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2025

KRONE

XtraBlatt

Turbo service

Cover story

The Meijer family
Controlled traffic farming

Biogas
Wildcard of the energy sector

Contractor Albrecht
The bale checker

In the run-up to the Agritechnica 2025 trade fair, more than 100 specialised journalists from around 30 countries visited the Spelle site in Germany, as part of the traditional, international KRONE press days. The main focus was the exclusive, live presentation of new products and ones that are being developed in use in the field.

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

If you are holding this issue of XtraBlatt, then the Agritechnica 2025 trade fair was about five weeks ago. The trade fair was an outstanding event and complete success for our KRONE team. The extremely positive response by our visitors to the more than a dozen innovations that we presented, as well as being awarded a silver Agritechnica Innovation Award for the world's first OptiSet system for the Vendro rotary tedder, far exceeded our expectations. The new design of the stand also received a lot of positive feedback and presented the KRONE Group as the world's largest supplier in the grassland and harvesting technology sector, as well as the professional agricultural logistic sector. This has given us an optimistic outlook for 2026.

This confidence is more important than ever given the global political situation. Particular challenges have arisen for the KRONE Group because of the current US tariff policy, which has massively increased prices in the USA – our most important export market. In addition, this policy entails a tremendous amount of administrative work and legal risks, so that deliveries to this market are currently very limited. It is of little consolation that other European and even American manufacturers based in Europe are affected in the same way. This trade policy not only makes it more difficult to access the market, but also places a strain on American farmers.

Consequently, we are, more than ever, focusing on key European markets. We continue to have an optimistic outlook because of our extended product range comprising our professional agricultural logistic solutions. We continue to be motivated by the fact that our innovations are still setting trends and standards around the world and that some of these are only achieved by our competitors after decades.

Bernard Krone is the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Krone Group.

However, difficult times have also motivated us to inject a new dynamism into existing systems, such as Aftersales. Our Parts and Logistics Centre, that we officially open in April, was the first milestone in this direction. Now we need to pull out all the stops to market high-quality original spare parts and innovative service concepts. Heiner Brüning, the Managing Director of Aftersales, will provide a more detailed overview in the title story of this issue of XtraBlatt. The objective is to work with our specialist partners to offer you, as one of our customers, a premium service with even more added benefits. This is and will, more than ever, become an essential part of the KRONE brand value – you can count on that!

I would like to wish you and your family a relaxing break and a good start to the new year full of health and optimism.

Bernard Krone

Kind regards, Bernard Krone

VERSION 2/2025

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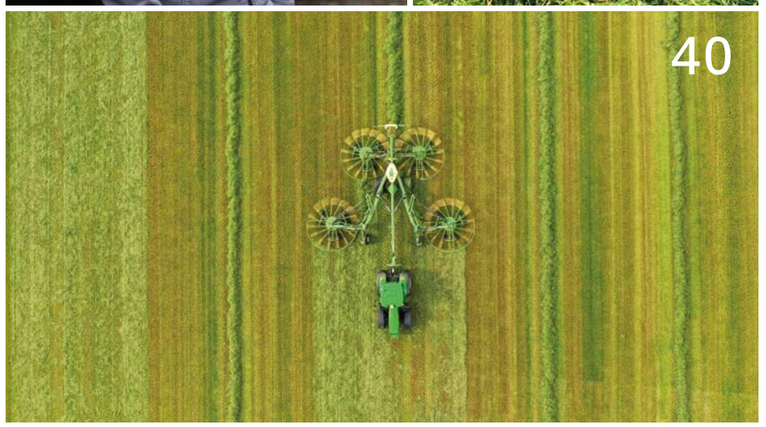

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AFTERSALES

"We want our service to become even more proactive."

In 2024, the initial start-up of the new spare parts warehouse was a little bumpy, but now everything is running smoothly. Heiner Brüning, the Managing Director of Aftersales at Maschinenfabrik KRONE, now has a new large project to tackle and is looking to fast track the service concept.

XtraBlatt: ***There is an old saying in the Service department that in times when sales of new machines are restrained, revenue generated from the workshop and spare parts in the specialised trade sector generally has a tendency to increase. Was that also the case in the last two years?***
Heiner Brüning: Generally, this still applies. The service revenue in the specialist workshops and in our Spare Parts department has developed favourably. However, fundamental changes can be identified.

XtraBlatt: ***What do you mean?***
Brüning: It is no secret that the revenue generated from services in the specialised trade sector is most important to companies. In principle, this also applies to manufacturers and hence equally to us. In the last financial year (2024/2025) we generated close to € 140 million from spare and wear parts, slightly up from the previous year. However, we must admit that growth rates are declining in comparison to the average of the last 15 years.

XtraBlatt: ***Why is this happening? The declining number of new machines being sold across the entire market since 2023 in itself cannot be the main reason, after all, on a proportional basis new machines have very few faults ...***
Brüning: That is true. To start with, the causes are far more complex than would appear at first glance. Our analyses clearly illustrated this.

XtraBlatt: ***So it is primarily not due to the growing proportion of replicas and the fact these are being made available on the market by relevant spare part wholesalers?***
Brüning: This is certainly an important reason why the revenue from original parts has and continues to come under pressure. Especially because the number of suppliers in the replica segment has increased significantly and they are also covering more part segments and brands. However, our surveys conducted with contractors and farmers highlighted that customers' preferences have changed fundamentally over the last four years. This was also confirmed by a survey conducted by the German Association of Machinery and Plant Engineering Companies (VDMA) in 2024. Customers' preferences are based on price, although that is not the only factor. Nevertheless, the original spare part market is currently restrained.

Amongst other things, I believe one of the identified causes is that the high machine stock levels in the specialised trade sector since the end of 2022 have generated a huge capital commitment, which in turn has considerably reduced the willingness to make definitive early purchases, which in themselves are very attractive to dealers and customers. During the main season there was a significant increase in orders placed at short notice and even then, only for the bare essentials. The subsequently higher prices were good for our revenue, but the volume of parts was lower.

However, this is a temporary result of lower growth. Generally, I believe another reason is that over the last ten years structural changes have reduced the number of wear-prone components in machines. This not only applies to KRONE, but in my opinion affects all manufacturers. The latest example from our products is the new CombiPack HDP round baler that we introduced at the Agritechnica trade fair. The baling element and rotor of this round baler rely on the PowerDrive concept and, for the first time, are driven by the gearbox and without any chains, thus significantly reducing maintenance costs. This is good for the customer, but does have a tendency to reduce the sale of spare parts.

XtraBlatt: ***So there are fewer parts that are of a higher quality and therefore more expensive to replace if they are faulty ...***
Brüning: That may apply in individual cases – however, what is classed as affordable and what is expensive? When answering this question, you cannot just take the prices of spare parts into consideration, but must also consider the total costs of ownership (TCO) – i.e. the total a machine will cost the customer over the entire service life of the machine. I am convinced that we at KRONE are very well-positioned when it comes to the TCO, although I believe it is something we can improve further. We still have some work to do to be able to achieve this.

XtraBlatt: ***What are you specifically thinking of?***
Brüning: Very briefly, we must first determine the necessary statistical basis, such as the TCO and then further develop the benefit statement for customers. Secondly, it is important to analyse the spare parts market in even more detail. We must not be satisfied with the extent to which manufacturers are selling copies of fast-moving wear parts for our machines, for example. Suitable original part offers need to be made available by us to ensure we can retain or reclaim a certain potential. »»

Heiner Brüning is the Managing Director of Aftersales at Maschinenfabrik KRONE.

By implementing innovative Aftersales marketing, KRONE hopes to increase sales and the market share of original spare and wear parts.

XtraBlatt: ***That sounds like a dual-track pricing concept or even like a secondary brand for the price-sensitive market segment?***
Brüning: We already differentiate the prices of spare parts based on the intensity of wear, however, that is not the only solution. It is still far too early to report about this in detail. The fact is we are working on a suitable strategy. Once again, I would like to emphasise that the price alone is not a sustainable solution. We want to convince customers with a complete service concept and expand it in an innovative way. The latest workshops with our service partners in the specialised trade sector clearly demonstrated that KRONE as a brand scores very highly when it comes to our image, quality, delivery capacity, documentation and availability. However, the feedback also highlighted the areas where we can and must improve. This, for example, includes more intense marketing especially in the spare parts sector and, amongst other things, campaigns that give the trade sector the chance to actively approach customers. I am convinced that this last point, in particular, is certainly a broad area where we, as a manufacturer, and the specialised trade sector still have a lot of opportunities. This not only comprises the topic of spare parts, but also services that are in line with market requirements and new digital solutions for both customers and our service partners.

