

Nick Johnson visits Cormidi UK at Haydock to see the latest 6.50 High-Tip compact tracked dumper that Keith Bradbury and his team have helped develop with the Italian manufacturer.

High hopes

Sales of the Cormidi range of compact tracked dumpers in this country really started to take off two years ago after a new UK importer was established. Called Cormidi UK, this independent dealership now claims to have doubled its sales of these rubber tracked dumpers from Italy in the first six months of this year. This success has been fuelled by the introduction of a new 6.50 High-Tip model.

The Managing Director of Haydock-based Cormidi UK is Keith Bradbury who sees a much bigger future for these small machines in this country. He cites the need to comply with ever more stringent safety and manual handling legislation as the reason why small tracked dumpers, particularly the high tip models, are becoming ever more popular.

Keith Bradbury is no stranger to pioneering new concepts such as mini excavators and rough terrain handlers in the UK plant industry. He lays claim to becoming the first Kubota construction equipment dealer in Europe and his former Bradbury Plant Sales company also helped put Manitou on the map in the North West.

Increasing sales

After living abroad for a number of years, Keith Bradbury is now spending much more time back in England to oversee the expansion of Cormidi UK and help with the development of new products. Such is the fruit of his labours that sales are rising rapidly. He reports selling around 60 machines here last year and now the plan is to sell some 150 units this year and at least 250 in 2007.

According to Keith Bradbury, a major strength of Cormidi SRL is that the family-owned Italian manufacturer has been focused predominately on making compact rubber tracked dumpers. Although the company, led by Armando Cormidi, is also now introducing compact tracked loaders, it does not make compact excavators. So the undercarriages for the dumpers are purpose made (not an excavator conversion) and it is easier for Cormidi UK to find regional dealers as there are no diggers to clash with an existing franchise.

Last year, Cormidi SRL produced around 900



Keith Bradbury (left) and Danny Farrell of Cormidi UK with the first prototype and final production version of the new 6.50 High-Tip tracked dumper.

machines at its factory in Salerno. Units are sold into Germany through Caterpillar dealer Zeppelin and Ammann Yanmar has recently signed up to sell machines through its outlets in France. Some Cormidi tracked dumpers have been sold here in Ammann Yanmar colours in the past, but Keith Bradbury indicates that the future focus will be the orange units supplied through his import company.

The machines currently being imported by Cormidi UK include the walk behind 500kg payload 6.50 dumper (including the new High-Tip version), the walk behind 650kg payload 9.65 and 10.65 models (with fold down rear platform) and the ride-on 1800kg payload 200 dumper – available only with standard forward tipping skip. The 6.50, 9.65 and 10.65 models (which prominently display the numbers 50 or 65 on the sides of their skips) are all available with standard or high tip skips and the larger duo can also be supplied as Combi models with self loading front buckets.

Wide variety

Keith Bradbury says the models that have the most to offer here in the UK are the newly launched 6.50 High-Tip, the established 10.65 High-Tip and the Combi self loading High-Tip machines. The Combi machines can excavate 100mm below their track level and carry 650kg in their dumper skip which can be discharged into builders skip.

The standard tip 6.50 dumper is a 690mm wide machine that can be supplied with a Honda GX200 petrol engine or a choice of diesels (Hatz UB20 or UB30 and Yanmar LA70. This machine has a maximum dry weight of 290kg and it can be purchased with rocking rollers (to improve traction on uneven ground) and a two speed transmission which increases maximum travel speed from 2.9km/h to 4.0km/h.

The newly launched 6.50 High-Tip dumper retains the 'ultra-narrow' 690mm width whilst providing an improved tipping mechanism with a maximum height under the high-tip skip pivot of 1390mm. This allows the dumper to discharge over the 1300mm side walls of 8.0 yd³ builders skips.

Keith Bradbury and Cormidi UK Technical Manager Danny Farrell, together with Steve Strachan of associated hire company Ray's Rentall, worked closely with Cormidi in Italy to develop the 6.50 High-Tip machine. Having persuaded the manufacturer to produce this variant, they carefully evaluated a first prototype. This featured a front



This 6.50 High-Tip from KB Plant Hire has been successfully used by Roots & Shoots to access front and rear gardens during landscaping work in Manchester.

stabiliser blade and a heavier elevating mechanism carrying a shallow skip. They recommended a host of improvements.

The resulting 6.50 High-Tip machine has a more refined elevating mechanism which tucks down neatly inside the lengthened main chassis rails to minimise the centre of gravity when the new, deeper and better reinforced skip is stowed. The load centre of the production machine was moved down and back so that it became more stable when travelling on site.

It was decided that there was no need for the stabiliser blade which, on the prototype, automatically lowered when the skip was elevated. The absence of this stabiliser blade saves cost and complication whilst sensibly allowing more forward reach when the skip is tipped at full height.



