealer

officially opened during February for sales, service and parts, two months after Ravenhill closed its operation.

Battlefield Machinery immediately joined forces with Kubota UK, meaning it is the manufacturer's key agricultural dealer covering an area south of Shrewsbury, which includes Telford and right down to Kidderminster.

Richard Evans, Director at Battlefield Machinery Ltd, said, "We were delighted to officially open our doors as the independent dealer for Kubota Agriculture in this area. We believe there's a huge opportunity to target the professional farming market in South Shropshire and surrounding areas, with Kubota's agricultural products.

"Kubota is one of the newer manufacturers in the UK agricultural sector, but it's growing fast and we're hopeful that we can develop together. We're very fortunate to have a wide range of farms on our doorstep to target, from the big arable farms to the East, to the smaller mixed and dairy farms. Teaming up with Kubota was a natural fit for us and we believe its range of tractors, which are designed to really add value to a farmer's business, will be a perfect fit for our customer base."

While Battlefield Machinery is a new name in the agricultural market, its three directors have years of industry experience between them. Richard was a previous Ravenhill employee who has spent the past four years at the Kverneland Group (UK) Ltd (part of



L-R: Meyrick Pope and Richard Evans of Battlefield Machinery Ltd

the Kubota Corporation). Joining Richard is Meyrick Pope, former Branch Manager of Ravenhill, with Philip Poole the third director in the partnership. The new business also employs Grant Williams in sales and has taken on five experienced mechanics from Ravenhill in the workshop along with a service manager and parts supervisor.

Meyrick continued, "Our plan is to utilise the knowledge we have gained from the market and shape our business to provide a service that we know the county wants and needs. Already, in a short space of time, we're building an excellent reputation in the farming community and business activity is extremely positive. We've a great team here and aim to offer a range of quality tractors and equipment and provide an aftersales service that's second to none.

"Our five mechanics, for example, all have a service van so that repairs can be carried out in the field as well as in our modern workshop. We will also provide an emergency service throughout harvest time."

Rob Edwards, Business Development Manager for Kubota Agriculture, added, "Joining forces with Richard, Meyrick and the Battlefield Machinery team is an extremely exciting opportunity. For Kubota, it expands and strengthens our dealer network coverage into this important farming region, which when combined with Battlefield Machinery's service proposition, will enable us to increase our market presence through an excellent product backed up with first-class service.

"We're under no illusions though about the current challenging market conditions, with more and more farmers and contractors now looking for tractor solutions that really do add value to their day-to-day operations. The cost of ownership is therefore absolutely critical."

In addition to Kubota's agricultural range, Battlefield

Machinery also sells Kverneland implements, Marshall Trailers, McConnell hedge cutting equipment and Teagle muck spreaders and toppers.

AL Agri

Two young agricultural engineers have taken control of their careers by forming a new farm machinery dealership to service and repair equipment, and supply new tractors and implements.

AL Agri, based on farm premises close to Forfar, has been set up by long-time friends Andy Mitchell and Liam Wylie, who started their careers together as apprentice workshop technicians.

The pair secured agreements to supply McCormick tractors and Pöttinger grass and arable equipment to underpin their new venture, and they also now handle Abbey livestock and grassland equipment, Albutt loader attachments, INO flail cutters and Carré harrows and cultivators.

Having learned their craft in the workshops of a large machinery dealership in the area, the AL Agri partners went their separate ways, Liam spending time in New Zealand travelling and working for a dealer there, while Andy shifted across to the sales team.

"After Liam came home, and having spent 12 years in the machinery business, we felt the time was right to work together again and start our own business," said Andy Mitchell. "It's difficult to start up as a one-man band because if you're busy on repairs and servicing all the while, there's no time for following up sales leads.

"By working together, we can both spend time in the workshop or attending to equipment on-farm, but as the business develops, I'll be free to devote a couple of days a week or more to sales."

Bob Bain, Scotland Area Sales Manager at McCormick distributor AgriArgo UK, said, "The new dealership is representing our



AL Agri business partners Andy Mitchell (left) and Liam Wylie

McCormick tractor range in Angus and north Perthshire, providing parts and service support as well as supplying new tractors.

"Andy and Liam's energy, enthusiasm and complementary skills should stand them in good stead as they work to establish the business," he added.