XtraBlatt: ***The basic principle is not really a new idea …***
Brüning: That is true, however, generally speaking I believe that up until now the approach by the service business is still too reactive. If we, as the manufacturer, work with our service partners to become more proactive, we can tap into new potential for original parts.

> We want to convince customers with a complete service concept and expand it in an innovative way.
>
> **Heiner Brüning,**
> **Managing Director Aftersales**

XtraBlatt: ***Are you thinking about offers such as maintenance kits and preventive maintenance, based on the model used by the construction machinery industry?***
Brüning: That is a possible direction, but not the only one. It does not make any sense to want to copy concepts from the construction machinery sector into the agricultural sector as both sectors operate very differently. This is why we must and want to first gain a better understanding of what is most beneficial to customers, we therefore need more systematic and detailed feedback from the market. The approach taken by the new machine business sector is a great example. KRONE has always been a manufacturer that listens and takes customer requirements into consideration earlier and more effectively than others, thus enabling us to offer suitable solutions. And when these products are ready for the market, an innovative and comprehensive marketing approach is required. In the new machine sector this approach is possible thanks to the excellent collaboration between product development, product management and product marketing within the factory and, of course, by always working in conjunction with our specialist partners. This is the same approach we must implement in the service sector.

In 2024/2025, the sale of spare and wear parts generated close to € 140 million, slightly up from the previous year.

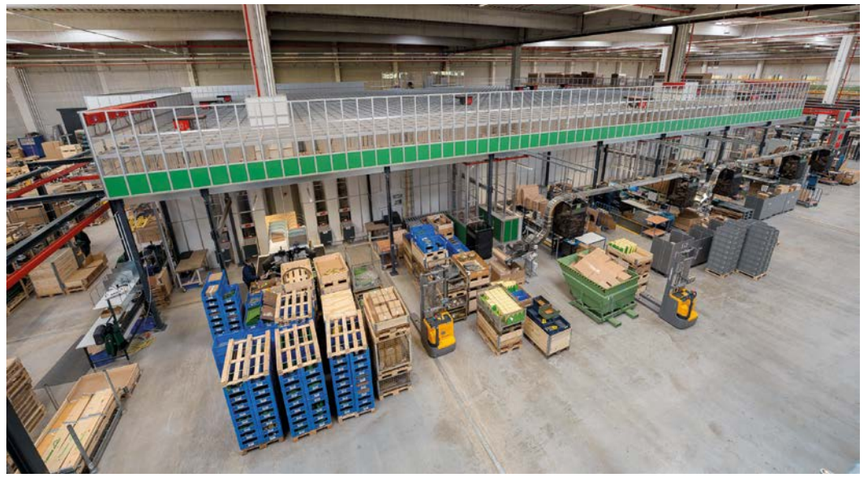
This is why we have decided to set up our own department – Aftersales Product Management and Communication. We were very lucky that Henrik Feldmann joined the team. He has worked for the KRONE Group for more than 20 years gaining all the required skills in an optimum way, including product management and marketing, dealer network development and from the specialised trade sector. He is going to work with the Aftersales department to establish suitable structures, initiate and collate market feedback and then work with our experts to develop concepts based on this feedback to ensure KRONE and our service partners can proactively promote Aftersales offers with the best customer value. This will not only comprise spare and wear parts but also training for the specialised trade sector.

XtraBlatt: ***That sounds like a lot of things to manage at once …***
Brüning: Yes, but it will not all be done at the same time. Some matters are quicker to implement, while others require a bit more time to develop. Especially when it comes to the spare parts sectors, I believe the first steps will be to optimise the online KRONE shop to include package solutions for wear parts or maintenance kits and ensure the price structure is even closer to market requirements. We are also going to act quickly when it comes to marketing and special offers for parts – incidentally something that was requested by our service partners. On the other hand, a longer-term solution to improve the support we offer the specialised trade sector will be to provide suitable training, for example. In this context, it is important for me to emphasise that we will not simply be providing the trade sector with more training and then see a sudden increase in sales figures. The key element of our strategy at KRONE remains unchanged – we will provide our partners with effective incentives in the context of development, but will not push them through from above or even want to complete the business ourselves. The benefits for our partners must be the same as the benefits of our service products to our customers.

About Henrik Feldmann

Experience at KRONE:
2004–2009: Sales promotion staff member for the machine factory
2009–2016: Sales Division, Export Manager for Scandinavia, the Republic of Ireland, Iceland, Australia and New Zealand
2016–2019: Head of Product Marketing
2019–2021: Head of Marketing
2021–2023: Managing Director Sales & Marketing of trading arm LVD Krone
2023–2025: Head of Business Development
since October 2025: Product Management and Communication Aftersales

The small parts are stored in the AutoStore of the KRONE parts logistics centre.



We must not be satisfied with the extent to which manufacturers are selling copies of fast-moving wear parts for our machines, for example.

Heiner Brüning, Managing Director Aftersales

XtraBlatt: ***Please could you explain this with an example?***
Brüning: A starting point will be winter checks that give the specialised trade sector the opportunity to check customer machines at a quieter time outside of the season and to complete any necessary repairs. Our analyses highlight these winter checks significantly reduce the risk of failure during the next harvesting season by around 50% + X. This benefits the customer in the same way as the use of reasonably priced wear and spare parts. And the specialist dealer benefits from improved utilisation of workshop capacity and the sale of original parts. Dealers can also improve their terms and conditions relating to their hourly rate for warranty or package maintenance work or the purchase of parts, if dealers take advantage of the qualification opportunities provided by us, for example. And before you ask, yes, this is not a new concept, but it continues to offer a lot of potential if it is amended correctly and marketed more actively than before, including in the trade sector. I want to reiterate that we want our service to become even more proactive and must work together to achieve this.

XtraBlatt: ***What do you mean by amend ...***
Brüning: We need to take a more holistic and innovative approach. Training sessions do not necessarily need to be attended in person, tutorials and online training is going to become more popular, including for machine settings. The digital opportunities when it comes to communicating with the specialised trade sector are far from being exhausted. Our Technical Information Centre (TIC) is an important step in the right direction. However, this is by no means the end of the proverbial road. The more intuitive and easier we make it for our service partners to access our technical and specialist knowledge, the more effective it also becomes for our customers. By integrating it all within "mykrone.green", end customers and dealers have faster, better and more specific opportunities to access relevant information on the machines.

XtraBlatt: ***To date this has been achieved by being available over the phone and having familiar contact partners, which offered an important competitive advantage compared to other suppliers.***
Brüning: This will remain the same. Digitalisation will not prevent this but will in fact ensure greater flexibility, so that difficult service cases, in particular, will receive even more personal resources. "Easy to deal with" has been one of the greatest strengths of KRONE for a long time – we want it to remain this way and strive to become even better. ❝

INCLUSION

"Shift swap" campaign

As part of the "Shift swap" campaign, Heiner Brüning, the KRONE Managing Director of Service & Parts, swapped roles for the day with Daniel Wöckel who works in the Caritas team that operates in the KRONE spare parts centre, and gained an overview of the inclusive cooperation of the companies.

"Shift swap" – a successful campaign for Caritas and KRONE.

Swapping work stations for the day – this is the basic concept behind the "Shift swap" initiative by the Federal Government Association of Workshops for Disabled People (BAG WfbM). Accordingly, Heiner Brüning, the KRONE Managing Director of Service & Parts recently swapped places with Daniel Wöckel who works as part of the Caritas team in the KRONE spare parts and logistics centre where spare parts are picked, for example.

"I realised immediately that I really wanted to support this campaign because the eight colleagues who are part of the Caritas team work really hard. When we designed the new spare parts centre, we deliberately set up modern workstations for this group and have thus explicitly highlighted our commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities into our daily work routine. Since the 1970s KRONE has worked in close collaboration with rehabilitation facilities to allow individuals to participate in working life. And our experiences have and always are thoroughly positive," explains Heiner Brüning (pictured on the left).

The Director of Caritas, Dieter Führer (2nd from the left), is also very happy that the KRONE machine factory has joined the "Shift swap" campaign. "At the Caritas Association, it is important for us to establish opportunities for people with disabilities to access the labour market. External workplaces and external work groups, such as the ones at KRONE, are an excellent opportunity to test these transitions while providing support from partners. We are very happy about the extraordinary commitment of KRONE and the opportunities available on site. Caritas employees experience an inclusive environment that is part of the overall culture."

