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MeritAgCheck The Farm Safety App

Built by the leading UK agricultural safety specialists. Ensuring compliance across your farm, estate or rural business, at the touch of a button. Create an account at www.meritcheck.co.uk

Features include:

- Over 200 customisable daily checklists for machinery
- Add any training completed by team members
- Record **servicing, maintenance and inspections** on machinery
- Monitor LOLER and Trailer Brake Testing
- An **Essential** version 'free forever'

Coming soon to MeritAgCheck:

- Access to Risk Assessments
- Print and export any reports completed
- Access to Lone Working Processes
- Individual teams as departments



As farms begin to get busier over the next few months now is an important time, as ever, to make sure all your employees are up to date on all the Health & Safety procedures on the farm that they are working on. It is imperative that new starters for silage & harvest seasons are aware of the procedures and have the relevant training certificates to drive any machinery.

Regular check of all farm machinery should be done daily and using the Merit Ag Check farm safety App these checks can be done from the tractor in the morning before the day is started. This not only gives the operator the peace of mind the tractor & implement is in good working order, but also the farm/estate manager can see this information as well, thus problems are found sooner, creating less delays once out in the field at work.

To take advantage of the FREE offer to use the Merit Check App for one year please contact Steve or Camilla in the Ring Office.

Members Information

Inter row Maize drills

We have members who have Inter row maize drills that can undersow grass into a standing Maize crop.

If anyone would like any further information about the machines and rates please contact Steve in the Ring office.

Fuel Card Price

The weekly (9/5/22) **AF (key fuels card) fuel price** is 175.90 inc VAT & The weekly **Eso fuel price** is 176.42 ppl inc VAT

As with all prices please check the price at the pump as it may not be cheaper than the fuel card price.

Planning a grain store? Talk to the experts

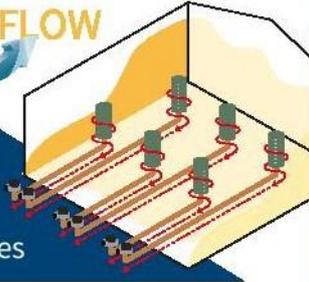
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Polycool Laterals
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for high pressure grain ventilation



- Suit overhead conveyor filled stores
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- Pedestals more secure when filling
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Available in:



OXFORDSHIRE:
500 tonne mixed crop store

WARWICKSHIRE:
5000 tonne wheat store

WILTSHIRE:
1000 tonne wheat & spring barley store

EV Fans connect directly to 450mm duct through external wall to cool stored crops

Designed for dust laden air, available in a variety of standards and finishes

- Built to order in sizes 0.75kw-75kw
- Perfect for blowing air through under floor channels or floor ducts
- Highly efficient impeller

YORKSHIRE:
10,000 tonnes of wheat for animal feed

CAMBRIDGE:
Used for part of a 100,000 tonne commercial storage operation

ROMANIA:
10,000 tonnes of grain maize

WE'VE BLOWN IT

Grain maize in Romania

Miscanthus for horse bedding in Cornwall

Animal feed in Yorkshire



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We are pleased to announce a new contracting service to help the removal of:

- **Black Grass** • **Rye Grass** • **Wild Oats**
- or any other weed that sticks its head above the canopy

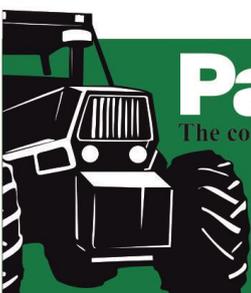
Job Vacancy

We have a member looking for a skilled person to be part of their rural contracting/farming business that supply services to equestrian, country estate & Agriculture. Primary enterprise comprises of:

Forage production * hedgecutting * fencing and groundwork services * contract straw bailing * outdoor lambing ewe flock * beef suckler herd with emphasis on Beef from forages.

Must be reliable and willing to take on all aspects of required operations. Person with good fencing skills/experience particularly sought to manage existing and growing workloads. Must have a clean driving licence. To be based Nr Henley-on-Thames

More information please contact Steve or Camilla.