"We're delighted that they got off to a good start by retailing one of the first of the new 160hp McCormick X7.650 Pro Drive tractors in Britain, and a 177hp McCormick X7.670 Pro Drive.

Since opening their doors, Andrew and Liam say they have been "bowled over" by how busy they have been and how much support they have received from the local farming community.

"We have a very personal approach, which people appreciate, but it also helps that we're offering really good machinery at this early stage of the business," said Andrew.

"The McCormick range offers so much for farmers in terms of efficiency and value for money, and the people behind McCormick have a really forward-thinking attitude – they want to work with farmers in the way that Liam and I do." ●

COMMON CREDIT CARD SCAM HITTING DEALERS

Penn Lawn Mowers' story prompts dealers to offer advice

Back in March, the *Service Dealer Weekly Update* ran a story entitled *Dealer hit by card fraud following recent break-in*.

The story concerned Ringwood-based dealership Penn Lawn Mowers, which had a wall at its dealership smashed in, with thousands of pounds worth of chainsaws stolen.

Not long after this traumatic event (but before it suffered a damaging ram-raiding incident) the company subsequently fell victim to a particular type of credit card fraud.

Unfortunately it turned out that Penn Lawn Mowers was far from alone in being taken in by this hoax – many other dealers around the country have also been hoodwinked by it at one time or another.

Dawn Smith, who owns the business along with her husband Roland, contacted *Service Dealer* in the hope of warning other dealers about the hoax.

Dawn said, “I would like to bring other dealers attention to a card scam that we have been hit with – to the tune of £2,500.

“How it works is the person phones up to order the goods, in our case chain saws, and pays by card over the phone. They then send in a guy to collect them.

“Weeks later we have received charge back letters from the bank saying that the customer knows nothing about the purchase.

“It now comes to light that we are not alone in this and other dealers have also been hit by the same guys. The criminals have managed to get the card details

from the card holder by saying they are from Sky or BT and that their package is wrong. The customer then gives them all the details from the card.

“The sad thing is that the card holder gets the money back but us poor retailers are the ones that suffer the loss.”

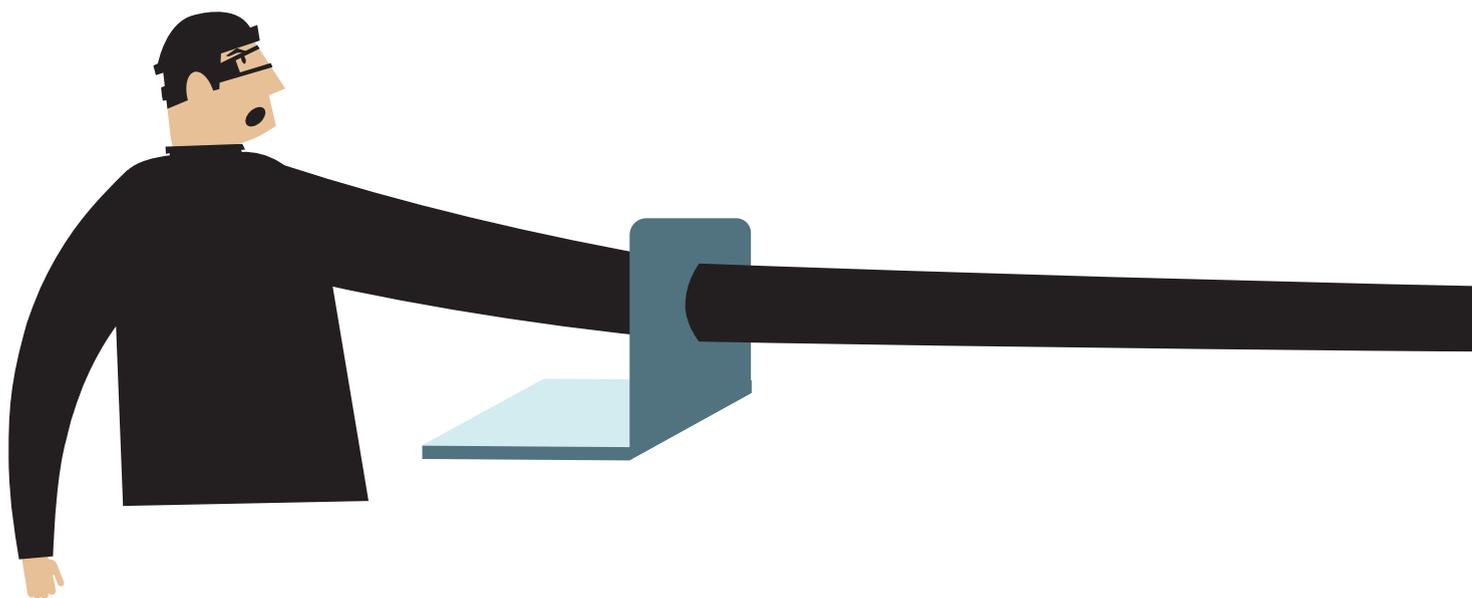
Dawn’s story prompted many dealers to get in touch with *Service Dealer* to let us know how a similar fraud was either pulled or was attempted to be pulled on them.