What experience did interim Managing Director, Daniel Wöckel (2nd from the right) gain from the boss' office and during the obligatory tour of the spare parts warehouse? "It was really cool. Heiner showed and explained the statistics to me. We have delivered nearly 6,500 t of spare parts this year and we have completed nearly 500,000 picks since the start of the year. These numbers highlight just how important our work is. Particularly during the maize harvest, when my favourite machine – the BiG X forage harvester – is being used, it is important that all of the machines are working. This is something we all help to achieve." ❝

CONTRACTOR ALBRECHT

Close to development

KRONE produces machines and devices for practical applications, while practical experience gained with these devices helps KRONE with the development. This is illustrated by the sample of Philippe Albrecht. He is a contractor and was involved in early prototype testing of the new combined baler and wrapper – the CombiPack HDP.

From Kempten, Germany, the main road roughly takes you in the direction of Lake Constance. About half way along the route, you will find the tranquil town of Weitnau nestled in the valley between Hauchenberg and Sonneneck. Green meadows stretch up the slopes, so that a certain amount of driving skill and courage are required to work with agricultural technology here. Contractor, Philippe Albrecht, is certainly someone who has these characteristics. "I have been a contractor for 25 years. Back in the day, I started out on my own using KRONE technology and I have always remained loyal to the brand. Our main focus was the round baler and that is the same today. Although, the difference is that back then we could harvest 500 hay bales in one cut, while today we can process more than 1000 in an afternoon if we have to."

Four balers in use

Of course, the technology has changed drastically over the years and Philippe Albrecht has gone along with all of the development steps at KRONE. In 2004, the first pilot series Comprima round baler arrived at his farm to be tested. "This baler was the start of building a closer relationship with KRONE because I believed there were many points that needed addressing to improve how the test machine operated," explains the contractor looking back. His feedback was not ignored, quite the opposite. It caused such a big stir at KRONE that one day Dr. Bernard Krone contacted Philippe Albrecht to discuss directly what needed to be changed. The conversation had a lasting impact on both parties and was the start of a sustainable and close cooperation.

Philippe Albrecht was motivated by the fact that the KRONE technicians listened to his opinions and discussed ideas with him as an equal partner. "There are no indirect routes, like you encounter with some large companies. I am in direct contact with the design engineers. Of course that also results in an extremely high development speed," explains the contractor. It has thus been the case that he has suggested a change and, for example, two days later he has received delivery of a modified part at his farm to install and test.

Prototype testing since 2021

He was already able to use one of the prototypes of the new CombiPack HDP in 2021. "It is great to be able to work with technology at such an early stage, when it will only be for sale years later. Of course, everything does not run smoothly at this point in the development. However, by the end of the first season, the performance of the machine was really good and I could drive it pretty fast. The basic principle was definitely right even though, of course, a lot was modified in the following years," he says in retrospect, adding: "That is a completely normal part of the development process. The machine is optimised bit-by-bit and weak points are removed."

One of the main points of focus while testing the CombiPack HDP at contractor Albrecht's site was transferring bales on a slope. The terrain at the contractor's site was perfectly suitable for this. "I operated a piste machine for years. Nothing much fazes me when working on slopes. Every now and then representatives from Spelle come to site and join me for a drive. They are not used to the slopes and some end up with a pale face," he explains with a twinkle in his eye.

> There are no indirect routes, like you encounter with some large companies. I am in direct contact with the design engineers.
>
> **Philippe Albrecht, contractor**

Philippe Albrecht predominantly bales grass silage but also bales smaller amounts of haylage and hay from the permanent grassland.

However, he believes these tests are extremely important and meaningful for the development. “A machine behaves completely differently on a slope to an even plane. We also use videos to document this. The baler is exposed to completely different loads and becomes distorted. If the technology works well under our conditions, there will not be any problems on an even plane,” the contractor is convinced. The bale transfer process takes six seconds on the CombiPack HDP that is now going to series production. “And that is also guaranteed on slopes. This is something we ensured during all of the test runs,” he adds and continues to explain: “The greatest motivation for me is if I come across a KRONE stand at a trade fair and start talking to farmers and contractors who tell me what an excellent machine it has turned out to be.”

A machine for professionals

He only has positive things to say about the KRONE CombiPack HDP. “These round balers really are in a completely different league.” 41 blades that provide a very short cut, the mono belt that almost completely prevents rolling losses and the enormous throughput rate – the contractor believes these are the key arguments for the new combination baler and wrapper. “In comparison to the current KRONE Comprima Plus, we can harvest approx. 30% more with the CombiPack HDP in the same amount of time.” In addition, it offers a baling density that has previously not been available in the round baling segment. “This is why the name of the machine includes the abbreviation “HDP". On the other hand, this also means that a corresponding tractor with up to 340 hp can be hitched to the front without the components of the baler being affected,” he adds. The contractor actually uses a John Deere with 230 hp. On the slopes this provides the best compromise between performance and the working weight.

Another feature on the new baler, that has convinced the contractor, is the double twine tying system, which means that the system switches between film and net wrapping. “Or, if I want to, I can load two film rolls if I am baling silage and can generate 350 bales before I have to reload the film for the tying process,” explains the contractor. Of course, this also has the advantage of minimising downtimes spent reloading films. He has been producing bales with peripheral film for 15 years and is convinced by this process, as are his customers who do not request anything else. “However, I believe it is important that we continue to develop even in this regard, so that we use more sustainable processes. Nowadays, I am using a film that has a recycled content of 30%. We process a lot of plastic and our aim is to reduce CO_2 emissions as much as possible,” he states with conviction.

Only baling

Philippe Albrecht works in many fields that span a radius of 20 km. Due to the different elevations, cutting the individual grass sections is a protracted process. Generally, he drives his balers over the area once per cut, starting in the valley and working his way up into the higher elevations. “Once the last areas on the hills have been harvested, it is time to start the next cut in the valley.” The contractor is convinced this is the only way they can make good use of their balers. The harvesting season runs from April through to November.

The side hoods of the CombiPack HDP open automatically at the touch of a button. 16 rolls of wrapping film and 2 rolls of peripheral film can be transported as additional stock.

As a service provider, we almost exclusively concentrated on the forage sector from the start.

Philippe Albrecht, contractor

“As a service provider, we almost exclusively concentrated on the forage sector from the start. From the outset, I realised I could only do one thing, but had to do it right,” states the contractor describing his strategy. He wanted to guarantee reliability and punctuality as at the end of the day that is the only way he will have happy customers. On a small scale, he also spreads solid manure with a spreader.

The contractor predominantly bales grass silage but also bales smaller amounts of haylage and hay from the permanent grassland. Hay is of minor importance because hardly any grain is cultivated in the region.

The baling process is charged based on the number of bales. “We apply an additional charge for using our solo machines with an additional wrapping device. However, we only use that to bale areas on extreme slopes where we cannot work with the combination machine,” states the contractor explaining his invoicing model. During the baling process, he generally completes the first cut with a full set of blades. On the Comprima machines this means 26 blades. He operates the new baler with half a set of blades. “On this machine, I, of course, have the advantage of being able to swivel the blades in and out. This enables me to drive for twice the amount of time with sharp blades.”

It is very important to customers that the areas are well maintained. “We have adapted our approach to this. We are advertising our work while working on the field, this means we work without damaging the ground surface and always consider the best approach for the area before we start. Our customers appreciate this. Grassland in our region is in high demand and the area is limited.” The contractor has not actually had to advertise his services. Generally, customers give him a ring before they start to mow, so that he can schedule the baling process in an optimum way. “It is not uncommon for farmers to delay the mowing process if our order book is full.”

The mono belt design on the new KRONE CombiPack HDP means that rolling losses are almost completely prevented.

He believes his business will continue to grow in future. The contractor is convinced that specialising and focusing on the round baler is paying off: “We are at the top of our game in this sector. Nobody can fool us. Our technology is in top condition. Our customers can see this and appreciate it. And they tell others about us, which is why we gain new customers year after year.“

OptiSet

Silver medal for world first

Maschinenfabrik Bernard Krone GmbH & Co. KG was awarded the renowned Innovation Award 2025 at the Agritechnica trade fair for developing the KRONE OptiSet system on the Vendro rotary tedder. The jury thus honoured a practical solution, which enables the spreading angles to be adjusted centrally, synchronously and continuously for the first time from the cabin. The Vendro series covers working widths of 4.70 m to 13.40 m with up to twelve rotors. The system impresses with numerous innovative features, such as OptiTurn tines, maintenance-free eight-finger couplings, a compact V-frame, as well as precise and robust guide wheels. The OptiSet system ensures, that in future, the spreading angle of all rotors can be adjusted quickly, ergonomically and efficiently at the touch of a button from the comfort of the driver's seat. As something that previously entailed a lot of work by adjusting each rotor manually, it can now be completed centrally in seconds.

