

Weighbridge loads the game for haulier

Cartwright Bros of North Hykeham, near Lincoln, is reporting that its drive-over weighbridge is helping to improve productivity and customer service, while also generating revenue.

The company, which runs a fleet of 60 trucks and 80 trailers on general haulage and is part of the Pall-Ex network, is using the Axtec weighbridge to ensure its own operations are legal, but has also had the equipment certified by Lincolnshire Trading Standards for public use.

Director Jamie Cartwright explains that operators can get their vehicles weighed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure legal compliance or for invoicing by weight.

The Axtec 4000 weighbridge is the only one of its type that can be approved as a public weighbridge, as it meets the stricter requirements of accuracy (+/- 0.25%). This is



only the second available for public use in the UK, the other being at Axtec's own premises in Runcorn, Cheshire.

Cartwright explains that his company's Pall-Ex work involves around 2,500 consignments each week, with considerable weight variation. Hence the weighbridge to check that each vehicle's payload is

optimised and that it is operating within its legal weight limit, both gross and on individual axles.

He says that the weighbridge delivers all this information in the few seconds that it takes a vehicle of any axle configuration to drive over the weighing plate.

On the general haulage side, he explains that the company also uses the weighbridge to get accurate tare weights for every vehicle and trailer. Information is recorded on a spreadsheet, so the traffic office can see which truck or tractor/trailer combination is best suited to a load when a customer phones in.

"The spreadsheet allows us to check instantly which vehicle is right for the job and to do so with confidence that it can handle the load within its gross weight limit," states Cartwright.

Stoneridge upgrade for Carefoot & Sons

Since winning the Stoneridge time challenge at the Commercial Vehicle Show last April, Carefoot & Sons (Transport) has so far upgraded 16 of its tachographs to SE5000 Exakt units.

"We decided to test Stoneridge's bold claims, using our own tachograph data, and we were pleasantly surprised to find that we could save 46 minutes of driving time a day per truck," explains transport manager Rob Dean.

He reveals that the company originally trialled three SE5000 Exakt tachographs in the Carefoot vehicles responsible for the majority of multi-loading and tipping work. That led to positive feedback from the drivers about the devices' ease of use.

"While the driver's daily hours regulations remain unchanged, the amount of driving time we can conduct within the legislated time means we can increase the amount of loads achieved each day," states Dean.

"Over the course of a month and year, this adds up, in terms of productivity gains, which is why we've decided to retrofit the tachographs.

"We fully expect the new equipment to pay for itself in the coming months as a result of the extra driving time gained."

Renault trucks at a premium for Master Farm Services

Agricultural and horticultural equipment specialist Master Farm Services has taken delivery of a Renault Premium 460.18 4x2 18-tonner, configured with a drawbar, twin sleeper Privilege cab and Optidriver automated gearbox.

Supplied by Renault Trucks Felixstowe, the low height, high-powered Premium joins Master Farm's distribution service, delivering grain driers and tractors nationwide.

Body design and custom trailer work – including hydraulic beavertail and flatbed body, with hydraulic drop wells – was undertaken by Webb Truck Equipment.

George Young, who manages Master Farm Services, says the resulting design allows the truck to undertake two very different operations: transporting up to three large capacity grain driers, which fit into the drop wells, one on the tractor unit and two on the drawbar trailer; and, with the wells up, delivering Mitsubishi Compact Tractors and ground care equipment as a flatbed.

Chassis height was also important, he says. "Most of our driers go out as full height finished units, so delivering to farms

and agricultural sites means negotiating country lanes with low-hanging trees, as well as low bridges on the road network," states Young. "The Renault Premium was the only chassis to get us below 16ft," he adds.

Young also reveals that the cab's driver is delighted with the new truck. "Although high wind resistance adversely affects our fuel consumption, the Premium achieved 8mpg on its first run to Cornwall and we hope this will improve in the coming weeks," he confirms.



Fleet boosts recycling drive with Econic



HW Martin Waste is reporting “spectacular increases” in recycling rates since drafting its first five Mercedes-Benz Econic refuse trucks into service for local authorities in Derbyshire.

“We have been delighted by the way that recycling material tonnage has shot up,” states Phil Darwin, northern area operations manager for HW Martin Waste, which now provides a managed service for waste collection, sorting and recycling.

“In the first few weeks of operation, we

saw a 170% increase on one particularly challenging round, while the average across the whole project shows a 90% jump in recyclable tonnage. We are now moving 70% more material, with fewer vehicles,” he adds.

Supplied by East Midlands dealer Mertrux, the trucks are 6x2 Econic 2629LL 26-tonners, with mid-steer axles for optimum load distribution and ride quality.

Darwin explains that power comes from 290hp Euro 5 and EEV compliant engines,

matched to Allison six-speed automatic transmissions, while air suspension front and rear makes for quiet operations in urban areas.

He also points to the trucks’ 70:30 split Heil Twintrack compactor bodies, which offer 22m³ capacity, to reflect the fact that much of the waste carried is light, but bulky. They are also fitted with triple Terberg Omnidel bin lifts.

“The axle weighing system was key to [the Econic’s] appeal, while we were also impressed with the safety benefits offered by the bus-style door and low-entry cab,” comments Darwin.

“The deep, panoramic screen allows the driver and crew to see more of what’s going on around them, whether on the road or on the pavement,” he adds.

In a little detail, Mercedes’ axle load indicator employs load sensors, linked to the vehicle’s individual airbags, to monitor weight via the CANbus. This can be viewed on the dashboard display as: individual axle, all axles showing all weights or all axles, plus total vehicle weight.

As for the Econic’s door, it is wide opening, air assisted and forward folding, which Darwin says is ideal in tight situations, where obstructions, such as street furniture, can make conventional doors a problem.

Occupant safety is also a benefit: for example, the door can only be opened while the vehicle is stationary, thus removing the temptation for crews to jump into or out of the cab.

Massive fuel savings with Fleetboard, says John Lewis

The John Lewis Partnership has installed Daimler FleetBoard telematics hardware across its entire fleet of John Lewis and Waitrose heavy trucks, in a move it hopes will lead to a cut of at least 4% in vehicle carbon emissions.

FleetBoard’s contract with the John Lewis Partnership followed a year-long trial between two providers of vehicle telematics – with FleetBoard winning, because of its reliable and ‘glitch-free’ system, as well as the clear and accurate presentation of vehicle and driver performance data.

Ray Collington, fleet engineer for the John Lewis Partnership, says he expects carbon savings equivalent to 3,000 tonnes of CO₂, through a reduction in annual fuel consumption of one million litres or more.

“Our approach has been to view telematics as an investment that, over time, will have both positive environmental and



cost benefits. Telematics is one part of a much wider programme of activities aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of this business,” he explains.

“Our target is to achieve an absolute reduction in operational CO₂ emissions by 2020/21 of 15%, against a baseline of 2010/11,” continues Collington.

“On the evidence of the trials we’ve undertaken, we’re hoping that FleetBoard will help us to achieve carbon savings of over 4% from our fleet,” he adds.

And he says that the John Lewis Partnership is also optimistic that its adoption of Daimler FleetBoard’s technology will result in significantly lower maintenance and repair costs, and reduce its already low accident rate even further.