Below is a selection of comments we received, which hopefully can go some way to arming other dealers with the knowledge they need not to get caught themselves:

Simply Machinery Ltd, Letchworth

We had the same thing happen to us. We lost £3,500 at the end of last year selling used machinery. Same situation, but the vehicle which arrived was a totally independent courier company. This year we have lost over £8,000 in online orders. The buyer does a transaction online from our website but uses a fake address, we then post the machine out and two to four weeks later the card company takes the money back and we are left at a loss with no machines.

My advice is to only sell over the counter and make sure that the customer pays chip and pin – that way you are covered.



Lawncare Garden Machinery, Wallingford

We had the same thing happen to us a few years back. We no longer take card payment over the phone from people that we don't know.

Albany Farm & Garden Machinery, Isle Of Wight

We had a similar situation earlier this year. A person rang saying he had won a contract locally and wanted to buy machines for the local contractor to collect. A £1,400 order was paid up front with a debit card. Before we delivered, he rang back to ask to cancel the order as we are on the Isle of Wight and he thought he was dealing with Portsmouth (similar postcode) but if we paid him back £1,200 and kept £200 for our inconvenience that would be OK.

That immediately rang alarm bells, so we double checked with our card company (£3.00 well spent) and sure enough the card had been reported missing and the address did not match the details given. In our case we had retained the goods and never heard from them again. We reported the matter to the police who said no crime had been committed.

We were lucky and are now very suspicious of any CNP transactions. We are also looking at a new card provider which gives us online access to card checking and if you have the authorisation codes you are protected.

Ian Gillespie Garden Machinery Specialists, Lancashire

This happened to us a few years back. We don't sell over the phone now other than to regular customers. However, the thing to do is when the man arrives to pick up the goods, which they do quickly, is to cancel the original transaction and ask him to put the card and pin into the card machine. Works well watch them leave!

Groundcare, Leeds

We had a similar thing happen three years ago. A person emailed us for price and details of a £10,000 machine and gave the email address of carriers to contact for a price for delivery to Shetland. They gave us a price which we added to the cost of the machine and emailed him back. He then phoned and paid by card and asked us to arrange for payment to the carriers. We contacted the carriers and they asked us to pay by money transfer as they did not take card payments. We did this and prepared the machine for shipping.

Next we had a call from our card handling company to say they suspected the card payment was fraud and suggested we did not send the goods until further checks could be completed. We then had a phone call from the haulage company to say they were arranging for another company to pick up the machine within 30 minutes. We told them it was going nowhere and he got very angry. We then checked the shipping address and found it did not exist – neither did the haulage company. We tried to get our money back for the haulage but without success. We had to refund the card money and all we can say is we lost a lot less than we would have done if we had let the machine go.

Noel Ogden Mowers, Warrington

We had the same several years ago and lost £1,750. Last two years we have had similar phone calls for our most expensive machines. I took their number and gave it to the police who did nothing and I also phoned our local competitors to warn them that they were at it again. We have never taken payments over the phone since, except for existing customers. ●



PRODUCTS

CONTACT:

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@ steve@servicedealer.co.uk

COMMERCIAL

CONTRACTOR CAN COMPLETE 3N1 TASKS

New Masport model from FGM Claymore



Designed for a heavy duty workload or commercial use, the new 3 speed, self-propelled 3N1 Masport Contractor from FGM Claymore is powered by a 850EX, 190cc engine.

