



Industry Update

NEW HAND-ARM VIBRATION REPORT

Echo have released a new issue of their hand-arm vibration report, based on comprehensive tests of the full range of Echo power tools. The report shows the vibration levels measured on each tool with a low frequency weighting filter applied (as specified in the British Standards) which quantifies the relative importance of different frequencies and corresponds to the way vibration is imparted into the hands and causes damage.

The tests were conducted by the Industrial Noise and Vibration Centre Ltd under laboratory conditions, and were made in three orthogonal directions using an accelerometer attached directly to the handle of the products, as close as possible to the operator's hand.

The measured vibration for each tool in all three directions is presented in the report. The frequency weighted RMS vibration $a_{h,w}$ is representative of continuous ("finger on trigger") tool operation.

The daily usage limit presented in the report for single tool operation is based on not exceeding a vector sum action level of $2.5m/s^2 - 5m/s^2$ in an eight hour day, with no other exposure to high vibration.



Results of the tests have highlighted a number of Echo products which have particularly low vibration levels. These include the new HCR-161ES Hedgecutter with a vibration figure of just $2.6m/s^2$ and the new SRM-265ESU brushcutter with a vibration figure of just $1.9m/s^2$.

The Echo Hand-Arm Vibration Report is available on request, call 0870 4055574 or email sales@echo-tools.com for a copy.

GOING TO WORK AT OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP VENUE

A Tycrop MH-400 materials handler/top dresser has been added to the machinery fleet at Royal Birkdale Golf Club with the aim of bringing long-term benefits to the Lancashire links course. Its first major task is to assist course manager, Chris Whittle, in his preparations for the 2008 British Open Championship, taking place at Royal Birkdale from 17 to 20 July.

Supplied by Turfmech Machinery through local sales and service dealer, Turner Groundscare, the MH-400 was selected by Chris for its ability to apply top dressings quickly and evenly across large areas with minimal surface marking.

"We are aiming to further increase the firmness of all fairways ahead of the Open Championship and needed a suitable machine able to apply effectively the selected medium sand top dressings," explained Chris. "I knew that Paul Smith, head greenkeeper at Royal Lytham and St Annes Golf Club, had been using an MH-400 for a number of years so I phoned and asked for his opinion. He told me that the machine was not only an excellent top dresser, but its other capabilities had totally revolutionised the way that materials are moved and handled on the golf course."

Following Paul's recommendation, Chris Whittle arranged with Turfmech a demonstration of the MH-400. Carried out in October, it took less than 30 minutes to convince Chris that the machine was right for the job.

"First and foremost, it did the principal task that we wanted it for really well," he commented. "Spread pattern is very even and both the application rate and bout width can be altered easily. I also like the machine's walking-beam suspension which keeps all four wheels firmly on the ground across undulations and the fact that it can be used as a bulk re-loader of greens top dressers out on the course. Materials are offloaded quickly and cleanly from the MH-400 using a combination of moving belt floor and hydraulically-raised rear end."

Delivered to Royal Birkdale in early November, the MH-400 was in top-dressing action the same day, completing all 18 fairways in a little over two days. "The speed and accuracy of the machine have to be seen to be believed," said Chris. "All the signs show that the dressings are having the required effect and further applications are now planned in the spring ahead of the Open Championship. From my standpoint, the machine does everything that is claimed for it and you cannot ask for more than that."

EUROPEAN LAUNCH

John Deere has announced the expansion of John Deere Golf Irrigation into Europe for the first time. The company has been providing water management products and solutions in the USA since 2006.

From early 2008, a comprehensive line of state-of-the art John Deere golf irrigation heads, rotors, valves, internal replacement assemblies and accessories will be available through selected John Deere dealers across the EAME region (Europe, Africa and the Middle East). The new range will be featured on the John Deere stand at Harrogate Week.

"We are very pleased to offer this new product line to our golf and turf customers," says David Thorne, John Deere's EAME sales & marketing director. "Up to now, customers in this region of the world have been offered a limited range of competitive irrigation products and solutions."