The benefits are clear: adjusting the spreading angle more frequently increases the forage quality, reduces rolling losses and makes the most of tight harvest schedules. At the same time, the system increases operator comfort and opens opportunities for autonomous operations in the future. "Receiving the award at the Agritechnica trade fair is a great honour and confirms our commitment to providing farmers and contractors with practical innovations," explains Jan Horstmann, Managing Director of Research & Development at Maschinenfabrik Bernard Krone GmbH & Co. KG.

EasyCut F 320 / F 360

Another two front mounted mowers

KRONE has added two new models to its range of front mounted mowers – the EasyCut F 320 and fourth generation of the F 360. In addition to being compact, they stand out for their modular design which allows them to be configured individually. When it comes to the headstock, the customer can select the Push, Pull or Plus variant depending on operational requirements. The Push variant is suitable for particularly rugged terrain, while the Pull variant is, amongst other things, aimed at even surfaces and high working speeds. The Plus variant, on the other hand, is suitable for daily fresh forage harvesting and for tractors with active lower link relief.

Upon request, an auger for a swath merging system can be integrated at the factory or can be retrofitted, if required. The technical basis of the EasyCut F 320 and fourth generation F 360 with a working widths of 3.16 m to 3.60 m, is provided by the fully welded, lifetime lubricated and low maintenance EasyCut cutterbar. Fitted with five or six cutting discs and two mower drums, as well as SafeCut and SmartCut, this cutterbar always guarantees a clean and safe cut. Upon request, all of the mowers can be fitted with a 450 mm diameter large merger auger ex works. As these front mounted mowers do not require a conditioner, they are very lightweight and can already be operated with tractors with an output of around 50 kW.

EasyCut B 1250 Fold

A great success for mowing

KRONE has once again enjoyed a great success with the new EasyCut B 1250 Fold. This butterfly combination operates highly efficiently at a maximum working width of up to 12.50 m, while accurate tracking ensures it is optimally adjusted to the sward protecting Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) concept. The patented folding mechanism allows the mower units to be folded together very compactly for travel on the road. The innovative slide gearbox of the EasyCut B 1250 Fold enables a variable working width of 11.30 m to 12.50 m. The hydraulic side shift can be used to easily adjust the working width of the mower units from the cabin, whereby each telescopic side can be extended outwards by 60 cm. In this way, the EasyCut B 1250 Fold can be perfectly combined with the EasyCut F 320, F 360 and F 400 front mounted mowers by adjusting the suitable overcut.

With a dead weight of only just over 3,500 kg, the mower can be used with tractors from around 200 hp. The technical basis is provided by the fully welded, lifetime lubricated and low maintenance EasyCut cutterbar. With eight cutting discs and two mower drums, as well as SafeCut, SmartCut and an impact damage protection system fitted as standard, this cutterbar always guarantees a clean and safe cut. A special feature of the EasyCut B 1250 Fold is that the outer cutting disks on both mower units can be folded away to the rear using the hydraulic slewing gear.

Swadro BaleTrain TC 880 Pro

For one-person operation

KRONE is the first manufacturer in the world to supply the Swadro BaleTrain TC 880 Pro – an intelligent combination of a rake and baler that can be operated by one person. This system is based on the modified Swadro TC 880 twin-rotor rake combined with a KRONE round baler to establish a highly efficient unit. The only prerequisite for the baler is the ability to provide bottom hitching with a K 80 ball-head hitch and 540 rpm PTO drive. By the way, both the rake and round baler can continue to be used on their own.

The twin-rotor rake is fitted with a continuous drive train for the PTO drive of the round baler. A manual gearbox on the rake ensures that the round baler is always driven at the required speed, while the speed of the rotors is always adjusted to the harvesting conditions. A real highlight is the KRONE AutoBale system. The automatic lifting function ensures that when the net or (peripheral) film is being inserted into the baler, the rake rotor and baler pick-up are lifted automatically. The automatic reversing function does the same when the system reverses. The automatic steering system is also a great help. It automatically steers the rake axle to the left or right based on the steering signal provided by the baler, thus ensuring the required amount of swath is collected for optimum loading of the bale chamber.

BIG PACK HDP II 1290 (VC)

World’s best

When it comes to large square balers, KRONE has been setting trends and benchmarks for 22 years with its HDP II. At the Agritechnica trade fair, the company presented the latest generation offering more power, but above all increased driver comfort, ease of maintenance and durability.

The team was significantly involved in the development of the sixth generation of the HDP II through to series production (from left to right): André Wilmer (Product Management – Large Square Balers and Premos), Niklas Beindorf (Product Marketing – Large Square Balers and Premos), Martin Amshove (Product Manager – Large Square Balers in the Research & Development department) and Tobias Frische (Head of the Mechanics Department in the Research & Development department and technical project manager of the new HDP II).

XtraBlatt: ***With a new generation of balers, we must first ask ourselves how much power is really possible?***
Niklas Beindorf (Product Marketing - Large Square Balers and Premos): The predecessor of the HDP II was already globally renowned as the large square baler with the highest bale density and largest throughput. When the HDP II was launched on the market in 2013, it already set a world record of 149 bales per hour with an average weight of 500 kg per unit. At the time that was already more than 74.2 t/h – a value that market competitors cannot or can only achieve with difficulty today. In contrast, KRONE has been able to increase this output with every new baler generation. To a certain extent, this also applies to “Gen 6” that has just been introduced. However, generally speaking, we must take into consideration that in comparison to the increased bale density in this dimension, the power requirements are rising exponentially and from a certain point we need to question whether this is cost-effective. This is why the development of this generation of HDP II predominantly focused on other aspects, such as increasing driver comfort, making the system easier to maintain and service, while also ensuring the durability of components.

XtraBlatt: ***Especially as the twine has to withstand ever increasing pressure ...***
Martin Amshove (Product Manager - Large Square Baler in the Research & Development department): The stability of the current twine quality used with our eight patented V-knotters is quiet clearly in the safe range even if the bale density was increased even further. However, when it comes to the bale density it is not just about achieving peak values, but to continuously produce completely uniform and highly compressed bales even in adverse conditions.

XtraBlatt: ***What do you mean by “adverse”?***
Tobias Frische (Head of the Mechanics Department in the Research & Development department and technical project manager of the new HDP II): Anything, that at first glance, may appear strange. Especially during hot weather when processing very dry straw, the baling performance can sometimes reach its limits. The straw has a tendency to slip and is not in an optimum condition to compress. By modifying the design of the technical features, we have been able to increase the baling force of the new HDP II by another 15% and can now ensure an optimum layer thickness on a continuous basis, which is even more important. This provides us with even, highly compressed bales. This is how the performance of the new baler has actually been increased.

> The development of this generation of HDP II predominantly focused on increasing driver comfort, making the system easier to maintain and service, while also ensuring the durability of components.
>
> **Niklas Beindorf, Product Marketing Large Square Balers and Premos**

The Variable Filling System (VFS) always ensures the bales are very even regardless of the swath size, moisture and driving speed.

Martin Amshove, R & D, Product Manager – Large Square Balers

André Wilmer (Product Management - Large Square Balers and Premos): The performance has also been improved with the new short cut VC cutting system that can manage perfectly with the increased performance dimensions. This was explicitly requested by our customers, especially contractors who want a short cut without having to compromise on the throughput during the baling process. Unfortunately, it cannot be completely prevented, however, we believe that KRONE is the first supplier in the world in this size range. The fact that both variants of the cutting unit with a maximum of 26 or 51 blades, can each be switched in five groups and can achieve theoretical cutting lengths of 44 or 22 mm, is also unique.

XtraBlatt: ***At the beginning you mentioned comfort as something you focused on during product development – where will customers notice a difference?***
Beindorf: Of course, the driver is the main focus. In brief, the aim was to use the ISOBUS-compatible, new user interface of the terminal to ensure operation of the machine was as efficient as possible so that the driver rarely has to leave the cab. An example is that the height of the crop press roller unit can be hydraulically adjusted from the cab in the new HDP generation. Another example is the bale ejector that now has a split design. As the length of the bale channel means that it contains more than one bale, even in automatic mode only the rear bale can be pushed out via the splitable bale ejector. A residual pressure can then be set in the channel that safely maintains the front bale in position, so that you start the process again with a regular bale in the next field. When it comes to changing fields, this can be completed without the driver having to leave the cab including to fold in the chute.