The 52cm/21" Quick Cut blade can tackle overgrown grass, packing cuttings into a 80L fabric catcher.

The cutting system is a 4 swing back blade set-up with the machine catching, mulching or rear discharging depending on the situation.

The company says for a large machine, it is easy to manoeuvre whilst mowing around obstacles and into smaller spaces.

Features include single lever height adjuster, zone start and heavy duty components such as reinforced handle system, control cables and axle system, large aluminium wheels and front bumpers that protect the deck and engine.

This machine is covered by an extended professional warranty.

DOMESTIC

NEW SMARTSTOW FROM TORO

Now featuring rear-wheel drive

Toro has announced the new SmartStow mower – the first petrol mower that can be folded and stored vertically without having to drain the fuel and oil.

The 20961 model now has rear-wheel drive, an Automatic Drive System and Recycle on Demand as standard. The Automatic Drive System automatically matches the mower's speed to the user's walking pace, while a Traction Assist handle enables improved control on difficult terrain.

Traction is further enhanced with the introduction of rear-wheel drive.

The Recycle on Demand feature allows the user to switch between collecting, cutting or recycling clippings at the pull of a lever.

The company says these new features add to the unique ability of the SmartStow to store vertically with no petrol or oil spills.

The mower features a 55cm steel cutting deck.

The SmartStow 20961 model comes with a two-year full coverage warranty and has a recommended retail price of £629.



LANDINI GETS ACTIVE

New four- and six-cylinder tractors

A new line of tractors that Landini says combine the best features of 'mechanical' and 'electronic' models has been introduced.

The new Active models join the line-up between the four-cylinder 6L Series and full-spec Dynamic versions of the four-cylinder Landini 6 Series and six-cylinder 7 Series.

While the advanced Dynamic models come with a seat-mounted control console, electric spool valves, full headland management and 9,300kg rear three-point linkage, the Active versions have fewer electronic features to suit farmers and others wanting a simpler but still very capable tractor.

In the 7 Series, Active specification is available on the 165hp 7-175 Roboshift with +10hp boost for pto and transport applications, and on a new addition to the range, the 7-160 Roboshift.

With 152hp at rated speed and 160hp max output, this new model caters for operators wanting a tractor at this power level with a six-cylinder engine installed in a cast chassis for extra stability with heavy implements.

In the four-cylinder 6 Series, there are three Active models with maximum power outputs of 143hp, 160hp and 166hp, the latter boosting to 176hp for pto and transport work.

How the models compare

The Landini 6L tractors of 143hp, 163hp and 176hp have a 'mechanical' specification with, as base equipment, a lever-operated Synchro Shuttle 18x18

transmission, which can be upgraded with an electric Power Shuttle and additional speeds, including a three-step powershift.

Standard equipment includes two-speed pto, manual spool valves coupled to an 87-litre/min gear pump, and a comfortable cab installed on iso mounts.

Choose the new Active versions of the 6/7 Series tractors instead and drivers get to work in the spacious Lounge four-post cab with optional hydraulic suspension available to complement the beam axle suspension that can also be added to the specification.

Manual spool valves feature again, set at a convenient angle on the side console, and while the four-cylinder 6 Series tractors have a gear pump with 88-litre/min flow, this can be changed for a higher capacity flow-on-demand pump delivering up to 123-litres/min, which is standard on the six-cylinder 7 Series Active models.

In both cases, the main pump is complemented by a 44-litre/min element dedicated to steering and ancillary controls.

Also standard is the Roboshift semi-powershift transmission, its six ranges and four powershift steps giving a 24x24 configuration (40x40 with creep option) operated by buttons on a multi-function joystick located on a new side console.

Semi- and fully-auto modes for the Roboshift transmission can be used for optimum hands-free speed control in field and road applications, and the four-speed pto provides 'power' and 'economy' gearing for 540 and 1,000rpm shaft speeds.

The 6-145 Active with 135hp-rated speed output, 143hp max, is one of five new Active specification tractors to join the line-up



PRO Z SERIES DEVELOPED BY CUB CADET

Professional zero-turn mowers

Cub Cadet has reaffirmed its commitment to the professional market with the launch of a completely redesigned Pro Z Series of commercial, zero-turn mowers.