"Coupled with John Deere's industry leading equipment and dealer parts and service support, this announcement gives us the ability to provide truly unique and comprehensive solutions for golf and turf industry professionals. As the official golf course equipment supplier to the PGA Tour and the Ladies European Tour, John Deere can be trusted to provide greenkeepers with the tournament level quality needed on today's golf courses."

GREENS SWEEPER PROVES IDEAL FOR CLEANING AND RENOVATING

An important new application has been found for Turfmech's SQRL walk-behind green sweeper.

Extending the SQRL's primary function of collecting and removing hollow cores, scarified material and other debris from fine turf is the ability to pick up soil and vegetation from synthetic golf and practice tees to leave a clean and neatly groomed surface.

The SQRL's additional capabilities were uncovered by Graeme Clarkson, head greenkeeper at the Worcestershire Golf Club, an 18-hole parkland course laid out in the lee of the Malvern Hills.

"We purchased the SQRL originally to mechanise greens' clean-up after the Graden scarifier-aerator had done its work," explained Graeme. "Used for the first time last autumn, the SQRL did a first-class job, saving us a great deal of time and effort in getting the greens quickly back into play. When the work was completed, the machine was put away with no thought that it would be back in action again within six weeks."

The synthetic surfaces benefiting from SQRL treatments are winter tees installed in mid 2007 on the club's three par-3 holes. Commissioned by the Worcestershire to help take the pressure off natural grass, the tees were constructed using a high quality all-weather turf with a high fibre density able to accept a tee peg without the need for a filler. Brought into play in late October, the tees were starting to suffer from a build-up of mud and grass clippings being walked onto the surface by golfers during periods of wet and frosty weather.

"The staff did their best to clean the surface with a hard brush and back-pack blower, but the appearance of the tees was starting to draw adverse comments from members," commented Graeme. "The club was on the point of asking the supplier for advice when I suggested using the SQRL to clean-up and refurbish the pile. The results were superb, with each tee being restored to an as-new finish in less than 10 minutes."

EXPERTS COMBINE

A specialist aeration company and the landscape design section of a well-known group of garden centres have joined forces to ensure that homeowners get the best from their gardens.



Nick Mansell, Project Manager for Notcutts Design and right - Steve Oates of Terrain Aeration working with the Arforce Tracker

Terrain Aeration, the one metre deep, compressed air de-compaction experts, often called upon to treat badly drained, waterlogged lawns have been giving customers grass after care advice for many years. But following a recent contract for Notcutts Design, (the landscaping and design wing of Notcutts Garden Centres) this advice has expanded to include a comprehensive plant guide, pinpointing the right plant for the right situation.

David Green, Terrain Aeration's MD says that not only do homeowners need to know about his company's aeration process, (which breaks up compaction by injecting compressed air one metre below the surface) but also how to care for their lawn after treatment. "As well as cutting regularly, treating the grass for any disease or insect pests, spiking once a month, feeding, weeding and scarifying and top dressing every autumn, we also point out that rainwater from patios, decking and shed roofs should not, if possible, be allowed to run onto the lawn," he says. "If, at the end of the day, the situation is totally unsuitable for growing grass – the garden could be completely over shadowed by the canopy of a mature oak carrying a Tree Preservation Order for example – then the home owner will be better off abandoning his lawn and using suitable plants instead."

Malcolm Veitch, senior designer at Notcutts Design (whose family has been in the landscaping business for over 50 years) says that he is delighted to be providing plant information alongside Terrain Aeration's grass growing advice. "All too often people will plant something totally unsuitable, an exotic for example in a cold, north facing spot and then they're disappointed when it dies," he explains. "What both companies want is people getting the best from their gardens."

Notcutts' "Plants For Specific Situations – Soils And Climate" will be handed to homeowners free of charge alongside Terrain Aeration's "Aftercare Following Airforce Terralift Aeration" lawn care letter, once aeration treatment is complete.