Amshove: However, these example not only improve comfort but also have a very positive impact on the quality of the work and performance. Let us look at the example of the crop press roller unit again. The crop press roller unit significantly influences how the pick-up collects the material, which in turn ensures an optimum bale quality is achieved. In addition, I would like to mention the Variable Filling System (VFS) that always ensures the bales are very even regardless of the swath size, moisture and driving speed. A new feature is the electronic VFS control that can easily be set via the terminal from the tractor cabin.

Wilmer: This control ultimately optimises the pick-up and filling phase. The overall aim is that every plunger stroke fully picks up a new material layer and compresses it, achieving a 1:1 cycle. This is usually controlled by the driving speed. However, if there is not enough material in the swath, the system switches to a 2:1 cycle, which thwarts the power and places a physical strain on the machine. On the new HDP II, the driver can preselect five levels on the terminal to determine how much is picked up beforehand and when it is conveyed. This means that the thickness of the layers in the bale is reduced, but they are more even than when using mechanical controls and the system maintains a 1:1 cycle. The bale length also remains consistent.

Beindorf: The driver can monitor all of the units from the tractor terminal and select the best driving speed based on the displayed load.

XtraBlatt: ***Speaking of monitoring: Earlier you also mentioned ease of maintenance – what is "Gen 6" better at than previous HDP series?***
Frische: One of the highlights is certainly the new AutoCheck maintenance mode: With this function, the machine can be slowly turned and checked from several points at the touch of a button – one person can now complete this on their own. The cycle from the pre-chamber to the piston and from the piston to the knotter can be checked as part of a self-diagnostic function. In addition, all of the installed sensors on the machine have diagnostic capabilities and their function can easily be checked via the terminal, just like that of the actuators.

Wilmer: I believe that, amongst other things, service technicians will also be very relieved that the design of various components ensures they are easy to replace. Even though the quality of the components is a top priority at KRONE, wear especially on machines of this performance category cannot be avoided due to the high number of bales. One example is the screwable packer shaft, that is now made up of three parts, making it considerably easier to replace, if required.

Beindorf: When it comes to maintenance, it is also important for me to mention that we have not just retained the eight V-knotters, but also the proven KRONE PowerClean system that ensures the knotter table is completely clean without any dust or crop deposits.

By modifying the design of the technical features, we have been able to increase the baling force of the new HDP II by another 15%.

Tobias Frische,
R & D, Head of the Mechanics Department

XtraBlatt: ***A lot of the new features of the sixth generation of the HDP II have already been discussed – what do you consider to be other highlights?***
Frische: We would not have enough time to list all of them here. A major development is the reworked starter aid that now has an increased torque of 2,700 Nm and a higher final speed. The individual components are connected gradually until the system is up to full speed. This only takes a few seconds. This avoids load peaks and prevents the tractor being damaged.

Beindorf: In connection with load peaks, I would like to add that the tried and tested belt drive from the previous HDP generation has been maintained. In contrast to the couplings on competitor machines, it absorbs brief load peaks without having a negative impact on the performance of the machine. Our solution is speed-controlled and the system warns the driver to reduce the driving speed, if required. Although the driver can continue driving. Generally speaking, we have transferred all of the proven and unique features from the fifth generation into the new technology.

I believe that, amongst other things, the service department will be very relieved that the design of various components ensures they are easy to replace.

André Wilmer, Product Management
Large Square Balers and Premos

XtraBlatt: ***Are all of the machines equipped with a VC cutting unit?***
Willmer: No. This is an option that the customer can select during the configuration. However, it must be emphasised that this professional machine includes a lot of options from the other series as standard.

XtraBlatt: ***Are the requirements really that different? The clear focus is obviously picking up straw ...***
Frische: This tends to be the case in Western Europe. From a global perspective, I believe the BiG Pack is used to bale more lucerne than straw. However, there is a wide variety from hay through to maize straw and the machine must be able to deal with it. The BiG Pack HDP II 1290 (VC) is able to process it – basically, it is the best in the world.

The special features of the new HDP II include eight standard snippet-free double knotters and the KRONE PowerClean cleaning fan.

FAMILY BRUNNSCHWEILER

The best cheese made from the best forage

The Brunnschweiler family relies on the Holstein Frisian breed.

Barbara and Eric Brunnschweiler – farmers from Switzerland.

Brunnschweiler family farm is based in Villeret, in the Bernese Jura region in Switzerland.

A very special cheese – the Tête de Moine – comes from the Bernese Jura region in Switzerland. The main ingredient is high-quality milk from animals that are not fed silage. Family Brunnschweiler based in Villeret, Switzerland, is one of the milk producers. XtraBlatt went to visit them.

One hundred cows is quite a heard by Swiss standards. Barbara and Eric Brunnschweiler based in Villeret in the Bernese Jura region in Switzerland rely solely on the Holstein Frisian breed. The milk is delivered to a local cooperative for which Eric is the president. A total of six regional cheese dairies produce the speciality cheese that is then sold internationally by trading companies. 60% of the cheese is exported. “There used to be more farmers in our village, but now there are only five who deliver milk to the cheese dairy,” explains Eric Brunnschweiler. “Another farmer is going to stop soon. In total, we process 1.7 million kilogrammes of milk in the cheese dairy. In comparison to other Tête de Moine dairies that is not a lot. More than a third of the milk is supplied by our farm. This is used to produce around 3,000 t of cheese in different age categories per year.”

The cheese specialist pays the Brunnschweiler farmers a comparatively high price for milk – currently around 90 centime/kg. However, production is also at the highest quality level. The catch is that fresh milk is delivered directly to the dairy twice a day using their own tank. This alone takes up one hour every day. “We are producing around 10,000 kg per cow each year with a fat content of 4.1% and protein content of 3.4%,” explains Eric Brunnschweiler. “As Tête de Moine is a semi-hard cheese made of raw milk, we do not feed the animals any silage, they only have fresh forage and hay. However, that must be of the highest quality. In the summer the animals also graze on the pasture.”

Fresh forage & pasture

The farm itself is located around 750 m above seal level. There are around 60 ha of grassland, as well as some fields to plant wheat, maize and spelt. The field crops and meadows are located around the farmyard, while some of the pastures are positioned higher up. “In the summer, I get fresh grass once a day,” explains the farmer. “In the evening, their food rations include a percentage of hay from the feed mixer. In winter, they only receive dry rations. Other components include fresh potatoes, carrots, maize meal, soya and a little bit of lucerne. The fodder hayrack at the milking robot is topped up depending on the milk yield. At the end of the lactation period, they are only given groundbait feed.”

A special feature at the farm is the four-box milking robot. A luxury investment? “No!,” states Eric Brunnschweiler. “The tightest factor for us is time. We used to spend 4 to 5 hours daily in our double, three bay tandem milking parlour. Nowadays, work spent on the milking process is limited to cleaning the robot system. Of course, the system cost a lot of money. However, when colleagues ask, I always tell them it is not that we have too much milking capacity, but that we do not have enough cows,” explains the farmer with a smirk. This setup with the four box system also offers other advantages: “During the milking process, we are never stressed about having to wait. There is practically always a box free. The machine is waiting for the cows and not the other way around. This also made it easier for us to get used to the robot.”

We do work pretty hard. But then we do need a top quality product

Eric Brunnschweiler – farmer and president of the cooperative

The four boxes with milking robots are the centrepiece of the barn.

The front mounted mower is used every day during the season.

The farmer had to seek permission from the cheese dairy to use a robot for the milking process. “It takes about 8 hours for the required shape of fat globules to form in the milk. Otherwise, this has a negative impact on the oxidation behaviour, which in turn changes the flavour of the cheese. At the start, we had two fixed milking times a day. In the meantime, it suffices if the cows are milked again after 8 hours." The robots have been in use since 2021. The farmer emphasises that this milking process works the best for their operations. “However, you do need to be willing to work with so much technology, especially electronics. Although it is great tool to manage the herd. And I can use the app anywhere to monitor if everything is alright.”

Additional rations, including hay, are also supplied from the mixing wagon in the summer.

Quality equals milk

Four cuts are usually completed each year at the Brunnschweiler family farm. Although the fresh forage season lasts longer. The animals usually graze on these areas towards the end of the season. “We do work pretty hard. But then we do need a top quality product,” explains Eric. In the spring, the areas are cleared, resown in part and slurry is applied at regular intervals, based on the motto “little but often". The slurry is applied with trailing hoses. The farmer uses a barrel for this purpose and has formed a machinery cooperative with colleagues. “In total we cover 12,000 m3 per year. We rarely use mineral fertilizer.”