The Pro Z Series line-up launches with the Z1 137 and Z5 152, with each machine designed to meet the specific needs of professional landscape contractors. The Pro Z1 137 is equipped with a 137cm welded cutting deck and can cover 5,000m²/h with speeds of 9.5mph. The Z5 152 has a 152cm cutting deck and with a 10mph cutting speed, can cover up to 6,000 m²/h.

The company says both machines have been developed with 'extreme strength' at their core. The Z5 152 has been designed and built with the industry's only Triple seven-gauge deck, which features three layers of seven-gauge steel, plus a 1/4-inch leading edge and 5/16-inch side reinforcements. From frame to front yoke, the Pro Z Series is designed to stand up to the demands of everyday professional use.

In addition to this, the full-length laser-cut steel

frame and 5/16-inch steel rear bumper are protected with a durable e-coating. This precise, multi-stage process provides automotive-grade corrosion defence. High-back suspension seats with lumbar support and padded armrests come as standard.

The Synchro Steer steering system delivers manoeuvrability and control, with smooth, precise handling and increasing hillside stability.

The Z1 137 is equipped with an Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) engine by Kohler, which makes the machine extremely fuel efficient.

The Z5 152 has high-torque commercial transmission paired with a high-horsepower, commercial-grade Kawasaki engine, working seamlessly together to provide optimal and consistent blade tip speed.

Nick Hills, General Manager for Cub Cadet UK, says: "We're dedicated to working with the professional sector, and believe that we've created products that will prove to be, not only popular, but indispensable to the market."



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DUH551



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DUB361



Twin 18V Brushless Line Trimmer
DUR364L



Twin 18V Chainsaw
DUC353



Twin 18V Charger
DC18RD



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DLM380



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22 Minute Charge

Unbeatable charge times

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DOMESTIC

CYLINDRICAL COBRAS

New walk-behind electric and hand mowers

Cobra has launched two new cylinder machines – a walk-behind electric and a hand mower.

Hand-powered machines remain popular, says the company, and the HM38C offers a 15" (38cm) cutting width. Split rollers ensure beautiful stripes and the five hardened steel blades can be quickly and easily adjusted to four different cutting heights.

Weighing in at just 8.5kg, the HM38C is light and easily manoeuvrable, allowing intricate cutting patterns to be achieved.

For gardeners preferring a mains electric system the new Cobra CM32E will meet all requirements. The 12.5" (32cm) machine features a 400W motor, 12m cable and four-blade diamond ground steel blades. It offers a simple height of cut adjustment between 12mm and 42mm. The split rear roller ensures clear stripes. It weighs 10kg and is easily manoeuvrable around beds and edges.

Both the hand and electric machines are easily stored. The CM32E is priced at £99.99 and the HM38C is £54.99.



HM38C

IPAD CONTROLLED BRUSHCUTTER FROM ETESIA

New SKD ExxDrive

Etesia's Attila mower is now available as a fully automatic robotic mower with the use of an iPad.

The SKD ExxDrive has been developed with partners FeBroLift GmbH and is a completely new type of external operating concept that allows the user to operate the device reliably and precisely by means of a gesture-controlled operation via an app on an iPad - without having to sit on the mower itself.

All functions, which the device contains serially, can also be accessed via the tablet, including the permanent use of the 'deadman button' during use which ensures safety at all times. If an emergency does occur, the device can be switched off via a secure emergency stop function.

The company says the biggest advantage of the SKD ExxDrive is that it can be fitted with a dual wheel kit and be used on steep slopes where mowing work can be carried out with a low risk to the operator, who can stay at a safe distance and avoid risks of being injured, while still ensuring a high productivity in difficult terrain.

The unit retains all of the features of a standard SKD mower including an 85cm cutting width and cutting decks with steel reinforcements specifically designed to withstand different mowing conditions for a long period. ●



