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Grimme Newsletter
Spring 2014

Delayed Planting Tests The Supply Chain

Hopefully, the worst of the wet winter weather is behind us. However, although some areas are able to plant others are still well behind. We asked Truro Farm Machinery how Cornish growers are coping and checked with Grimme UK exactly how delayed planting is testing the supply chain

Kevin Andrews of Truro Farm Machinery believes as little as 5% of the Cornish crop is in the ground and that planting of early potatoes is up to six weeks behind.

“A lot of growers with contracts to fulfil have real concerns about being able to deliver,” he says. “I even heard of one grower who has planted 70 acres of potatoes by hand. Others have opted to plough up grass leys where the ground is dryer in an attempt to find land that can be planted.”

Although some growers have invested in additional machines to guarantee a fast start when conditions improve, working in such difficult conditions is likely to lead to breakdowns and a corresponding call for additional parts and workshop support.

Grimme has responded by ensuring dealer shelves are well stocked with spares and that its own service engineers, as well as those

throughout the dealer network, are professionally trained and equipped to cope with the extra work. “It’s all adding up to being a tough year for our potato growers but we will be making every effort to help them keep going and achieve their targeted acreages,” says Kevin. “At the end of the day, their success is important to our business too.”

Andrew Starbuck – Group Sales Manager for Grimme UK sees quite a mixed picture “We have seen a major increase in calls for after sales support in the South West – undoubtedly because of the pressure growers are under for early plantings. However, the news isn’t all bad. Planting of second earlies in Cheshire is going to plan and in Suffolk planting is on schedule.”

“We know from experience that when the pressure is on for growers their machinery, particularly destoners and planters, has to work at the upper tolerance levels but wet weather has a significant impact on wearing parts.” He says, “Wet soil becomes very abrasive – especially the heavier sands in Cornwall.”

“Our objective is to have the appropriate infrastructure in place to ensure that last minute decisions to increase planting capacity can be absorbed into our current workload,” he says.

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Rexor 620 Self Propelled Harvester



The Real Grimme GL860 Planter In Action

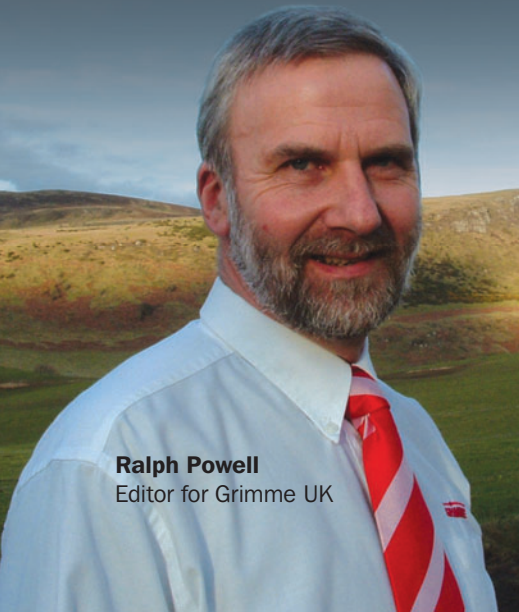
Welcome

Our cover story reveals how some growers have had to contend with the worst weather in living memory. Yet, in spite of the conditions, they are getting on with the job. Our aim is to ensure that the after sales support they need is there when the calls come. Our centre spread details how Grimme is leading the way in technician and management training.

There are items too on other types of Grimme machinery with which many growers will be less familiar. We feature a sugar beet contractor who thinks his Rexor harvester is the best yet. It's the same for a professional vegetable grower who chose ASA-LIFT, which is another big name in the Grimme stable.

I hope you find our latest read not just interesting but encouraging too.

P.S. Grimme UK will be at Cereals 11 – 12th June and at The Royal Highland Show 19 – 22nd June as usual and we look forward to welcoming you there.



Ralph Powell
Editor for Grimme UK

Rexor Fits The Bill!

