

Composting TORION



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Nigel Baker



With up to 1,000 tonnes of compost to handle each week, Nigel Baker’s TORION 1511 is never idle, but has also given him the capacity to cope with a doubling workload in the last 6 months.

The piles of compost created using the TORION are the only things that provide any height in the dead flat landscape surrounding Westonzoiland Airfield in the Somerset Levels, where Nigel Baker creates compost for Durston Garden Products.

Traditionally a supplier of peat-based bagged composts, over the past 10 years Durston’s have moved away from using peat in their range of composts, with composted green waste now being used in about 80% of their products.

The compost is typically a mix of green waste that has already been composted and graded down to 15mm, along with sawdust and horse manure. While Durston’s are responsible for haulage into and out of the site, it’s Nigel’s job to mix and turn the compost over the 11

weeks it takes to create the end product.

Until a year ago, Nigel had relied on an excavator working on top of the heaps for mixing, turning and loading lorries, but with an increased amount of material to handle and lack of manoeuvrability around the large site he needed another solution.

THE TORION IS GOING ALL DAY LONG

“A wheel loader was the obvious answer. An excavator works within a zone whereas a loader can work anywhere. I had looked at a couple of other machines when a ‘ag’ friend suggested that I try the CLAAS TORION as he said I would not get better aftersales service and support than from HAMBLYS and CLAAS. That’s what’s important to me.” says Nigel.

“The TORION is going 8 to 9 hours a day, 6 days a week, but we have material coming in 24 hours a day, so sometimes you can come in to find six loads have been tipped overnight. The more you move the compost and get air into it, the better the end product, so the TORION is going all day long. Over the last six months intake has doubled, but we have been more than able to keep up.

“I can’t afford downtime and that’s what I like about HAMBLYS. Matt (McDonald – Field Sales Manager) and Leonard (Summers – Service Manager) are great and will always answer the phone. They will work around me, fit in with our workload and even come after we have finished for the day. That’s worth a lot and the civil plant industry could learn a lot from agriculture when it comes to support and service!

AGRICULTURAL MACHINE DESIGNED FOR TOUGH AND MUCKY CONDITIONS

“I also like the fact that being an agricultural ‘spec’ machine, the TORION is designed for tough and mucky conditions. It’s designed very much with hard work in mind. For instance, the compost can be very dusty, so having a reversible fan to clear the radiator is ideal, and the VARIPOWER transmission means it climbs really well, far better than other loaders my drivers have used. Also it has greater clearance than some other machines and is far more stable. There are others I have tried where you can certainly start feeling a bit twitchy, but the TORION stays firmly planted to the ground.”

Nigel opted for the TORION 1511 mainly because being a used

machine that HAMBLYS had in stock, it was immediately available. When he bought it, it had about 1,200 hours on the clock, but now a year later it’s showing 3,700 trouble-free hours. With the TORION having proved ideal for the job, an order is now in for a larger TORION 1812 to replace it. Unlike the 1511 which has a Z-bar linkage, the new TORION has been specified with a high lift mast and Agricultural kinematics designed to give more hold control when tipping and loading lorries.

“The larger TORION will give us more reach for loading lorries and be better able to handle the large 4-tonne capacity BA Caulkett high tip bucket we have on the front, which I bought with a view to eventually having a larger loader to handle it. Also because the service intervals are longer, the running cost will be lower and servicing downtime reduced. Also fuel use, which is very good, should be lower as the engine will not be under so great a load.

“I also have taken the MAXI CARE 3-year parts and labour warranty, which fixes my costs and means I won’t get any unexpected bills, and in turn has enabled me to give Durston’s a fixed cost for the next three years.”