ipad remote



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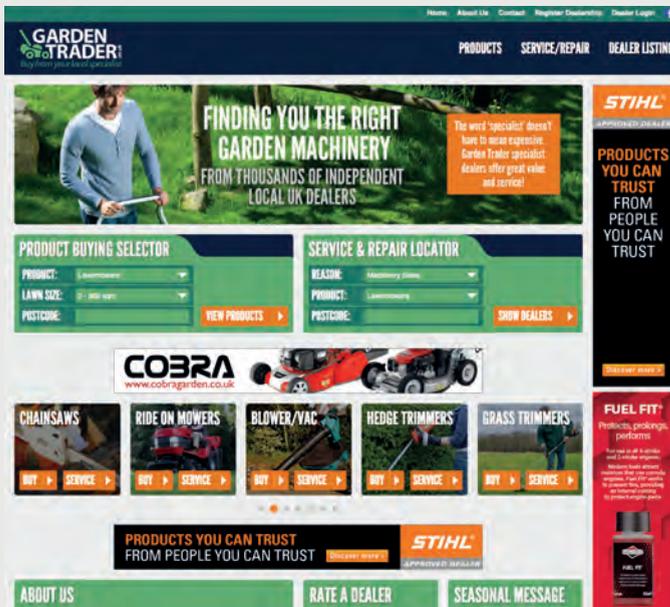
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ARE YOU ONBOARD?

February saw the launch of Garden Trader, the nation's only independent website to promote servicing dealers. Already we have seen hundreds of dealers in the UK register and activate their accounts to take advantage of a free listing on this dedicated website. This website not only helps the customer with ideas on products and services but will also identify their 5 nearest specialist dealers. Garden Trader is helping dealers collectively take on the sheds and online retailers, giving customers access to

the best advice and support with their garden machinery.

The site is designed to promote the whole industry in the UK, channelling customers to you the specialist dealer. If you are not signed up with this new and exciting initiative and have a specialist garden equipment offering, then it is not too late for the season. Online registration takes just a couple of minutes and could really help raise the profile of your dealership and all free of charge this year.



WHAT IS GARDEN TRADER?

- The only online platform designed around the consumer's needs, which will be completely independent.
- Garden machinery selector - the consumer answers a few simple questions and they are then guided towards a suitable selection of products, this will then point them towards their local dealer of their selected brand.
- Service and Repair centre, guiding customers to the appropriate local dealership after a couple of questions.
- Advertising for the manufacturers. Finally, a dedicated site where the well-known dealer brands can be promoted to the masses.
- Information and awareness centre, consumers will be able to learn about and understand not only the products you sell but also the industry and how you work.
- Dealer directory, as well as you being in front of the consumers when they select a product or service, we will also add you to our general search in our dealer directory.
- Rate my dealer. You the independent garden machinery dealer offers a fantastic service and provide a wealth of knowledge to the consumer. The consumer will be able to feedback to the site on a star rating basis.
- All associated dealerships will be able to add the Garden Trader accredited stamp of approval.
- National online advertising through Google and Social Media.
- Pricing will be at full retail, for price point identification and no discounts or offers will be shown on the Garden Trader site.

**TO BECOME A SELECTED DEALER
EMAIL RON@GARDENTRADER.CO.UK
OR REGISTER THROUGH THE WEBSITE**

EVENTS 2017

MAY 2017

- 1** North Somerset Show, Wraxall, North Somerset
www.nsas.org.uk
- 10-13** Balmoral Show, Belfast
www.balmoralshow.co.uk
- 13-14** Nottinghamshire County Show, Newark, Nottinghamshire
www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com
- 23-27** Chelsea Flower Show, London
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 18-20** Devon County Show, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, Devon
www.devoncountyshow.co.uk
- 24-25** Grassland & Muck, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
www.grasslandevent.co.uk
- 27-28** Hertfordshire County Show, Redbourn, Hertfordshire
www.hertsshow.com
- 29** Surrey County Show, Guildford, Surrey
www.surreycountyshow.co.uk/surrey-county-show
- 31-1/6** Staffordshire County Show, Stafford, Staffordshire
www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show
- 31-1/6** Suffolk County Show
www.suffolkshow.co.uk
- 31-3/6** Royal Bath & West Show
www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show

JUNE 2017

- 2-4** Gardening Scotland, Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh
www.gardeningscotland.com
- 4** Rutland Show, Oakham, Rutland
www.rutlandcountyshow.com
- 8-10** Royal Cornwall Show, Wadebridge, Cornwall
www.royalcornwallshow.org
- 8-10** South of England Show, Ardingly, West Sussex
www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show
- 14-15** Cereals 2017, Boothby Graffoe, Nr Lincoln, Lincolnshire
www.cerealsevent.co.uk
- 15-18** BBC Gardeners' World Live, Birmingham NEC
www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com
- 16-18** Three Counties Show, Malvern, Worcestershire
www.threecounties.co.uk/threecounties