Modern contracting businesses need high output modern machinery, reasons Alan Witham. “You need to provide customers with a service which is efficient and cost effective.”

SW Witham & Sons is based at The Forge, Blacksmith Lane, Erpingham, Norfolk. Alan, his brother Stephen and their father Tom Witham provide a wide range of services all year round. By far the most important is sugar beet harvesting, which also calls for the largest investment

Operating in the North Walsham to Wells area, their Grimme Rexor 620 self-propelled, 6 row harvester lifts in excess of 2600 acres of beet each year.

Alan likes the Rexor, “It has the power, the harvesting capacity and, despite its size, its ability to make tight headland turns needs to be seen to be believed - its turning radius is just 7.5m no more than some saloon cars!”

“The powered Opperl wheels perform well in the lighter, stony soils in the area. “They lift the beet cleanly and gently without extra soil being pressed on them and they handle all the stones without a lot of fuss.”

He adds that the ability to alter the speed of the lifting wheels as a ratio of the harvester's forward speed is particularly useful, plus they can be reversed to clear blockages and also have hydraulic deviation of up to 90mm should they encounter a large stone or similar obstacle.

The flail topper unit, unlike some designs that deposit tops to the side in a single row, places them between the beet rows so that they are incorporated into the soil and prevent the striping which can occur in following crops.

The Rexor weighs almost 48 tonnes when full. Ground compaction is reduced by distributing the weight evenly across its four wheels and by allowing the articulated chassis to run in a crab position to place the rear wheels in a different track to the front. The use of hydraulic wheel motors rather than mechanical shaft drives does away with axles and creates greater space for crop cleaning. “This is particularly useful at the front and allows the lifted beet to enter the machine on a much wider cleaning web after they have left the full width roller cleaning unit,” he says.



“The configuration also means my tyres are always running on virgin ground.”

The six-cylinder 490hp Mercedes engine achieves maximum transport speed at just 1300rpm, which saves on fuel and for road transport only the rear wheels are driven – which reduces wear on the front tyres too.

In the field the beet is cleaned by three turbine units each of which can have their speed and the height of their guide grids adjusted from the cab.

“It is also possible to set the cleaning turbines so their speed is altered automatically to suit throughput,” he says. “The whole lifting and cleaning process is designed to be thorough and gentle.”

“ It has the power, the harvesting capacity and, despite its size, its ability to make tight headland turns needs to be seen to be believed. ”

“The bunker has a capacity of 22 tonnes, so it's possible to park trailers on the headland and unload at the end of a row,” he says. “A nice touch is the use of a fan roller in the 1.8m wide unloader web which makes a final separation of any loose soil as the beet make their way to the trailer.”

Cab comfort, visibility and touch-screen controls are outstanding with some important operator aids such as the Visual Protect Camera System.

In good conditions, working at speeds of 7.5 - 9.5kph, Alan can lift over 40 acres of beet per day – around 1200 tonnes.

“Overall, I think Grimme has got it about right with the Rexor,” he concludes. “Right down to the smaller details like the autolube system, the lights in the tool box and in other key places you need to check before you start when it's often still dark.”

News & Events



We have a winner!

Winner of the Golden Web Competition at British Potato, November 2013 – A F Dowson,

Alan Corney of A F Dowson was presented with the web by Russell Lister at Grimme UK's Swineshead premises in February 2014.

New Scale Model

The Grimme 860 Compacta Toy (pictured below) is a superb replica of the real thing.

Available from all Grimme dealers - be sure to get yours!



Grimme CS150/170 XL Destoner

Introduced at Lamma 2014

the CS150 XL Destoner has a longer rear web and is available as a star/web machine only in 150 and 170 models.





Brooksby Melton Students



Students receiving their awards at Brooksby

New Manufacturer Backed Engineering Course Off To A Flying Start

True collaboration between an agricultural manufacturer and an educational establishment is about to be tested with the enrolment of the first two students on Brooksby Melton College's new Level 4 HNC qualification in land based engineering and business management in association with Grimme UK Ltd, which starts in September this year.