The use of a hydraulically tipped loader bucket and extra travel on the elevation cylinders allows this 10.65 Combi better forward reach at maximum discharge height.

Cormidi UK experimented with slightly increasing the travel of the rod in the main lift cylinder.

All the 9.65 and 10.65 High-Tip dumpers imported by Cormidi UK have the lever arrangement to operate the Combi self loading front bucket so this equipment can be added at a later date if desired. The labelling on these levers is now being improved as previously it was not clear that the side-mounted lever operated the scissor style skip elevation mechanism.

The use of the piston pump on the 9.65 and 10.65 machines provides the power needed to grade off material. The loader bucket can load the skip in five or six passes to provide a machine that can work independently of a digger.

The arms for the loader bucket are attached to the machine's chassis rather than its skip so stability is improved as extra weight is not raised up with the skip. However, having a chassis mounted loader means that the bucket has to be lowered to the ground in front of the machine before the skip is elevated for high discharge.

On early Cormidi Combi models with fixed loader buckets, the arrangement meant that effective discharge into builder's skips could only be made over their ends. Here the Cormidi loader bucket could be tucked under the angled end of the skip. Now the latest Combis have hydraulically tipping loader buckets so they can be angled back to allow the dumper to discharge over the side of a builder's skip. More hire companies are now seeing the potential of the self contained Combi concept which can excavate down to 100mm below track level. Hire Centre is running these machines nationally and Ray's Rentall has eight in its regional hire fleet covering the North West.

Growing network

Whilst Cormidi UK still sells direct in some areas, its growing regional dealer network includes Plant and Engineering Services (covering the South West), Chippindales (in Yorkshire), PPS (in the North West and North Wales) and Kattrak (in Scotland). Most recent appointments include Oswald Record (in the Birmingham and Shropshire area) and Arrow Plant (in Hereford and Worcester).

Meanwhile more product developments are in the offing. Cormidi SRL is developing a wireless remote controlled version of the 6.50 High-Tip dumper together with a new line of compact loaders.

Called Rikishi – the Japanese word for a Sumo wrestler or strong man – the first of these loaders is already being tested in Japan. Initially the three model range will consist of the 330kg capacity Rikishi 7.0 (a loader version of the 6.50 High-Tip); the Rikishi 10.0 (based on the 65 series chassis) and the Rikishi 12.0 (a loader variant of a new V-twin 13.4kW (18hp) Yanmar powered, 1200kg payload tracked dumper currently being developed). So there will be plenty to keep Cormidi UK and its dealers even busier in the months ahead. ■

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Rocking rollers

The upper structure of the 6.50 High-Tip is engineered from high-quality Swedish steel. And the long-life undercarriage features solid steel rocking rollers and Cormidi's own design sprockets.

Engine options for the 6.50 High Tip include a 4.9kW (6.5hp) Honda GX200 petrol or 5.6kW (7.5hp) Yanmar LA70 diesel power units. Both engines now have rubber mounts. The machine runs on Cormidi's own brand rubber tracks that are made for it in China by a Japanese company. And the two speed hydrostatic transmission provides a maximum travel speed of 4.0km/h.

The 6.50 High-Tip had its official UK launch at SED 2006 in May and over 40 have been sold in the last three months. Buyers have included the multi depot Hire Centre as well as smaller independent hire companies and end users.

One of the independent hire companies which has added the 6.50 High-Tip to its fleet is KB Plant Hire of Lowton in Lancashire. A typical hire for the machine has been to Warrington-based landscape design and construction company Roots & Shoots which has successfully used the unit to landscape the front and back gardens of a new terraced housing development for Manchester City Council.

Situated in the Ardwick district of Manchester, with Gleeson Homes as the main contractor, this job entailed Roots & Shoots personnel using the 6.50 High-Tip in conjunction with a Takeuchi TB108 micro excavator. The machines were able to access narrow gateways and side passages to move material in and out of both the front and rear gardens.

The little Cormidi formed an excellent working partnership with the 825kg class micro excavator. Its high discharge ability also proved invaluable. This feature allowed building debris and unwanted spoil to be removed and loaded into builders skips for disposal as well as enabling new top soil to be conveniently discharged over fences into the front gardens of the houses.

While the ultra narrow 6.50 uses gear pumps, the bigger Cormidis such as the 9.65 (with Honda GX270 petrol engine) and the 10.65 (with a Yanmar LA100 diesel) have piston pumps and motors. The 650kg payload 9.65 and 10.65 High-Tip dumpers are a good match with 1.5 tonne mini excavators.

The latest versions of the 9.65 and 10.65 High-Tip dumpers now provide better forward reach when their skips are fully tipped at maximum elevation. This has been achieved after



The 6.50 High-Tip proved useful in Manchester by being able to discharge new topsoil over front garden fences.