

Grahams milks 6.5 tonne Dailys to cut costs

Stephen Elliot, transport manager at Grahams Family Dairy, says he is trialling a move from 7.5 to 6.5 tonners and has bought two Iveco Daily 65C18 LCVs for the purpose.

The Dailys are already in operation, clocking up a projected 40,000km a year at the Stirling-based firm, which distributes milk and dairy products to a mix of retail outlets, from corner shops to supermarkets around the region.

Elliot explains that the new, smaller trucks still offer a more than adequate body and payload allowance of 4,255kg for the dairy's deliveries, but also offer the advantage of easier driving and manoeuvrability, typical of smaller LCVs.

"The decision to buy these Dailys, rather than simply replacing like-for-like, has brought multiple benefits to the business," states Elliot. "Not only has it reduced capital



expenditure, but the Dailys offer improved payload capacity and allow us to carry 14 trolley-cages. Our existing Ategos can only carry 12," he adds.

Elliot says that extra capacity amounts to a "big improvement in productivity", which will, he believes, cut delivery miles and fuel costs – so also resulting in reduced emissions and fossil fuel consumption.

He also comments on the benefits for drivers: "The Daily offers better manoeuvrability, which is particularly important, as these vehicles will spend the majority of their time making deliveries in busy urban environments," he explains.

The Daily chassis cabs were supplied by Iveco dealer Kerr & Smith and both were mounted with bespoke refrigerated

bodywork, manufactured by Tekbo. They each use a direct-drive Carrier Transicold Xarios temperature-controlled system to keep the dairy products cool throughout the distribution process, and Elliott expects them to remain in operation with the company until 2016.

Power comes from 3.0 litre HPT (high performance turbo) engines, capable of 176hp, between 3,200 and 3,500 rev/min, and up to 400Nm of torque between 1,250 and 3,000rpm. Elliot reckons this wide power and torque band is an excellent match for his urban delivery requirements, while also permitting motorway cruising at low engine speeds.

He also advises that every component in the engine has been specified for heavy duty, prolonged work – citing the timing chain service interval, which has been extended to every 350,000km.

Bunzl is going greener with electric truck hire

Truck contract hire firm Ryder has delivered its first leased 10 tonne electric truck to Bunzl, the distribution group, for operation in the catering sector, throughout central London.

Bruce Howard, Ryder's contract hire director, explains that the Smith Newton truck is ideal for stop-start work – in this case, with a maximum range of some 80 miles every day.

It was trials with a demo vehicle that convinced Bunzl that the truck – now based at the distributor's Charlton branch – would be able to run for up to three days per single charge on its normal delivery routes around the capital.

That is partly because the vehicle has been fitted with regenerative braking technology to extend battery life. It also carries its own recharging equipment, enabling it to be recharged from any three-phase electric outlet.

"We've been supplying vans and trucks to all five divisions of Bunzl since 2007 and currently supply more than 200 contract hire vehicles to their national locations," says Howard. "But the supply of our first zero emission electric contract hire truck is part of our plan to supply Bunzl with the most

environmentally friendly vehicles available," he adds.

Max Harris, operations and field sales director at Bunzl, explains that the new Smith Newton truck has been acquired as part of Bunzl's green Sustainable Distribution Initiative, which covers all aspects of the firm's activities.

"We have already fitted wind deflectors to every vehicle, which gave us a 5–8% reduction in fuel consumption. And we have also introduced aerodynamic double-deck trailers, which took the equivalent of two articulated 38 tonne vehicles off the road," explains Harris.

"We have also conducted trials with LPG [liquefied petroleum gas], but found the engines underpowered. We even investigated the viability of bio-diesel, but concluded it is not sustainable as a long-term proposition for light goods vehicles, because of the land mass required to grow the crops," he says.

"So, we've focused on electric motive power units. The first truck will operate in London and, should the reliability meet expectations, we will be launching further electric LGVs in cities across the UK in 2011."