- 20-21** Royal Cheshire County Show, Knutsford, Cheshire
www.cheshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 21-22** Lincolnshire Show, Grange-de-Lings, Lincolnshire
www.lincolnshireshowground.co.uk/whats-on/event/lincolnshire-show-2017
- 21-24** House & Garden Festival, Olympia London
www.houseandgardenfestival.com
- 22-25** Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh
www.royalhighlandshow.org
- 25** Derbyshire County Show, Elvaston, Nr Derby, Derbyshire
www.derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 25** Royal Isle of Wight County Show, Newport, Isle of Wight
www.riwas.org.uk
- 28-29** Royal Norfolk Show, Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk
www.royalnorfolkshow.co.uk

JULY 2017

- 1** Monmouthshire Show, Monmouthshire Showground, Monmouth
www.monmouthshow.co.uk
- 1-2** Smallholders & Country Show, South Of England Showground, Ardingly
www.smallholdersshows.co.uk
- 2** Cranleigh Show
www.cranleighshow.co.uk
- 4-9** Hampton Court Palace Flower Show
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-hampton-court-palace-flower-show
- 7-9** Kent County Show, Kent Showground, Detling, Kent
www.kentshowground.co.uk
- 8** Newport Show, Newport, Shropshire
www.newportshow.co.uk
- 11-13** Great Yorkshire Show, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate
www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk
- 15** Camborne Show, Gwealavellan Farm, Nr Coombe, Camborne, Cornwall
www.camborne-show.org.uk
- 24-27** Royal Welsh Show, The showground, Llanellwedd
www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh-show
- 19-23** RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-flower-show-tatton-park
- 22** Mid Devon Show, Knightshayes, Tiverton, Devon
www.middevonshow.co.uk

- 25-27** New Forest & Hampshire County Show, The Showground, New Park, Brockenhurst, Hampshire
www.newforestshow.co.uk
- 28-29** Border Union Show, Springwood Park, Kelso, Scottish Borders
www.buas.org
- 28-30** The Game Fair, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire
www.thegamefair.org

AUGUST 2017

- 2** North Devon Show
www.northdevonshow.com
- 2-3** Bakewell Show
www.bakewellshow.org
- 3** Honiton Agricultural Show
www.honitonshow.co.uk
- 3-6** Countryfile Live, Blenheim Palace
www.countryfilelive.com
- 5** Garstang Show
www.garstangshow.org
- 5** Emley Show
www.emleyshow.co.uk
- 5** Dumfries Agricultural Show
www.dumfriesshow.co.uk
- 11-12** Shrewsbury Flower Show
www.shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk
- 13** Ripley Show
www.ripleyshow.co.uk
- 15-16** Anglesey County Show
www.angleseyshow.org.uk
- 15-17** Pembrokeshire County Show
www.pembsshow.org
- 16** Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show
www.gillshaftshow.co.uk
- 31** Bucks County Show
www.buckscountyshow.co.uk



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WHO'S TO BLAME?

What is the industry doing to attract fresh blood?

In the last issue of *Service Dealer* dealers were asked to name any key issues that are impacting on the service side of their business.

Surprise, surprise, the old chestnut of finding qualified technicians was raised.

This situation has been going on for decades. It has come about from years of a lack of a high-profile attraction to the industry.

Many youngsters are more attracted to university. Let's make no mistake though, potential applicants are out there, but are they being nurtured? Gone are the days when they were confined to the 'bench' – nowadays they need variation in their daily routine and that's why some companies are recognising the need to give some slack to youngsters who are bored with the same routine every day.

It's said that responsibility is key in the development of any employee. Being given duties and responsibility builds self-esteem, confidence and the will to do well, not only for themselves, but also for the company – and most importantly that comes through to the customer.

Being self-motivated is one thing, being motivated in the job is another!

There is a company in the industry run by a go-ahead owner who obviously thinks out of the box as he has taken a different view on how to attract new blood into his company.

The approach is to 'sell' the job to a prospect on the basis that there is a future in the industry and that they will be subject to daily variety in the work place. He has two youngsters, both of whom were employed as apprentice mechanics. Intelligent lads, they are going to college and are encouraged to attend manufacturers' service courses plus any sales or business-oriented seminars.