Oliver Wilson (22) and Jack Samways (21) are both employed by Grimme UK and work out of its headquarters at Swineshead in Lincolnshire. The flexibility of the course is demonstrated by the fact that they are both from totally unrelated backgrounds.



Pictured above (left to right) Jack Samways and Oliver Wilson

Jack left Billingborough College in Sleaford in 2008 and started working in the Grimme workshop soon after but has no agricultural experience. Ollie is a farmer's son and had been working on the family's arable enterprise at Fosdyke before moving to Grimme six years ago.

"I knew nothing about agriculture when I started here in 2008 but I've been in the workshop since then and going out on breakdowns to gain experience," says Jack.

"I'd been here for about a year before deciding to go to Brooksby to do a Level 2 and 3 qualification. This was a three year course involving college work as well as gaining practical experience out in the field in one month blocks."

Jack has been at Grimme for nearly six years and is excited about starting the new course at Brooksby in September 2014.

"The level 3 qualification is very general but Level 4 is more specific and is the next stepping stone for my career within the company," he says. "I want to be a key person within the workshop department and on the practical and technical side of the business too. I'm motivated by getting a satisfied customer. It's team work that makes this initiative work."

Ollie saw no future for him at the family farm as there were no opportunities to expand the business and smaller farms were being amalgamated into larger organisations to achieve economies of scale.

"I needed to look for a new direction although I enjoyed doing our own maintenance at home. I started making my own go-kart and went on from there really."



If an opportunity becomes available in the Grimme sales department then I would be very interested in doing that."



Russell Lister, Head of After Sales for Grimme UK (Pictured above) says that everyone involved with the course benefits: the student because it presents an opportunity to develop within a company that will sponsor the course, the college because it can build on the success of integrating with businesses and Grimme because it is able to develop its young workforce for the future.

"Agricultural manufacturers struggle to find suitable candidates and it's a growing problem every year," he says. "There simply isn't the quality of student out there and nor are there courses, other than degrees, that produce the type of person we are looking for. The advantage of the Level 4 qualification is that we have an influence on what the students learn. The sophistication of the equipment now on farm means a Level 4 is the absolute minimum requirement. We have got to train our own staff if we are going to continue striving for excellence."

"Increasingly as a company we find that our customers feel insecure if personnel working on their equipment are not qualified to do so. Remember that some of the machines these young engineers are working on can be worth over £350,000," he says.

"The whole industry is struggling to recruit good people and it takes at least three years to train an engineer up, especially on such sophisticated kit. This training programme gives confidence to the customer."

The first course starts in September 2014 and Grimme is working closely with Brooksby Melton to help ensure successful uptake is achieved. To date there has been a lot of interest from around the UK.

"We won't offer the course to everyone," says Russell. "Students will be assessed by us and the college and best candidates will be selected. Once selected the student takes out a loan and if he or she successfully completes the course Grimme will pay the loan off."

"There is an element of trust and mutual respect needed to make this initiative work successfully. But as a company we have a moral obligation to look after our staff as well," he says. "And hopefully it means that they will stay with us and grow with the company. We would like to see the next MD coming from inside the company rather than being recruited from outside."

“Increasingly as a company we find that our customers feel insecure if personnel working on their equipment are not qualified to do so. Remember that some of the machines these young engineers are working on can be worth over £350,000.”

Once the course is established the college intends to focus on other manufacturers to try and build similar courses related to their particular products.





Grimme CS All Web Destoner at work in Scotland

Carrot Harvester Keeps the Green

Years of experience in vegetable growing lies behind the distinctive branded boxes holding Paget produce. The boxes can be seen in wholesale markets throughout the UK and hold the high quality crops grown by JT Paget and Son, which also supplies to the retail and catering trade under the Paget Produce label.

