



Hi-tech load handling

Moving, hoisting, loading or unloading products, equipment or raw materials efficiently and safely – whatever the need, Hiab has the specialist answer. Developed over several decades, Hiab's hi-tech range of load handling equipment includes demountables, hook-lifts, cable-lifts and skip loaders as well as truck-mounted forklifts, forestry and recycling cranes, tail lifts and loader cranes. All cost-efficient, reliable and easy to maintain.

*And as part of the internationally respected **Cargotec organisation** with over 20 strategically-placed service centres across the UK alone, when you need help it's never very far away. Find out more – call us on 01691 623 100 or visit www.cargotec.com*

Trailers cut costs and increase safety

c&a

trailers



After two years in the doldrums the commercial truck market is starting to show signs of life. Figures from the ACEA the European Automobile Association for the first two months of this year indicate that European commercial vehicle registrations are up 18.5 percent on last year, with registrations in the UK up 25 percent for the first quarter. In all of the major markets across Europe the largest rise increase is for trucks with Gross Vehicle Weights of more than 16 tonnes where increases in many cases are up by more than 50 percent.

In spite of this good news recovering from the ravages of the recession may be a slow process as manufacturers struggle to rebuild capacity. Broshuis Trailers for example has recently revealed that its manning levels plummeted from 300 to 135 and that it may take up to five years before order levels return to their previous highs. With confidence growing but manufacturers reluctant to make significant increases in production levels, lead times are on the increase. Add to that the general inflationary pressure on raw material prices and truck and trailer prices are bound to be heading upwards.

Many smaller transport operators are still reluctant to expose themselves financially through new equipment investment. However the pent-up replacement demand in the larger fleets where extended contracts - often at premium prices coupled with increases in maintenance - on older trucks is leading to the current growth. When it comes to vehicles used in the lifting industry for delivering access equipment or crane components, the new safety devices and better payload to weight ratios are creating an additional justification for replacement.

Lavendon's recent decision to replace a large part of its delivery



fleet in the UK is just one example of the movement taking place in the market. King Trailers - working with DAF - is providing the bulk of the fleet replacement, supplying 39 beavertail plant bodies. In addition King has also recently announced that it has concluded a similar deal with Hewden to supply 15 new trailers which will significantly reduce the average age of its delivery fleet. King and Nooteboom, have both recently announced increases in their manufacturing capacities as the equipment trailer market starts to take off once more. The cause of this renewed desire to replace vehicles however, is not just driven by the age of the fleet or improved product designs. Changes in the working at height regulations and rising fuel costs are also having an effect on the specification of the vehicles being purchased. In the UK

in particular, operators are doing more to reduce trips and falls and make loading operations safer. Major moves by contractors to reduce on-site accidents - such as Balfour Beatty's 'Zero Harm' campaign - have raised awareness amongst delivery and rental companies which now need to do much more to demonstrate the provision of safe systems of work for their own staff when on construction sites, both during daylight and at night.

The latest delivery trucks and trailers are being built with many more features aimed at protecting the drivers. On trailer top decks it is now quite commonplace to see handrails and their inclusion on the main loading decks of low loader trailers is increasing. On equipment delivery trucks side protection is also being specified. These systems



WELEX RENTAL

THE BEST QUALITY
**CRANE
MATS**

STARTING AT

£1 **A DAY**



WELEX RENTAL

Lower Drayton Farm
Penkridge, Staffordshire, ST19 5RE
Telephone 01785 713675
Fax 5603422006
E-mail: Welex@Welexrental.co.uk
Website: Welexrental.co.uk

- when fitted to trucks supplied to builder's merchants - can be kept quite simple. A truck equipped with a loader crane delivering pallets can usually be fitted with fixed handrails. However on vehicles delivering a variety of equipment, the problems become more difficult. On many delivery vehicles the load is often the same width as the maximum width of the vehicle - or more - so fixed side guards cause a problem as they inhibit the loading operation and in many cases get in the way. Hence the tendency is to specify moving or removable handrails often supplemented with walkways along the side on the load bed. However these components need to be quick to deploy and easily stowed, if they are to be used when no one is watching. They also need to be lightweight so as not to adversely affect the payload of the truck.

