

Golf Greenkeeping reports on exclusive golf course Tractor survey.

Greenkeepers throughout the country have replied to a questionnaire seeking information on tractor usage. This report analyses the responses.

A massive £5 million is expected to be spent on golf course equipment replacements for Britain's golf courses this year, according to an exclusive survey conducted by Golf Greenkeeping in February, and more than half this sum will be for the purchase of tractors.

Head Greenkeepers throughout England, Wales and Scotland were sent a detailed questionnaire seeking information on the quantity, manufacture, age and type of tractor used on their golf courses. They were asked to help with information on safety equipment, the type of ancillary equipment used with the tractors and whether it was intended to purchase or replace during this financial year.

The response that was received from the one thousand questionnaires sent out to Greenkeepers was extraordinary. Enough to make most market survey operators 'green with envy' For that, we at Golf Greenkeeping would like to express our most sincere thanks to all our readers who responded to the questionnaire and we trust you in turn will find the overall results interesting,

Kubota Compacts have at least half of the total market for small tractors on the golf course

useful and may be assist you in future purchase policies.

We would also like to thank the greenkeeper with a Scottish postal address who used the envelope to return his message that read 'MINED YOUR OWN BUISNES'.

As a non contributor of information it is unlikely he will wish to read further, but for the rest of you - read on.

Throughout the United Kingdom the number of tractors of all types currently in use averages 2.5 per course. The nine hole course often has just one tractor or may be an extra old model kept just for emergencies. Eighteen and thirty-six hole courses will have at least two, more likely three.

Almost half of the tractors used on Britain's golf courses - 48%, were purchased second hand which points to a lack of budget planning by golf course management, needing to replace a tractor during the season, because of an unexpected breakdown. Perhaps not so much unexpected, but because replacements of aged equipment had not been foreseen. This conclusion has been highlighted by the average age of tractors on the golf course. An analysis of the questionnaires, in three separate batches, showed a consistent false conclusion, because, included in the average age are the recent purchases of the new generation of compact tractors.

The purchase trend of golf courses is towards the predominately manufactured Japanese Compact, dominated by Kubota. Kubota have 50% of the market, followed by Iseki with 20% and the new Ford Compact with 15%. All of course, made in Japan.

Just over one in three courses intend to purchase a new tractor or ancillary equipment spending an average amount of £7,000 during 1987.

The survey showed 19% have bought either a new or used tractor in the last three years, 9% bought in the last twelve months and 36% intend buying during 1987, though several of the questionnaires added the rider 'If we can persuade the Committee to find the money!'

Continued overleaf



Ford have taken third place after Iseki in Compact popularity

We felt particular sorrow for the Welsh greenkeeper who added to his comment 'no purchase this year'. My Committee won't buy anything - they wait until the equipment falls apart.

Although Kubota reign supreme in the Compact market, it is Massey-Ferguson whose make dominates the large general purpose tractor used on the golf course. Thirty-eight percent of tractors currently in use are Massey-Ferguson and almost half of those are the old MF 135 a tractor regarded as the 'work-horse', many of them bought second hand from the agricultural industry. The MF 35 and the Ford 3000 also figure largely in the survey.

The survey took a particular interest in the safety factor requesting information on the use of roll-bars, and safety cabs. We hoped that all tractors would have been fitted with a safety device, but found that one tractor in every twenty had no safety feature whatsoever. Twenty-six percent had roll-bars, 69% were fitted with safety weather cabs but 5% had nothing.

One of our correspondents raised an interesting issue on his questionnaire and asked whether his Iseki 2160 should have a roll-bar. The regulations state safety cabs or roll-bars are required for all tractors weighing over 550 kg or 11 cwt, except where the tractor is of such an age no approved safety bar can be fitted. The Iseki 2160 weighs under the limit at 540 kg but the UK distributors do recommend a safety feature should be fitted particularly if the tractor is to be used on slopes.

Because of the age of a large proportion of the tractors in use on our golf courses the safety regulations do not apply. Breaking down the figures supplied for safety cabs and weather cabs, we find 54% have safety cabs and 15% weather cabs. The weather cab is not necessarily built with safety in mind and some operators could well be imagining they are protected but if an accident occurs the consequences could be serious.

This situation will only be rectified once the vintage tractors are phased out, but we would strongly advise Head Greenkeepers to examine the safety features of their equipment and produce a written report to the Green Chairman or club management on any shorfalls.



Newcomers John Deere are aiming to join an already competitive market with their American made range of Compacts

Although our survey was conducted on the understanding the forms were to be completed anonymously, we did divide the responses into a North/South category to see if the so called 'affluent south' were more likely to be buying new this year. To our somewhat surprise this was not the case and the buying intentions are virtually in proportion to the North/South responses.

And what type of tractor is to be bought this year? Compacts are certain to dominate and almost without exception these will be bought new or as ex-demonstration models. Sixty percent of those intending to buy have indicated it is their intention to purchase a Compact, 40% said a larger model or did not specify the type.

Whichever model is eventually chosen it certainly seems to be a very buoyant time for the manufacturers, importers and dealers in tractors this year.

