

A Peterborough-based agricultural equipment manufacturer has put its faith in Pirtek as the supplier of complete hose assemblies for its award-winning automated hoe system.

Just over a year ago, Pirtek Peterborough's sales manager Alastair Birley made contact with local agricultural equipment manufacturer Garfords Farm Machinery, offering the family-owned business a reliable source of replacement hoses. But after further consultation, it soon became clear that replacement hoses weren't the company's biggest issue. Rather, it was the lack of a reliable supply of new hose assemblies for its innovative range of computer-controlled hoe attachments.

Need for Diversification

The Garford family come from a long tradition of farming innovators. Current director Norman, father of present managing director Phillip, ran the family farm until 1953 when, together with his own father, diversified into engineering to produce an efficient beet harvester. The company's inventiveness lives on today, first with the "Victor" beet harvester introduced in 1992 and still manufactured today. More recently, the company collected the 2003 Royal Agricultural Society of England's (RASE) silver medal for its computer-controlled, high-speed, tractor mounted Robocrop 2. This hoe has a front mounted video camera that relays information to a guidance system inside the cab, affording extremely accurate crop tracking over multiple rows.

Even more innovative is the new Robocrop InRow, recently awarded the Gold Medal by the RASE after three years of heavy trials and that not only weeds between rows but between the plants as well. "The beauty of all our machines is that they provide a purely mechanical method of accurate high-speed weed suppression without the need for chemicals," Phillip Garford. "Thanks to these innovations, our business has actually grown during the recession because we can produce a machine that farmers actually want, one that improves the harvest and saves them money."

Working Relationship

Garford reports that the InRow rotating cutting units are all hydraulically controlled, which is where Pirtek comes in. "Despite the success of our products, we had struggled to establish a working partnership with a reliable hydraulic assembly supplier. But the good thing about Pirtek Peterborough was the fact that they took the trouble to learn about our unique machines and to suggest how to improve the common items in the range and thereby reduce our overheads. As our company grows, and we

are looking to substantially enlarge the production next year, we know that we have a reliable supplier who will play the role of an OEM, providing quality products, right on our doorstep," Garford continues. "The hose kits are supplied on a just in time basis. We send Pirtek Peterborough a list of components and they supply the complete hydraulic assembly for each machine next day, or even the same day.

To date, they have supplied over 700 kits and we even boast about our association to our customers because Pirtek is such a familiar and well-respected brand"



Pirtek provides Garford with a reliable and responsive source of hose assemblies.