Workshop system transforms recovery

Sometimes an operator can become successful so fast that the challenge is no longer about achieving growth, but attempting to improve efficiency and joined-up working, just to keep up.

That was what happened to Sovereign Recovery, which, from small beginnings, now has contracts with transport operators throughout London and the Home Counties. Big clients include Arriva, First Bus, Stagecoach, Metroline and TfL (Transport for London).

Sovereign Recovery director Sue Pope says one of the keys to improvement was the company's vehicle maintenance management software, Accelerator. "Before we had Accelerator, we were running ourselves ragged making sure we kept up with our customers' needs. We were managing, but it was manic. We were organising servicing off a basic spreadsheet, and there was no real way of linking



the recovery and servicing with the invoicing."

She says that Sovereign's system changed everything, and that installation and training took just one day. "It was set up to do exactly what we needed [and], as all the information is just two clicks away, all our staff can get a complete view of what we are doing. So now reminders are in place for scheduling repairs and maintenance. And that work can be directly linked to our invoicing."

Sovereign accounts manager Linda Crack adds that the whole organisation now has a better understanding of when work needs to be done, and says that it's made a big difference to the efficiency of both the recovery and workshop sides of the business. She also says that less time and money is wasted, because the maintenance workload is managed efficiently.

On the recovery side, she explains that Accelerator holds all its clients' bus identification data,

so that, when a call comes in for assistance, it automatically provides all the information on the vehicle itself, the operator and the area, and generates the documents needed. "That allows us to get the right driver and vehicle to the location as quickly as possible, and provides us with all the tracking we need for the job," adds Crack.

She also states that Accelerator prevents jobs from 'disappearing' after the work has been done – ensuring that recovery truck drivers, who are stationed around the capital, file their paperwork, so that invoicing is done on time.

One thing Accelerator can't do, she says, is force bus operators to deliver vehicles to the workshop on the due date. "If they've already got three buses off the road, they're not necessarily going to be able to release them to us," she points out. But it does allow maintenance rescheduling.

Guildford reports new efficiency from Traka

All operators have to maintain strict records on vehicle maintenance, driver licensing and competence, and vehicle use and mileage to comply with VOSA requirements – and Guildford Council is no exception. However, with about 25% of its driver workforce employed by agencies, responsibility and accountability for vehicle use has, in the past, been a big challenge.

So when the council reports that it has achieved a new level of efficiency in managing the movements of its fleet of 44 waste collection vehicles by adopting Traka's key management system, we ought to sit up and take notice.

Mick Tufts, the council's fleet administrator, makes the point that there are several aspects to this. For example, he cites accident management, which to him is about managing risk, but



doing it well. "We accept that accidents do happen," says Tufts. "Even the best driver will occasionally clip a wall or a gatepost. But it makes life so much easier when accidents are reported. And now, all our drivers know they can be identified with Traka, [so] they are much more likely to report any misadventure."

However, he explains that it's also important to ensure that

drivers are only accessing keys to vehicles they are qualified and licensed to drive. Since Traka locks every key in place and only grants access to authorised users (with LED illuminated key strips, showing which key to take and where to return it), Tufts says he now controls who has access to keys and how many they can take. And he adds that there is also an advance key booking option to

stop anyone taking a vehicle that has been allocated for service or repair.

Finally, to comply with ISO9002, the council has to be able to demonstrate that it has procedures to manage and account for driver activity. Prior to installing Traka, driver records were patchy, log sheets from agency drivers were not always submitted and, if there was an accident, a speeding fine or a report of inappropriate driving, it wasn't easy to identify the driver. "We can now trace the driver immediately, even if the incident happened weeks ago. The Traka software holds all records, giving full and accurate accountability."

So successful has the system been that the council has since extended it beyond its waste collection vehicles, also to manage road sweepers, litter vehicles, and even pest control.