

## **JCB Flies The Flag At IOG Saltex With Launch Of Eight New Grounds Care Products**

At 14 years of age, Jo Bamford really didn't appreciate the significance of the prototype mini backhoe loader that was attached to his quad bike as he scooted around the Bamford estate.

Today, however, as director of JCB Groundcare, nothing distracts his attention from the importance to JCB of the landscape and grounds care sector, a marketplace that has readily accepted a whole range of JCB Groundcare products – some purpose-built, others effectively scaled down JCBs.

Grounds care is, he says, “as exciting and offers as many opportunities” as, say, agriculture and construction – market sectors where the £1.42 billion annual turnover JCB operation is, justifiably, an iconic global brand.

A relative newcomer to the grounds care market – JCB Groundcare was established in 2004 – the company has quickly established itself as a major manufacturer of such products and has no doubt ruffled a few feathers among the more established brands.

“From day one, we've adopted JCB's traditional values of manufacturing cost-competitive products of high-quality build, coupled with the essential element of producing machines to suit customer needs,” says Jo Bamford.

“Like all JCB products, the functionality of the range is driven by customer feedback; we're always talking to our users, [JCB world headquarters at Rocester, Staffs, welcomes over 20,000 visitors a year] and hardly a day goes by when I do not meet customers.

“We know how to build machines, but our customers are the experts at using them, so we have to make sure we understand their needs.”

His obvious enthusiasm and boundless energy for the potential of a constantly evolving product range can perhaps also be measured by the importance that the company attaches to the annual IOG SALTEX show, where he and his team will be on hand to launch eight new products (see box item).

“IOG SALTEX is the biggest British show for the grounds care industry,” he exclaims, “and we're a major UK manufacturer of grounds care products. That's why we'll be there.

“We are a British company and we’re proud of it, but we have a global outlook, and there’s nowhere better than IOG SALTEX to launch our new products on the world stage.”

It’s a comment that, of course, is shaped by a business mindset that is obviously hereditary and has made JCB an eponymous noun in the Collins English Dictionary. “We estimate that the worldwide grounds care market is worth \$10 billion,” he says.

And although his initial target is to grow the business in the UK via distributors (so far, 15 independents with 60 depots between them) then Europe, it is clear that his sights are firmly set on the bigger picture.

Indeed, JCB subsidiaries in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Holland are already enjoying success through a network of specialist dealers.

That’s understandable when you combine fit-for-purpose, cost-effective machinery with high-level back up and customer service – all the grounds care products are fully integrated into JCB’s global product support and after-sales service activities that include a round-the-clock parts facility that guarantees deliveries anywhere in the world within 48 hours.

It also explains why Jo Bamford is “very excited at the prospects in a marketplace where there are few global players”.

He continues: “Manufacturing machines at the right price is critical but so, too, is effective product back up. This is why in the UK, for example, our distributor locations are strategically positioned to ensure all customers are very close to an authorised service and parts outlet.”

Most JCB Groundcare products are produced at JCB’s Cecilly Mills site in Staffordshire. Where products are produced by a third party in an OEM agreement, they are brought into Cecilly Mills for final assembly and individual product test prior to despatch.

The production methodology mirrors the principles so successfully applied to the 257 standard product lines produced throughout JCB’s 17 manufacturing plants worldwide: the maintenance of high product quality by manufacturing as much as possible in-house (up to 80 per cent of content) on a continual improvement flowline basis where quality is the byword.

Jo Bamford’s sales ethos – “if you spend £50 on a piece of kit, you’ll get a £50 piece of kit” - is certainly a family catchphrase. But it is a reasoning that

undoubtedly has also been influenced by his 'educational' spell in North America when he was tasked with the cold selling of JCB skid steers. "That taught me a lot about selling," he reflects.

"The fact is, JCB Groundcare products are not the dearest in the world and they're not the cheapest. But they are of quality – because quality manufacture is my family's lifeblood."

Visitors to the show can register now for their free entry badge at [www.iogsaltex.co.uk](http://www.iogsaltex.co.uk) or can call the Visitor Hotline on 0870 429 4524 to order free visitor tickets.

Following its 67-year tradition, IOG SALTEX is Europe's flagship event for the open space management industry, and this year will again embrace fine turf and sports surfaces, turf maintenance equipment, children's outdoor play and safety surfacing, landscaping, contractors, commercial vehicles, outdoor leisure and facilities management, as well as software and security equipment. The show is attended by open space management professionals and contractors – from groundsmen and greenkeepers through to play officers, architects, designers and surveyors as well as local authority and outdoor leisure facility managers.

#### BOX ITEM

##### Eight new machines at IOG SALTEX

JCB Groundcare is set to unveil eight new machines at next month's IOG SALTEX open space management show (5-7 September 2006, Windsor, Berks) as well as a concept walk behind mower scheduled for future introduction. The new products are five new compact tractors, a micro excavator, a 4x4 compact backhoe loader and a diesel-powered zero turn mower.

The new compact tractors include the JCB 323, 327, 331 and 335, which are 23, 27, 31 and 35 HP machines. All have hydrostatic transmission and category one three point linkages. The larger model, the 354, is a 54 HP machine. It has a mechanical transmission and a Category 2 three point linkage, and comes with an air conditioned cab as standard. Cabs are optional on smaller models. At IOG SALTEX, the JCB 323, 335 and 354 will be on show.

All models come with mid and rear hydraulics, auto headland management and cruise control, as standard.

Weighing in at 800 Kgs, the 8008 micro excavator is JCB's smallest ever machine, while the ZT20D Zero Turn Mower is powered by a 18 HP diesel engine. The mower has a travel speed of 13 mph making it the most productive type of grass cutting machinery – proven to be 30-50 per cent faster than

alternative equipment. Two variants of the ZT20D will be on show – one with a 48 inch cutting deck and one with the 52 inch side discharge/collect feature.

It is JCB's policy to continually expand the Groundcare range by a combination of in-house design, manufacture and assembly, as well as by OEM agreements with specialist manufacturers.