JT Paget and Son has been growing high quality vegetables for almost 100 years at Stills Farm, Broham, the market gardening village which is known for its sandy soils and early season vegetables.

The current partners are Michael and Sarah Paget and their second son Tim. Tim and his family are the fourth generation to live in the farmhouse and farm Stills Farm's 300 acres. His brothers Tom and Ross are also involved in the business; Tom has responsibility for the wash and pack facility, Ross is on sales.

Carrots have been in the all vegetable rotation for a quarter of a century. This year they account for 80 acres.

Marketed as bunched carrots, a younger crop with the foliage attached, they are harvested from mid-May through to Christmas.

"The crop has to be picked daily and gentle harvesting is a critical part of the operation," Tim says, "it's crucial not to damage the 'green', an important aspect of the crop's appearance. And they have to be presented in the bins tidily to bring them into the packhouse where they are washed and banded."

Harvesting went through a radical change two years ago, when the Paget's moved from hand pulling to mechanical lifting with a single-row machine supplied by root harvesting specialists ASA-LIFT of Denmark, whose products are distributed by Grimme UK's own retail outlets

"We went from being members of a consortium to building our own washing and packing facility and wouldn't have fitted into their system," says Tim, explaining the change.

"We also wanted to speed up harvesting and get people out of the field and into the packhouse, staff welfare is important to us.

"We're set up for bunched carrots. When we were looking for a harvester we approached a number of manufacturers. We considered the ASA-LIFT to be the only machine on the market that did the job and suited our needs; and they are vegetable harvester specialists."

The harvester, an ex-demonstrator model supplied by the then importer, Everett Bros, arrived at Stills Farm in time for the 2011 harvest. A 'wrap-round' design, it is linkage-mounted on a 110hp New Holland TS115 tractor. In action, a vibrating share lifts the carrots before rotating belts grip the tops and elevate the crop onto a cross conveyor. This then transfers the carrots to a demountable bin, which is filled in layers with all the crop lying in the same direction for presentation at the packhouse.

"It's a good machine in standard factory specification," says Tim. But he has made some modifications. A platform at the rear of the machine enables an operator to keep an eye on the auto bin auto-fill system, which does a good job, and the fill sensor cable has been repositioned to better protect it from the abrasive sandy soil.

As to the harvester's performance in the field, Tim comments: "It has enabled us to get the crop off the ground quicker, four hours lifting in the morning is enough to stock the packing shed. And we have got people into the packhouse; we now have two in the field compared with 20 and 18 in the packing shed. Overall harvesting costs are similar to hand pulling but the staff are in a far better working environment. It's also easier to keep an eye on quality."

Machine reliability has been good, as has ASA-LIFT's spare parts service with next day delivery when required.

Tim anticipates getting another two years out of this harvester, during which time he can identify aspects of the design that could be improved. "We'll be able to work out any tweaks that could make the harvester slightly better, driven wheels for example," he says.

"We'll feed ideas back to ASA-LIFT, they're very flexible and would probably accommodate us."

Pictured here: P0335A Carrot Harvester



Stone-Free Potato Harvesting

Established practices stand the test of time for a good reason: they provide significant benefits to the user. De-stoning potato ground is an operation that falls into this category, especially where the crop is grown in soils with a high stone content.

"On our thin, rocky soils we can't do without de-stoning," says Scottish grower Glen Allingham, a director, together with his wife Gilli, of Craggie Farms Ltd, Nairn.

"De-stoning is essential. We have to plant where the ground is stone-free to give the crop the best growing medium, to reduce crop damage at harvest and to produce a round, uniform tuber."

Craggie Farms Ltd farms 275 acres, with malting barley, wheat for distilling, oilseed rape and garlic in the rotation. Garlic comes second to the mainstream crop, seed potatoes. One of only 26 pre-basic growers in the UK, the company grows 190 acres/season on rented land. "We have more than 100 different plots and in excess of 30 varieties," Mr Allingham says. "Eliminating miss-shapen tubers is essential for planting as the seed is multiplied over two to three years before being moved on for commercial seed production."

