

# Machines made in Britain



*“We sell direct whether that’s here or around the world. We do that so we can talk to the customer and receive feedback first-hand.”*

SIMON WEAVING

Family-run, made in Britain, supporting the local economy, not to mention quality drills... there’s much to love about Weaving Machinery. *CPM* explores what’s driving the company’s success and how this is translating into exciting new product launches.

By Janine Adamson

It’s a difficult landscape across the board for agricultural machinery – all players are being squeezed with little sign of relief. Even if they wished to, growers are finding it challenging to justify upgrades or new purchases, while manufacturers are on the receiving end of significant hikes in raw materials, parts and fuel, plus added logistical constraints.

While this paints a bleak overall picture, there is a glimmer among it – as demonstrated by one UK firm’s continued success. Borne from a family’s commitment to listening to what customers actually want, Weaving Machinery is among a select few businesses that have increased their share of the European market significantly during the past decade.

As such, the company has been able to invest in its staff, R&D and manufacturing capacity – enhanced considerably by the recent opening of a new building at its HQ in Chadbury near Evesham.

Much more than just a shed, the facility addresses critical issues such as staff welfare, productivity and efficiency, and in-person customer experience.

“This has been a huge investment for us as a family and a company,” explains sales director, Simon Weaving. “We used to be in a cabbage hut/cold store, that was very small. But now this has really upped our game in manufacturing and product finish. It’s come at a significant cost, but is paying off.”

To rewind a little, Weaving Machinery was founded in 1983 by Edward Weaving as a family-run farming equipment company, much similar to how the firm operates today. From the outset, Simon says the aim has been to offer farmers the best quality machinery at affordable prices.

Known primarily for its seed drills and cultivators, Weaving mostly targets low disturbance farming systems of all guises, from those experimenting within a conventional approach,

through to full regenerative strategies. Highlights from the range include the GD disc drill and sabre tine drill – currently available from 1.5-9m.

Then, Weaving offers customers a selection of imported flail mowers, hedge cutters, silage and grassland equipment from other leading European manufacturers.

“Critically, we sell direct, whether that’s here or around the world. We do that because we can talk directly



#### Wise investment

Simon Weaving says the family’s recent investment in the new factory building has come at a significant cost, but is paying off.

# MACHINERY Weaving open day

to the customer and therefore receive feedback first-hand. We're also one of the few businesses to publish prices on our website, and the price you see is the price paid," says Simon.

Looking at the seed drills and cultivators specifically, all are manufactured at Chadbury, boasting 'made in Britain' quality, he adds. Furthermore, where possible, the company procures materials and key parts from local suppliers to reinvest in the region's economy.

Then once in action on-farm, all replacement parts are shipped from Chadbury too, with four service vans roving the UK looking after drills. Simon admits this is something that's changed during his time alone – as machines are used more often than once a year thus requiring year-round support. Equally, he acknowledges that being customer-facing is important.

"People are really intrigued regarding how machinery is put together and how things are built on the ground; we still have a lot of customers walking through the door from the local area. They might travel from a 30-mile radius to buy a PTO shaft or some oil. Anything we've

supplied even from the very early days, we still have, organised using high-tech module parts cabinets linked to a computer database," he explains.

Of course, while investing in facilities is all well and good, Weaving hasn't neglected new product launches along the way. This year alone the company has revealed new grain and fertiliser options for the Fenix drill, the new Raptor cultivator, and, a top-secret show-stopper.

First launched in 2020, the Fenix is Weaving's 'entry level' into direct drilling, aimed at mixed farmers, comments Simon. With a compact design it can be used for re-seeding degraded grassland, direct drilling grass seed into stubbles, leys and burnt off ground, or sowing cover crops, forage crops, cereals, peas and beans. The Fenix drill is available in a 3-metre working width at two row spacings – 32 coulter at 92mm spacing, and 24 coulter at 122mm spacing.

"It's always been a grain-only model up until now, and this is our first grain and fertiliser machine. As with all of our machines, simplicity is key; while most would have two heads, two metering units and two venturis, we've split the hopper



## Built in Britain

All of Weaving's seed drills and cultivators are manufactured at the firm's Chadbury HQ.

60:40. The under carriage is exactly the same as our grain-only model, but we've changed the tank," explains Simon.

"With a single head and two metering units going into one venturi for an equal mix, you only require one set of pipes."

The dual machine holds 1.5t total

## MULTICAST

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within the divided hopper, and has been upgraded to RDS iSOCAN controls so both metering units can be viewed on one screen. It's currently available in a 32-row option, with the launch of a 24-row machine due imminently.

"For the customer, it means they can drill grass seed and clover separately if they wanted, or grain and fertiliser. Also, if they wanted to plant companion crops – running wheat with beans – that can be achieved too."

Then looking at the new Raptor cultivator, this has been tested across a range of farming situations during the past 12-months, states Simon. Describing its features, he notes that it's a mix of a Horsch Terrano and a Väderstad TopDown.

"We've incorporated a bigger disc and two rows of sprung-loaded tines which can each provide 900kg of force. The machine can be run with or without the wing, without being suitable for working deeper than 8".

Regarded as Weaving's high-performance cultivator, the Raptor has a reinforced frame, with 70cm under beam clearance and 2m spacing between leg

rows, to ensure excellent soil flow and residue management without blockages.

At the rear, a row of levelling discs and a 600mm heavy-duty roller provide accurate depth control for a fine, firm seedbed, adds Simon. "It has a similar roller on the back to the Väderstad for a really nice, level clean finish to drill straight into, whether you're going in with a GD or a normal tine drill.

Designed for 160hp+ tractors, Simon points out that they've been trialling the Raptor on all types of soils. "Having had the 5m on the back of the 728, and unless you're going really deep, it does well."

The Raptor will work to depths of 9" with two rows of 560mm cutting discs. It will be available in 3, 4, 5, and 6m versions, with tungsten parts due imminently.

"The Raptor has a lower link arm hitch to allow for tighter turning," says Simon. "A switchbox control comes as standard, so you only require two hydraulic functions."

At the time of writing, one additional new launch from Weaving was being kept a much-guarded top-secret, ahead of its reveal at Cereals. Taking two years to develop, a 12m version



### Transformation

The factory has come a long way since Weaving Machinery was founded in 1983. Pictured 1990.

of the firm's popular Sabre mounted-tine drill will now be available.

The Sabre is noted as 'the ideal progressive tool for users looking to transition from conventional or minimum tillage systems into direct drilling'. Commenting on the 12m's grand reveal, Simon says it poses much more than simply a wider drill. "It's been designed from the ground up. The only thing that resembles existing machines is it uses the same tyres from the GDs, and of course, the colour."

Look out for more information on the 12m Sabre in future issues of *CPM*. ●

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