The season begins at the start of May. “We used to start later in the year. However, the forage grasses that offer potential have changed. Out motto is: the younger, the better,” explains the farmer. However, it must also be suitable for drying. The heated air ventilation is certainly essential during this process, especially during the first and last cut. The hay is gathered in a completely loose condition. It is placed into and removed from storage using a hay crane. “To increase the storage capacity, we do, however, create square bales from the stock and then refill the space,” continues the farmer explaining the process. The storage capacity for loose hay is 2,500 m3. To provide the cows’ stomachs with something with a little more structure, the farmer and his wife buy lucerne from France that they particularly use in the summer. However, they generate more than 90% of the forage themselves.

The mowing is completed using a front and rear combination with a folding unit. Eric Brunnschweiler thinks the processing quality is very good as well as the driving speed. “I can mow at speeds of 18-20 km/h in good conditions. A front mounted mower without a conditioner is positioned in front of the loading and forage transport wagon and is used to collect the daily forage. I really like the powered drums. I do not hold back when it comes to the power of the tractor. Really 200 hp would suffice, but I just do not have the time, which is why I drive a 250 hp tractor.”

After eleven years, the front mounted mower needs to be replaced. The turns are completed with a 13 m machine. “Since I have had this machine, I have had time to eat my lunch again,” explains Eric Brunnschweiler with a smile. “I can can cover around 10 ha per hour with the best distribution. Really, we should invest in a new machine but the wheels on current models can no longer be adjusted for the levelling system. And that is a requirement I need.” The farmer would also like a KRONE loading and forage transport wagon. He is sure it would last a lot longer than his current one. His current transport wagon is used daily from 1st April through to November, and is also used to pick up dry forage. “It processes a lot. However, unfortunately my driveway at the forage table it too deep,” he adds. He does not require special equipment for mountainous areas, because the region around Villeret is relatively flat, especially in comparison to central Switzerland, for example. When it comes to haymaking, time is the most important factor to end up with good forage. It must be picked up on the second day at the latest. “The rowen, i.e. the dry forage from the second cut onwards, is mowed at midday, turned in the evening and loaded at midday the following day.” The farmer is convinced that any additional night drastically reduces the quality. The field crops are predominantly made up of perennial 200 and 300 mixtures (every two or three year) with a high percentage of red and white clover. The 200 mixtures entails even more work. “I can get up to eight cuts. If it has been sown well and everything else falls into place, I can drive across the same area every four to five weeks.”

No compromises

“I am very happy with the products from KRONE. Otherwise, I would not have as many machines. My dealer – GVS – also does a great job. They are always on hand if there is a problem. That is important! Overall, the prices of the machine are of course high, but we have to be efficient to ensure the best forage quality. And that forms the basis of our operations. You just cannot compromise when it comes to technology.”

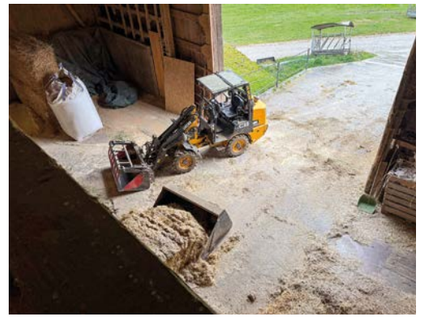
The infrastructure at the farm is not quite up to scratch. The cows do have a lot of room and have had an outdoor yard for more than 25 years, however, the farmer would like to make it more comfortable for them. “When we made some structural changes back in 2003, I really wanted to build a completely new, detached barn. However, I did not receive the funding and had to complete the expansion in a different way. In addition to the box inside the barn, we have some outdoor boxes. All of them are designed as raised stalls and are tended to twice a day. This is why I have to accept this compromise even though it presents disadvantages in terms of the workload.”

Successor secured

It is important to Eric Brunnschweiler that the animals are treated well. Despite the robots, he remains in close contact with the animals. This means that the feed rack is practically never used. “I can get all of the cows in the headstall if they need any treatment from the vet. I artificially inseminate the animals with sexed semen, which works well. The few male animals that are born at the farm are fattened up by the family as dairy calves. There are about 60 calves every year, including some from cows from which we do not want any offspring. These are inseminated with meat breads. “The calves I want to use for breeding are raised in groups and fed milk by the robot. I wean them after four months. Some of them are sent to partner farms to be reared. In the summer, they can graze on the pasture but are also fed close to the farm using the mixing wagon. The cows will calve for the first time at an age of 24 months. Cows will be used for three to four lactations. To date, we have had a fully working herd. We used to have some German Red Pied cattle but the Holstein Frisianis are more of a thoroughbred. Our daughter will take over the farm. She has just finished agricultural college and is working her way up. She would also like to become a breeder.”

However, it is now unfortunately time for Eric Brunnschweiler to finish the conversation at the kitchen table. “I need to head out to the barn. Everything revolves around the cows here, and they are creatures of habit.” ‹‹‹

Tête de Moine is a regional semi-hard cheese. Deliveries are completed twice a day using their own tank.



A picture of the forage store: The hay is stored loosely and subsequently pressed into bales.

AGRILOGISTICS

Logistic solutions for the agricultural sector

Grain, potatoes, maize silage – there are a large variety of agricultural products. Professional logistics is a basic prerequisite for transporting them. This applies to the concepts and technology. The KRONE Group has combined its range of products to efficiently transport goods from the field around the world.

Logistics is multi-faceted. This is particularly true for agricultural logistics. In this case, it is not just about transporting the goods on the road from the producer to the customer. The logistic chain starts on the field. An impressive example of this is the logistics implemented for the maize harvest. This relies on meticulous planning and smooth operation of the logistic processes, thus ensuring that unproductive waiting times for the harvester are prevented where possible. Contractors therefore plan the transport logistics accordingly based on the performance of the harvesting machine. In addition to optimised planning processes, lots of contractors have reconfigured their logistic processes according to the vehicle technology. This applies to transport wagons, that are towed by tractors, such as the TX and GX series from KRONE, as well as the use of semitrailer tractors such as the AgriTruck. Increased loading volumes, as well as faster unloading durations, have helped to significantly expand transport capacities in the harvesting logistics sector. What this means in practice was highlighted during the 2025 maize harvest at contractor Martens' site.

Contractor Carsten Brügmann based in Labenz in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, works with his brother and relies on high-performance transport technology and a special logistic concept tailored to the relevant customer. On an autumn day during the 2025 maize harvest, one of his five harvest fleet is being used for a customer who has several fields to chop. The total area covers around 180 ha and is split across three parts that are very close to one another. The distance between the field and silo plate is generally a 4 km route. Even over this short distance, Carsten Brügmann does not leave anything to chance. When it comes to the performance of the harvester, he has opted for a harvest fleet with five transport wagons, one of which is provided by the customer.

High performance transport technology

For this process, Carsten Brügmann uses three tractors with forage transport wagons from the TX series from KRONE, as well as an AgriTruck with a GX AgriLiner from the series of universal transport wagons. Maximum transport capacity is very important to the contractor. The forage transport wagons have a loading volume of 56 m³, while the GX can transport 52 m³. "We selected this number of transport wagons to ensure, as far as possible, that the forage harvester has no waiting times and there are also no waiting times on the field or at the silo. We also wanted to ensure that the vehicles preferably do not come to narrow points at the same time," explains Carsten Brügmann. As the later cannot always be guaranteed, the drivers are also in constant radio contact to ensure they do not end up blocking themselves and thus the entire harvest fleet in tight through roads.

Contractor Carsten Brügmann relies on high-performance transport technology and a special logistic concept tailored to the relevant customer.

The technology plays a key role when it comes to the contractor's logistics. "It must be highly efficient and work reliably," emphasises Carsten Brügmann, who on this specific day is at short notice sitting in a tractor himself and moving loads as the customer's heavy duty wheel loader cannot manage the delivered volume on its own. Performance does not solely relate to the loading volume. Fast unloading durations, ensuring there are no delays in front of the silo, are just as important. The material is unloaded within a very short space of time using both the forage transport wagon, that is fitted with a scraper conveyor, and the universal transport wagon, in which a belt drive with a connected front wall oversees the unloading process. The material can then be pushed on in thin layers ensuring an optimum compression.

Full range: Under the heading of AgriLogistics, the KRONE Group is specifically combining its skills from the agricultural and commercial vehicle sectors.

Fast unloading durations play a key role in the harvesting logistics sector.

Employee Norbert Scheel, appreciates the comfort that the cab of the AgriTruck has to offer.