The sequence of operations in the planting system is similar to that of a commercial crop.

Over-wintered ploughed ground is deep cultivated during the spring and ridged into 1.82m-wide beds.

A pass with the destoner then creates a flat, stone and clod-free bed for the planter. Debris is placed in the bottom.

"It has to be moved out of the way and in the worst conditions up to ten percent of the soil is removed," Mr Allingham says.

Two rows of potatoes are grown in each bed. The first year nucleus crop is put in with a hand planter, second year tubers are planted in larger, typically 5-acre, plots with a belt planter.

De-stoning is essential. We have to plant where the ground is stone-free to give the crop the best growing medium, to reduce crop damage at harvest and to produce a round, uniform tuber.

Craggie Farms Ltd has been de-stoning since the early 1980s and has always used Grimme machines.

The current model is a trailed CS150 Multiweb purchased from CC Powell Ltd, Banff. It replaced a long-serving CW1500 Combiweb for the 2013 season. "We like to keep the destoner for 10-years," says Mr Allingham.

"We use a 160hp tractor, although we could get away with less but we need the power on the hills," he says. Historically, both star- and web-type have been employed on the farm, with star-type destoners being more expensive to maintain but quicker than web designs, which were known to be quite slow.

Technological developments have overcome that drawback, he believes. "In our experience web machines have cheaper overall operating costs, are more durable and are 100 percent efficient. The CS Multiweb gives a better finish as it removes all the stone content from the bed, and with an output of 20 acres a day it has a workrate equivalent to that of a star destoner."

Other features Mr Allingham highlights are the ease with which the CS Multiweb is set up and its reliability. "Most of the settings are through the control box and we have had no problems," he says. "Most new machines have teething issues but it hasn't been touched since the minute it started."

The CS Multiweb's sieving efficiency has also had a positive impact on the harvesting operation.

"We lift at the same speed with our trailed Grimme two-row, but with two pickers on the harvester rather than the four we needed with the CW1500 Combiweb," Mr Allingham says.





Left to Right: Rexor 620 Beet Harvester, Tandem Hopper and SV260 Harvester

Grimme Worldwide



Worldwide Events

Grimme Technica 2014

Date: 11 – 14 November 2014

Location: Damme

www.grimme.com

Grimme Landmaschinenfabrik GmbH will be opening the factory for Grimme Technica in November.

More details in the Autumn Edition!

Praxisbörse Uni Bremen

Date: 22 May 2014

Location: Hall Universität Bremen, Stand Gebäude GW2

www.uni-bremen.de/praxisboerse.html

Terres en fête

Date: 13 – 15 June 2014

Location: Tilloy les Mofflaines, France

www.fnsea.fr/les-evenements/terres-en-fete/

Potato Europe 2014

Date: 3 – 4 September 2014

Location: Bockerode bei Hanover

www.potatoeurope.com

Beet Europe 2014

Date: 2 October 2014

Location: Dobieszów, Poland

www.beeteurope2014.com

Royal visitors at the Grimme booth



Prince Felipe of Spain visited the Grimme Stand at the FIMA Agricultural Show in February 2014.

Prince Felipe and his delegation came as a surprise to the Grimme employees which were very delighted. Since 1964 the FIMA show takes place in Zaragoza and had its 50th anniversary from the 11th to 15th February 2014. With 74,000 hectares Spain is one of the top 10 potato growing countries.



Pictured above: Prinz Felipe von Spanien

Delayed Planting Tests Supply Chain... (Continued)



He emphasises how important staff training is to all Grimme personnel. In a joint venture with Brooksby Melton Agricultural College, Grimme has extended its current programme for technicians to include a new Level 4 HNC qualification in land based engineering and business management.



“This ensures that, whatever the weather, we and our dealers have the highly trained people our customers need to keep growing.”

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