

Composting efficiency

We featured Nigel Baker in the Spring 2021 HT, using his TORION for his composting business.

Since then, not only has the 1511 been joined by a larger TORION 1812, but Durstons themselves have also now bought one of the first of the new Stage V, 184hp TORION 1511 for handling compost at their bagging plant.

Traditionally a supplier of peat based composts, over the past 10 years Durstons have developed a range of growing media, based on Gro Boost PAS 100 green compost, that is mixed with virgin wood compost and other recovered product depending on the blend required.

In addition to their own Durstons and Manor Farm ranges of growing media, Durstons also supply compost in own brand packaging, for instance for Lidl. In all, some 6 million bags, ranging in size from 20 to 60 litres are filled each year by the two packing lines at the company's factory near Street in Somerset.

PUSHING UP COMPOST

Delivered in October, the main role for the new TORION 1511 is to initially push up the Gro Boost compost as it arrives on-site into a mini-mountain of around 20,000 tonnes. Four hoppers, the largest of which is 15m³, are then filled with the required compost ingredients needed for each blend, that is then fed through to the two bagging lines which package around 2,000 tonnes of compost each week.

The TORION replaced a smaller wheel loader, which at 11,000 hours had served them well, but was starting to suffer from reliability issues. "It had been a good servant, but it was time to replace it and we decided to take the opportunity to look at something larger," explains Chris Durston. "We had one of their larger wheel loaders on trial, but didn't like it, so looked at a different make and eventually placed an order with them.



Chris Durston



"However, the delivery delay just kept getting longer, which caused us problems. Meantime I was watching Nigel Baker's TORION and how well it was performing, and starting to wonder if we had made the right decision. I contacted George (Evans) at CLAAS Western who arranged for us to try CLAAS' demo TORION 1511, which was in Scotland at the time, and once we saw the machine and had tried it, we did a deal for the machine and managed to cancel the order for the other one.

"An additional important factor for us is that CLAAS Western are only about 45 minutes away. They understand what we need and the service and support that they provide is a bonus, although in the 800 hours it has done so far the TORION hasn't missed a beat."

The TORION 1511, which has a load capacity of 9.7 tonnes, is paired with a high capacity Cherry toe-tip bucket on the P kinematics linkage and also has an auto-greasing system. The drive from the powerful 184hp 6-cylinder DPS engine with DYNAMIC COOLING, is through a VARIPower transmission, making it ideal for pushing up the compost and climbing the heaps. It also comes as standard with a 170 litre, 350 bar load-sensing hydraulic system.

"The drivers all like the TORION and how comfortable and easy to it is to operate, and having auto-greasing saves a lot of downtime," comments factory manager Paul Hembury. "Compared to our previous loader, the ease with which the TORION can push up and climb the stockpile heaps means they are now a third higher than previously. It's surprising how much more you can do.

FUEL EFFICIENCY

"For loading the hoppers, the TORION and the larger toe-tip bucket are well matched and far more efficient and will do in four bucketfuls what used to take six. Not only does this mean that the operator can keep pace with the bagging lines better, but there is less pressure on him and he has more time to push-up as lorries come in. The pump pressure in the hydraulic system is just right and the TORION is always working well within its lift capabilities, so the engine is not having to work hard, which helps save fuel."