There are many reasons why Carsten Brügmann relies on transport technology from KRONE. The flexible application options and lower running costs compared to a tractor were particularly convincing factors for the AgriTruck. Transport technology from KRONE has been used by the contractor for years and has proven itself to be very reliable. This is also highlighted on the harvesting day. The harvest fleet functioned smoothly, which in turn accelerated the process and subsequently reduces costs. Simply finishing a maize harvest a few hours earlier means that the harvester is operated for fewer hours and the costs for several transport wagons are reduced. Overall, this can result in a cost saving of several thousand euros.

Even though the restrictions of the German Road Traffic Approval Order (StVZO) have now been met, the development work at KRONE continues. The topic of cost efficiency in the agricultural logistics sector is at the top of the agenda. A lot has already changed in the truck transport sector, especially with regard to service and repair times. To ensure that agricultural logistics can also benefit from these efficiency improvements, the skills within the KRONE Group are going to be combined in a more targeted manner.

Strategic logistics

"Transport technology is a product group of strategic importance to KRONE," emphasises Rainer Weerda. The KRONE logistics specialist knows about the increasing importance of agricultural logistics and knows the growing demands of his customers. He is, amongst other things, responsible for the sale of the AgriTruck that was presented at the Agritechnica trade fair in 2023 and just two years later required production capabilities to be expanded.

"Even though the AgriTruck is a niche product specifically designed for the harvesting logistics sector, the high number of orders surprised us at this early stage," explains Rainer Weerda. A particularly important feature of the AgriTruck is that it meets the roll-over protective structure (ROPS) requirements of the agricultural or forestry approval (code no. 89.1000). This means that the truck output can be reduced to 60 km/h, if required, and driven with the equivalent of a German class T driving licence. Numerous equipment options, including, for example, the Load Sensing hydraulics and many others, are available for the off-road vehicles based on a Daimler Arcos semitrailer tractor that is fitted with a classic four-wheel drive and agricultural tyres, as standard. The customer has the option to configure the AgriTruck to ensure it is suitable for requirements. As a semitrailer tractor is not an end in itself, the AgriTruck was presented alongside the KX moving floor trailer from Knapen.

Offering complete solutions

"It is not just individual products that are important to us, but a complete solution that is tailored to the customer," emphasises Steffen Gerling, the KRONE Product Manager for transport technology. As there is no single solution that will meet all of the requirements, KRONE has a wide range of transport technology that far exceeds the agricultural technology sector. In addition to the AgriTruck, the transport technology that is connected to the fifth-wheel plate of the towing vehicle via the king pin must also be mentioned. In addition to the corresponding variants of the GX AgriLiners, this includes the KX moving floor trailer with a loading volume of up to 77 m³ and the SX dump truck from Schwarzmüller with a loading volume of 49 m³ and 57 m³. The later is new to the KRONE logistics range. The weight-optimised tipping semi-trailer will demonstrate its advantages when it comes to transporting crops. At the same time, it scores highly because of its flexible application options, as it is suitable for transporting different bulk materials. In addition to the high loading volume, fast unloading durations as well as numerous practical features, such as loading space covers and different tyre options, ensure the added value.

The Dutch moving floor specialist – Knapen – has been part of the KRONE Group since 2019, while Schwarzmüller joined this year. The commercial vehicle sector with its broad range of products is highly appreciated by European logistics customers as the leading manufacturer of semi-trailers, swap trailers and trailers. Combining these skills with expertise in agricultural technology is a step that elevates agricultural logistics to the next level. "We are not just content with offering our customers a variety of solutions that meet their requirements," states Rainer Weerda. "Under the heading of AgriLogistics, the KRONE Group is specifically combining its skills from the agricultural and commercial vehicle sectors. The products, sales structures and service processes have been specifically tailored to the requirements of modern agricultural logistics," adds Product Manager Steffen Gerling.

To support customers in view of the complexity of agricultural solutions from a single source, customers have the option to access demonstrations at their own premises. The overall aim is find the optimum combination of towing and transport vehicles, as well as presenting the service network available for the transport technology.

For flexible use

Contractor Carsten Brügmann has found the right combination. Both the GX AgriLiner using the AgriTruck as the towing vehicle and the tractor/machine combination with the TX forage transport wagon attached to the towing hitch have done an excellent job during the 2025 maize harvest. "The previously planned harvesting schedules for the individual customers were able to be met, and there were no delays during the stressful harvesting weeks," explains Carsten Brügmann happily.

While the forage transport wagons are initially given a rest following the maize harvest, the AgriTruck still has quite a bit of work to do. The GX AgriLiner, that is used in a variety of different ways in the harvesting logistics sector, is removed for now and 30 m³ tank trailer is attached for the slurry logistics sector. "Along with its flexibility, the slurry logistics option was one of the deciding reasons why we invested in the AgriTruck," explains Carsten Brügmann. The trailer can be changed in a few minutes and the AgriTruck can be used for a new task. That is not least demonstrated by how much it has been used. Although the contractor only started to lease the AgriTruck in the spring, the semitrailer tractor already has 700 operating hours on the clock. In addition to the slurry logistics and maize harvest, the AgriTruck has also been used to harvest all of the grass. The vehicle can also be used in the potato and sugar beet logistics sector. Carsten Brügmann hopes to utilise the AgriTruck for a total of around 1,400 hours per year. Thanks to its diverse range of applications, this should not be a problem. «

Customised agricultural logistics: Contractor Martens in Labenz, Germany, uses an AgriTruck along with an AgriLiner general-purpose wagon.

Transport technology is a product group of strategic importance to KRONE.

Rainer Weerda, responsible for agricultural logistics at KRONE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KRONE

“Biomethane is the wildcard of the energy sector.”

The European Commission has approved the biomass strategy, however, it is still uncertain how the biogas sector will develop over the coming years. We spoke to Horst Seide, president of the German Professional Biogas Association (Fachverband Biogas) about the future of this regenerative energy source.

XtraBlatt: ***If we consider the current situation of the biogas sector in Germany – how would you describe the situation?***
Horst Seide: The situation is inconsistent. On the one hand, there is an enormous amount of political and social pressure to ensure that the supply of energy becomes less reliant of fossil fuels. The wind and solar energy sectors are growing. At the same time, we all know that these energy sources fluctuate, sometimes there is an overproduction, sometimes there is a lull. Really biogas would be perfect in this situation as it can be stored and used flexibly. On the other hand, there are many operators who are shutting down their systems or intend to do so imminently. The reason for this is simple – the funding is stopping after 20 years and not everyone is going to be part of the next tender.

XtraBlatt: ***To what extent can biogas be implemented flexibly?***
Seide: Biogas systems do not need to run continuously day and night but can adjust to the requirements of the power network. Nowadays, a combined heat and power station runs continuously at 500 kW. In future, it should be structured in such a way that the system stores gas throughout the day and then, in the evening, when electricity is in short supply, it is powered up to 2000 kW thus increasing capacity fourfold. This is technically possible, although it requires some conversions including larger combined heat and power stations, additional units, larger gas storage tanks and more intelligent control systems. The brilliant bit about this concept is that we would not be producing more energy than before, we would just generate as required.

XtraBlatt: ***What is the advantage for the energy sector?***
Seide: Think of a typical day, at midday the sun is shining and solar power is flooding the networks. We do not need any biogas. However, in the evening when the sun goes down and the lights are turned on, the heat pumps are running while solar and wind supply less energy. This is when the biogas system would take over. They would thus close the gap that otherwise has to be filled by peak load fossil power stations. Flexible biogas is thus the perfect link in a renewable energy system.

XtraBlatt: ***Sounds like a perfect solution. What is the catch?***
Seide: The catch is the financing. There are pioneers who have installed additional combined heat and power stations and built large gas storage tanks. Experience has shown that it works well from a technical perspective. However, anyone upgrading a combined heat and power station will quickly have to invest several million euros. Banks will only grant loans if the framework conditions are stable. If politicians keep changing their minds, it is not possible to come up with a plan.

> It is important that politicians set out clear, long-term framework conditions.
>
> **Horst Seide, President of the German Professional Biogas Association**

XtraBlatt: ***What does this mean for farmers as the operators of biogas systems?***
Seide: The majority of farmers are waiting to see what happens. Many farmers are reluctant to take on any further credit. This is why it is crucial that politicians set out clear, long-term framework conditions. Investments would offer farmers the opportunity to future-proof their systems and open up new markets. Many farmers of converted systems are even reporting new business models because they are selling electricity when prices are high.