All of the major plant vehicle suppliers are currently developing systems to cope with this requirement. King recently produced a first generation, 'quick deploy' swing-out handrail and walkway system. The company is also working on a faster push-button version that will be released later in the year. Andover Trailers is offering a pull-out handrail system on outriggers and other manufacturers are following suit.

Aside from attempting to reduce trips and falls by introducing handrails, a number of other features are starting to appear.

Loading a vehicle with ramps deployed has always been a cause for concern, particularly on motorways. Obstruction of the rear lights by the ramps can mean it's difficult to see the vehicle from behind so pull-out rear lights and magnetic beacons are now becoming commonplace. On the vehicle bed itself the fitting of in-deck LED lighting is a recent innovation which both aids the driver when loading and unloading and increases visibility to traffic approaching from the rear.

On heavier vehicles operating above 44 tonnes - 'special transport' - the long awaited changes in the UK STGO regulations did not materialise so the anticipated harmonisation with some other European regulations did not take place.

Nevertheless manufacturers are gradually bringing together specifications driven by the threat of European 'whole vehicle' type approval and the need to standardise components. This, coupled with a greater pressure from regional councils, is resulting in a general lowering



of axle weights and the emergence of trailers with more axles. Heavy equipment hauliers across Europe are now increasingly using more four axle trailers, although three axle units still serve most requirements within the regular 44 tonne weight limit.

Where manoeuvrability is the key, the 'urban artic' - a shorter two axle trailer matched to a two axle tractor operating at 30 tonnes - is

beginning to emerge. In the UK, Hewden and Orion Access are just two companies using these vehicles for in-town deliveries. The trailers have many advantages and can carry more than rigid trucks, loading and unloading takes place closer to the ground so reducing trips and falls, stability is greater and spare trailers can be loaded and unloaded whilst the tractor is being used for other deliveries.

In spite of the benefits that modern truck beds and trailers offer, significant increases in new vehicle sales will only return when confidence among the smaller operators grows. In the meantime a replacement led market is likely to be constrained by the rate at which manufacturers can increase or afford capacity growth. But as it does, expect to see more sophisticated vehicles that help reduce costs, while increasing safety.

SUMNER

Does your material lifts supplier:



- Maintain local stocks?
- Promptly responds to your enquiries?
- Promptly answers your technical questions?
- Offer next day delivery?
- Treat you like a valued customer?

IF NOT, ISN'T IT TIME YOU STEPPED UP TO A SUMNER LIFT?

SUMNER MANUFACTURING

Unit 16a Blackpole Trading Estate East, off Hindlip Lane, Worcester WR3 8SG
T: 01905 458333 F: 01905 458222

www.sumner.com



A CAD drawing of King Trailers' new walkway and fall protection system

Lavendon orders King beavertails

UK-based King Trailers has won an order for 39 beavertail truck bodies in a programme that upgrades and replaces part of the Lavendon Access Services (UK) delivery fleet.

Fitted to DAF chassis, the order comprises 31 bodies on three axle DAF 26 tonne trucks and eight bodies fitted to four axle DAF 32 tonne trucks and feature built-in fall protection systems.

The new low profile beavertail bodies are fitted with double folding 'Mantis' low angle ramps and a range of optional features designed to help with easier loading, load restraint and driver safety.

the vehicle's rear lights are fitted to telescopic mountings keeping them visible from behind the vehicle.

Due to the nature of the loads carried, bodywork is fitted with Expamet overlay to the flooring for maximum grip when loading in wet conditions and a tie-down pattern that ensures that the widest range of mixed loads can be secured with compliant tie-downs.

Loads can either be driven onto the trucks or loaded with the inbuilt five tonne hydraulic winch which can be remotely operated so that the driver can find the optimum line of sight whilst loading. Other features include a truck-based charging system for 'jump-starting' equipment should the batteries be flat on collection.

King says that its truck bodies include many of the features from its low-loader trailer range and are built from fully shot blasted material and painted in house in the customer's colours.



Mark Carrington (L) and Stephen Wright of King Trailers with the first of 39 Lavendon chassis to go into production

The new bodies will be fitted with fold-out handrails and walkways which allow the driver safe access to the load even when it occupies the full width of the vehicle.

During transit the handrails can either be closed within body width or retained in position alongside the load. The load bed is also being fitted with LED edge marking for safer loading in the dark. In addition when the ramps are deployed



King launched this handrail system at Vertical Days 2010