Trust and responsibility plays a big part in the deal; both are given the opportunity to be involved in sales, generally looking after customers beyond the workshop and they are trusted with taking the money and learning the commercial aspects of running a business.

These lads are responding to and enjoying the trust and responsibilities bestowed upon them. They're having fun in a friendly but extremely professional atmosphere.

in recent years there haven't been enough youngsters being attracted to the trade and trained?

First impressions are everything: it takes a customer 20 seconds to decide whether they could do business with a dealership. Does the same apply to good quality applicants? Are they thinking: "would it be good to work here in these conditions with these people?"

First they have to respond to the advert or request for prospects.

IT'S SAID THAT RESPONSIBILITY IS KEY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY EMPLOYEE

What is the industry doing to attract applicants? Is the industry doing enough to up its underrated profile? Time and time again it's been raised by BAGMA and the AEA.

Should manufacturers be doing more to attract youngsters into the trade? Why don't the top manufacturers put their heads together and start a high-profile recruitment drive on behalf of the dealer network?

After all, they are expecting dealers nationwide to look after their end-user customers who have bought online or through a non-specialist. Maybe they could invite youngsters to visit their factories to see the real enormity and professionalism of the industry they would be joining? Maybe they could even sponsor exceptional potential talents?

Is the real reason there is a shortage of mechanics because

Is it time to start selling the trade in an upbeat manner in the advert or during the phone conversation, making sure the message comes across that the job will be fun and interesting to suit their talents and aspirations?

After all, if the dealer has expectations and aspirations, why shouldn't the prospect?

So, who's to blame for the lack of interest in the industry? Time to think on! ●



JIM GREEN



MOW THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

ROGUE ONE: A CHAIN SAW STORY

Darth Vader carved for actor who played him, using Makita saws

In the first of the *Star Wars* 'stand alone' anthology films which was released at the end of 2016, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, the iconic role of Darth Vader was played by Welsh sporting hero, turned-actor, Spencer Wilding.

In taking this role Spencer had to maintain a contractual silence, even being unable to confirm to his own family that he was acting the part until the film was finally released.

Ian Murray meanwhile, is a chainsaw sculptor, carving many varied subjects from timber as commissioned works. Both Ian and Spencer live in North Wales and are active communicators through social media. When Ian showcased

a recent sculpture via Twitter he got an immediate tweet from Spencer commissioning a life-size interpretation of the Dark Lord of the Sith who he had just portrayed.

"Carving Darth Vader for the star himself was a bit daunting," reports Ian. "I've owned a Makita 3500 chainsaw for three or four years now and it works very hard in my sculpting."

Ian's local dealer, Jonathan Morris of Morris Garden Machinery, has encouraged him over recent years. "His sculptures show exceptional talent and we're delighted that he uses Makita saws," Jonathan said. "We're a Makita-approved PDI dealer and sales have expanded tremendously

through us in the past three years."

Spencer Wilding is delighted with Ian's interpretation of Darth Vader. "When I saw Ian's work online I immediately commissioned his rendition of my character. I'm delighted to have this unique sculpture."



Spencer Wilding and Ian Murray with the Darth Vader sculpture

DIGGER FOR VICTORY

A HERO'S WELCOME

Welder turned FA Cup giant killer returns to JCB

Former JCB digger-maker turned FA Cup hero Matt Rhead was given a rousing reception when he retraced his footsteps on the production line where he worked for almost a decade.

Matt, 32, of Stoke-on-Trent,



Lincoln City's Matt Rhead

was a popular figure at the JCB Earthmovers factory in Cheadle, Staffordshire, where he worked before leaving to become a professional footballer in 2012.

Five years later he hit the national headlines after being named man of the match in a game which saw his team Lincoln City become the first non-league side to reach the quarter finals of the FA Cup in 103 years by beating Premier League team Burnley 1-0.

Just days before Lincoln lost to Arsenal 5-0 in the Quarter Final, Matt returned to JCB Earthmovers

to a hero's reception from former colleagues.

Matt said: "It was great to be back at JCB to meet my mates I spent almost 10 years working with. I had some very good times there and when I was offered a professional footballing contract it was a dream come true, but leaving JCB was also a very difficult decision because I really enjoyed the job. I was taught to work hard and to continue learning and that has stood me in good stead for my footballing career." ●



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