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TKMR AGM 2022

Thank you to all the members who attended the TKMR AGM on the 4th May in person or virtually. Below are the reports given by our Chairman, Geoff Elliott & Ring Manager Steve Ackrill.

Ring Manager's Report

Welcome to the 31st Annual General Meeting of the Thames and Kennet Machinery Ring. This year the AGM is a hybrid meeting with some members here with us in the office but also some members joining via zoom.

We do finally seem to be coming to the end of the pandemic, whilst there is still an alarmingly high number of people contracting Covid, thankfully it does seem that the symptoms of the latest variants are on the whole much less serious and some sort of normality is resuming, at least as far as Covid is concerned anyway.

A little about the last year within the Ring. We started 2021 with 263 members and finished the year on 260. The turnover on "Work" was slightly down the previous year at £900,000 compared to £930,000 in 2020. When comparing the figures whilst writing this report it seems there were no great changes just a little less of a few different things.

Fuel, where do I start The Ring supplied just over 5.7m litres during 2021 which was slightly up on 5.5m litres during 2020, the higher prices throughout the year meant an increase in turnover of almost £1m up to £3.4m during the year. The last few months have been a bit of a nightmare really, we started with a supposed fuel shortage coupled with a lack of drivers meaning lead times of up to 2 weeks and sometimes more which some members found easier to accept than others. I would like to say that Camilla and I didn't find this situation easy as we felt we were letting members down by not providing the service that we normally are able to and pride ourselves on doing. Then when we started to get back to slightly shorter lead times the prices have gone through the roof and I almost feel embarrassed to tell people the price, for a while the market was that volatile, we were seeing 5 and sometimes 10ppl changes over night, that all of our suppliers were forced to withdraw daily prices and all deliveries were priced on the day of delivery. The highest we saw was gas oil in excess of 130ppl.

The NAAC have recently released their new contracting charges guidelines with fuel prices based on £1/ litre.

I reported last year that in my position as chair of the MRA I was representing England and Wales and working with representatives from the SMRA on finding a replacement for our Farm Data computer system. We'd had a setback about the time of the last AGM when the chosen software developer pulled out at the 11th hour. I'm pleased to report that a different developer has since been found and a new agreement signed, we held a meeting 2 weeks ago to kick start the project and now work is underway. The main difference between this system and the previous developers is that this one will have its own fully integrated accounts package, whereas the previous version would have worked in conjunction with Sage or a similar accounting package.

As I reported last year the buying group services we offer are continuing to grow as more members realise that they can contact us for just about anything as well as just for 'Work' and 'Fuel' as we were previously known for. With this in mind, whatever you need please don't hesitate to get in touch as we are always happy to obtain quotes on your behalf.

As always I would like to end this report with a few thankyou's, firstly to our members, regardless of if you use us a lot or if you are a member almost as an insurance policy in case things go wrong, we thank you for your continued support and membership (we wouldn't be here without you). Secondly I would like to thank our Board of Directors who all freely give their time to aid the smooth running of the Ring, whilst we don't physically meet as a board that often it's reassuring to know that the board are there for advice "should the need arise". Whilst we have not officially got to that part of the agenda yet I would like to welcome Steve Thompson to the Board.

Finally, I would like to thank our Chairman Geoff for always being on hand and for just "knowing stuff", anyone who knows Geoff will know what I mean when I say he just "knows stuff" ...

Thank you.

Steve Ackrill
Ring Manager

Chairman's Report from the

AGM

Since mentioning dire predictions in my report a year ago, the direst predictions appear to have been trumped. Who would have guessed that we would see a near doubling of fuel prices, tripling of some fertiliser costs, a pig industry on its knees, a poultry industry questioning the viability of its next batch of chickens, and food prices rising in the shops? It's all a reminder that our businesses, and indeed our entire industry, are only small cogs in a very large, relentless wheel.