TRACTOR SURVEY STATISTICS

Average Tractors per club	2.5
Average age of Tractors	11 yrs
Bought in last 3 years	19%
Bought last year	9%
Expected purchases	36%

PRESENT MARKET SHARE:

Massey-Ferguson	37%
Ford	24%
IH/Case/DB	13%
Kubota	11%
Leyland	6%
Iseki	4%
Yanmar	2%
Deere	1%
Others	2%

COMPACT MARKET SHARE:

Kubota	50%
Iseki	20%
Ford	15%
Yanmar	7%
Massey-Ferguson	5%
Others	3%

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	Model	Engine Power HP	Cylinders	Number of Gears	Wheelbase (m)	Price £
JOHN DEERE <i>John Deere Ltd., Langar, Nottingham NG13 9HT Tel: (0949) 60491</i>	655*	16	3	Hydrostatic	1.29	5,280
	755* Compacts	20	3	Hydrostatic	1.45	5,970
	855*	24	3	Hydrostatic	1.62	6,420
	1550	44 (DIN)	3	8F 4R	2.05	9,624
	1750	50 (DIN)	3	8F 4R	2.05	10,527
	1850	56 (DIN)	3	8F 4R	2.05	11,361
FORD <i>Ford Motor Co. Ltd., Tractor Operations, Cranes Farm Road, Basildon, Essex Tel: Basildon 3000</i>	1210	16 (DIN)	3	10F 2R	1.40	5,308
	1710	26 (DIN)	3	12F 4R	1.60	6,206
	1910	32 (DIN)	3	12F 4R	1.68	7,136
GREENS (HINOMOTO) <i>Green's Fergus Square, Arbroath, Angus DD11 3DR Tel: (0241) 73841</i>	C142	15 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.29	3,800
	C172	18 (DIN)	3	9F 3R	1.29	4,395
	C144 (4WD)	15 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.29	4,135
	C174 (4WD)	18 (DIN)	3	9F 3R	1.29	4,895
ISEKI <i>Iseki UK Ltd., Bydand Lane, Little Paxton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE19 4ES Tel: (0480) 218100</i>	TX 2140F (4WD)	14.5 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.28	4,825
	TX 2160F (4WD)	16.5 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.28	5,150
	TX 2160F-HST (4WD)	16.5 (DIN)	3	Hydrostatic	1.38	5,740
	TE 3210F (4WD)	21.0 (DIN)	3	12F 4R	1.50	5,970
	TE 4270F (4WD)	27 (DIN)	3	18F 6R	1.65	7,915
KUBOTA (UK) LTD <i>Dormer Road, Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3UN Tel: (084) 4214500</i> <i>*(Gear box options)</i>	B5100	12 (DIN)	2	6F 2R	1.18	3,315
	L275	27.5 (DIN)	3	8F 7R	1.69	5,850
	B6200 (4WD)	15 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.4	5,165
	B6200 (HST) (4WD)	15 (DIN)	3	Hydrostatic	1.5	5,990
	B7100 (4WD)	16 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.25	4,995
	B7200 (4WD)	17 (DIN)	3	6F 2R	1.4	5,750
	B7200 HST (4WD)	17 (DIN)	3	Hydrostatic	1.5	5,750
	B8200 (4WD)	19 (DIN)	3	9F 3R	1.53	6,250
	B8200 HST (4WD)	19 (DIN)	3	Hydrostatic	1.53	*7,850
	L275 (4WD)	27.5 (DIN)	3	8F 7R	1.69	*8,600
MASSEY FERGUSON <i>Massey-Ferguson (UK) Ltd., Stareton, Near Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LJ Tel: (0203) 304500</i>	MF 1010	16	3	6F 2R	1.29	4,488
	MF 1020	21	3	12F 4R	1.44	5,248
	MF 1030	26	3	12F 3R	1.56	6,090
	MF 230	38 (DIN)	3	8F 2R	1.89	7,200
	MF 1010 (4WD)	16	3	6F 2R	1.29	4,882
	MF 1010 Hydro (4WD)	16	3	Hydrostatic	—	5,457
	MF 1020 (4WD)	21	3	12F 4R	1.44	5,749
	MF 1030 (4WD)	26	3	12F 3R	1.56	6,694
MITSUBISHI <i>E. P. Barrus Ltd., Launton Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 0UR Tel: (0869) 253355</i>	MT 372D-T (4WD)	15	2	6F 2R	0.96	4,970
	MT 180D-T (4WD)	18.5	3	6F 2R	0.97	6,170
	MT 180 HD-T (4WD)	18.5	3	Hydrostatic	0.97	6,570
	MT 250 D-T (4WD)	25	3	9F 3R	1.275	7,295
	MT 300 D-T (4WD)	30	3	9F 3R	1.41	9,195
YANMAR <i>*(Note New Address)</i> <i>John Croft (Machinery) Ltd., Thorpe Willoughby, Selby, N. Yorks. Tel: (0757) 210222</i>	165A	16	2	6F 2R	1.20	3,920
	186A	18	3	9F 3R	1.35	5,510
	165 DA (4WD)	16	2	6F 2R	1.20	4,765
	169 DA (4WD)	16	3	6F 2R	1.25	5,400
	186 DA (4WD)	18	3	9F 3R	1.35	6,675