It's not all bad news. Arable farmers are seeing unprecedented prices, crops look good (though some rain would be nice), and some of our customers are reluctantly accepting that if they want stable supply, they must pay enough to ensure stable suppliers. Prudent buying and selling, and careful cost control, mean that many businesses can still see a viable future. Whether or not the much-vaunted switch to carbon capture, biodiversity net gain and other environmental schemes will further reduce the land available for food production, only time will tell. Sadly, none of this helps the sectors under most immediate pressure.

Given the short attention span of most news formats, it's easy to forget that it's not just the war in Ukraine that is at the heart of the turmoil. Canada saw a very poor harvest last year, impacting on rapeseed exports, which pushed UK rapeseed and oil prices higher. We've been bemoaning the growth in palm oil and its associated deforestation for ages, so we should not be surprised that Indonesia has moved to ban exports, whatever its reasons for the timing of its move; we really need to pay more attention to world events.

British consumers are being asked to question the consequences and the cost of their consumption, but it's a sad fact that less well-off citizens often make the poorest choices about what they eat; just look at the trolleys in supermarkets.

The changes in agricultural support are now beginning to bite, and any current high prices should not divert farmers' attention from the need to be as efficient as possible. Input and machinery costs mean the risk of farming grows ever greater, and TKMR can help in making members' businesses more effective. I hope the era of vanity purchases is ending, but a casual glance at some of the tractors driving around our roads makes me less certain. I've been banging the same drum for a long time, but co-operation brings dividends, so it worries me to see that farmer-to-farmer business through TKMR has declined again, although only slightly.

Your Ring is in a strong position, due to a careful management team and good guidance from volunteer directors; the most recent accounts confirm this, with a respectable surplus achieved without the one-off grant support which helped us in the previous year. Steve's influence in the MRA is ensuring that the future software needs of all the machinery rings are being addressed. Let us help you more in the next year!

Geoff Elliott
TKMR Chairman of Board of Directors

Hampshire Training Providers

Hampshire Training where possible and as the weather allows will try and deliver as much training as feasible outside with fewer training numbers. They have the following courses scheduled at present:

May

20th Telehandler

June

8th ATV course

15th Telehandler

21st -23rd IOSH Managing Safety

23rd Telehandler

28th First Aid

30th Communication Skills for Team Leaders

Kennet & Thames Training

Kennet & Thames Training are starting to offer open courses. Dates continue to be booked so please keep an eye on our Calendar.

June

6th PA1 Safe use of Pesticides

7th PA6 Knapsack Sprayer

8th PA2 Field crop Sprayer

15th PA2 Field crop Sprayer

16th & 17th Chainsaw Maintenance & Cross Cut

Lantra E-Learning courses can be booked via [Lantra E-Learning - Kennet & Thames Training \(kennetandthames.co.uk\)](https://www.kennetandthames.co.uk)

West Berks & Oxon Training Group

May

10th LANTRA Rat & Mouse Control

10th * Infield Agronomy

11th Upholstery & Soft Furnishings

17th Management Techniques

18th LANTRA 1 day Chainsaw Refresher

18th Upholstery & Soft Furnishings

26th (evening) Introduction to Wet Felting

27th PA6 Knapsack Sprayer (training day)

June

7th (morning) Infield Agronomy

8th Upholstery & Soft Furnishings

8th Pottery - make your own candlestick

13th PA2 Boom Sprayer (Training Day)

13th & 14th Lantra 2 day Chainsaw Maintenance & Safe Cross Cut

22nd Upholstery & Soft Furnishing's

23rd 1 day Emergency First Aid at Work

29th Upholstery & Soft Furnishings

** Infield Agronomy Sessions with Julian Gold at Hendred Estate. The sessions will start at 8am with topical issues of all the common combinable crops. The emphasis being on sharing of knowledge amongst participants rather than one way lecturing.

We have members available for 2022 Grass Silage & Hay Making seasons with both Self-propelled and Waggon and hay making equipment. Please contact the office to find out more information.