XtraBlatt: ***Critics claim that biogas is too expensive in comparison to wind and solar energy. How would you respond?***
Seide: We need to compare like for like. One kilowatt hour of biogas energy may be more expensive than one kilowatt hour of solar energy. However, solar power is only available when the sun it out. Biogas supplies power exactly when we need it, even at night or during a lull. The value is not about supplying the cheapest energy, but in the security of the supply. Without flexible energy sources, we would need expensive, reserve fossil fuel power stations. Incidentally, the current German government is planning to invest billions into new gas power plants. A large part of that money could be invested into existing biogas systems, but there has to be a will to do so. If you include this in calculations, biogas ist not expensive but rather economically sensible.

XtraBlatt: ***What role does heat play? Many biogas systems not only supply electricity but also provide heat to the network.***
Seide: The heat is often the underestimated factor. Nearly every biogas system has a heat network either for a village, for public buildings or for companies. If a system is decommissioned, the supply of heat is also no longer available. Communities then have to rely on heating oil or gas, which costs more and has higher CO_2 emissions. Biogas should therefore not just be used for electricity. We also need to consider, how we can continue to ensure a stable supply of the heat networks. It is a balancing act that can be achieved.

XtraBlatt: ***Biogas can also be processed into biomethane. What is the significance of that?***
Seide: It is enormous. Biomethane is chemically identical to natural gas. If we process raw biogas in a system and filter out the CO_2 and other component parts, we are left with methane and that can be fed into the natural gas network without any problems. The big advantage is that biomethane can be stored, transported and used in all applications where natural gas has been used to date. That includes industrial furnaces through to heating systems, gas-fired

Prepared biomethane can be a solution for the transport sector, especially in areas where electric mobility is reaching its limits.

power plants and the transport sector. In this respect, biomethane is a bit of a wildcard in the energy sector.

XtraBlatt: ***How many biomethane plants are there in Germany?***
Seide: Currently, there are around 250. That sounds like a lot, but in comparison to the entire biogas sector it is rather low – we have a total of around 9000 biogas systems. This highlights that the market is still at a very early stage. However, interest is very high. Network operators currently have more than 700 requests to connect new biomethane systems or supply projects. This means that the sector really wants to invest heavily in this area.

XtraBlatt: ***What is stopping this expansion?***
Seide: Mainly, the duration of the approval procedures. In Germany, on average it takes five years from the first application through to actually supplying the network. This is extremely frustrating for investors. It is not just about approving the system itself but also the network connections, environmental assessments and meeting European guidelines. Every step takes months or years. In the meantime, we are wasting time and other countries are overtaking us.

XtraBlatt: ***Do you believe biomethane is also a solution for the transport sector?***
Seide: Absolutely. Biomethane is predestined for the transport sector, especially in areas where electric mobility is reaching its limits. This includes heavy goods traffic, buses and, especially, the shipping industry. These are sectors where we need energy sources with a high energy density. Liquid biomethane – i.e. Bio-LNG – offers exactly that. Lorries that currently rely on diesel could be converted to use LNG. Ships, that use an enormous amount of fuel, could use biomethane. Even in the aviation sector, biomethane could play a long-term role and form the basis of synthetic fuels, for example.

XtraBlatt: ***What are the prices like? Is biomethane able to compete in the transport sector?***
Seide: It depends. The prices of natural gas are currently fluctuating. In times of high gas prices, biomethane is often able to compete and is sometimes even cheaper. Things are more difficult when gas prices are low. However, the deciding point is that biomethane is climate-neutral. If CO_2 pricing is implemented consistently, then I believe biomethane will always be the cheaper option in the long term. The security of the supply must also be taken into consideration. Biomethane is generated in our country, we do not need to rely on imports from regions in crisis. This also has a value, which is often underestimated.

> Flexible biogas is the perfect link in a renewable energy system.
>
> **Horst Seide, President of the German Professional Biogas Association**

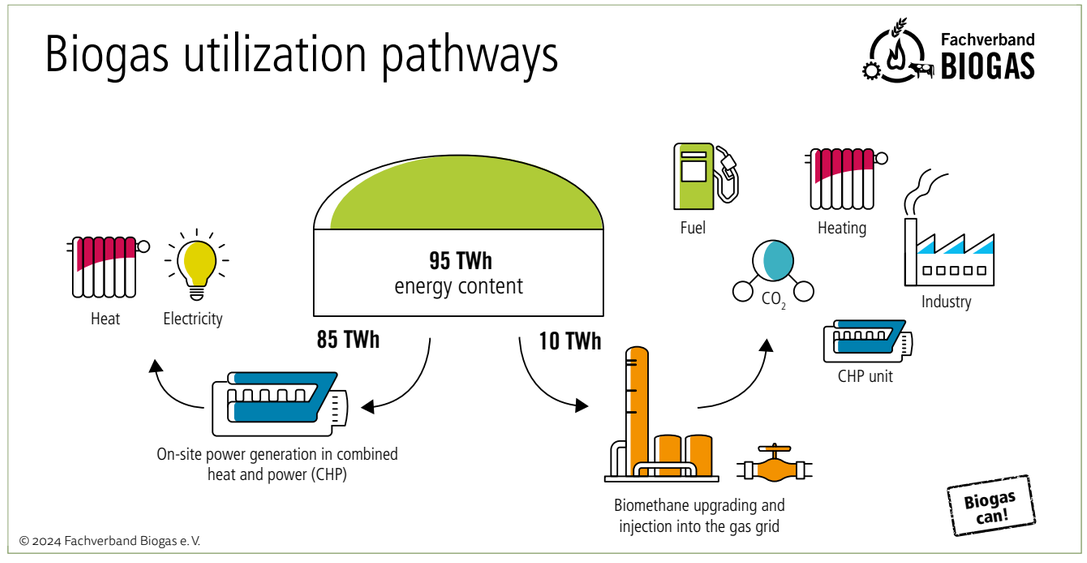
XtraBlatt: ***Are there any examples to illustrate how great the potential is?***
Seide: Let us just consider slurry and manure that is generated in Germany. To date, we have been using around a third of the slurry and manure in Germany for biogas. Two thirds remains unused, despite these materials offering an enormous amount of potential. From an energy perspective, if we could use all of these materials, we would, in purely mathematical terms, be able to power the entire agricultural fleet of machines. From a climate perspective, the open storage of slurry releases methane, a greenhouse gas that has a twenty-five times higher climate impact than CO_2. If we ferment slurry in the biogas system, we can prevent these emissions. That equates to ultimate climate protection, while also generating energy.

XtraBlatt: ***How come a lot more slurry is not already being used?***
Seide: There are several reasons. Firstly, logistics. Slurry is heavy, liquid and bulky. It often has to be transported over long distances and that is expensive. Secondly, technology. Systems must be designed for high percentages of slurry, otherwise they will not work optimally. Thirdly, bureaucracy. Every ton has to be documented, verified and certified. Many farmers shy away from this amount of effort. It is a paradox, because we could use slurry to achieve something twice as good by preventing emissions and generating energy, however the hurdles are often higher than the opportunities.

XtraBlatt: ***Bureaucracy is thus having a negative impact on the biogas sector.***
Seide: Unfortunately, there are countless examples to highlight this. Let us take the sustainability certification as an example. Every system must prove that it is saving at least 80% CO_2 in comparison to fossil fuels. If a system only achieves 79%, it is classified as "not sustainable" and is treated as if it were generating electricity from lignite. This leads to absurd situations where operations are actually saving millions of tons of CO_2 but are being thwarted by a bureaucratic detail. Other countries are more pragmatic. In Italy, if a system uses at least 30% slurry it is automatically deemed to be sustainable. And that is that, it is transparent, simple and practical.

XtraBlatt: ***Let us look to the future, what could the biogas industry look like in 2030?***
Seide: If we make the right decisions, we could see the production of biomethane double by 2030, with a stable number of flexible biogas systems that are securely integrated in the electricity and heating networks. Biogas could take over the role that gas power plants play today, flexibly supplying power when the sun and wind are not around. At the same time, biomethane could establish itself in the heavy goods traffic and shipping industry. Overall, biogas would then be one of the main pillars of the energy revolution.

XtraBlatt: ***And if politicians make the wrong decisions?***
Seide: Then we may face a gradual decline. An increasing number of systems will run out of funding and leave the network. There will be a lack of investment. Manufacturers will drift away. We will lose employees and specialist knowledge. Germany will have to import biomethane from abroad instead of producing it. And we will continue to rely on fossil fuels even though we have a renewable alternative. This would be a mistake for energy and climate policies that we really cannot afford. ««



Service based on passion

Milde technicians ensure the high operational reliability of the customer's machines.

<< A family affair: Kurt, Thomas, Bastian, Patrick and Tobias Milde (from the left).

< Each of the three Milde sites has modern facilities – photo of the site in Creußen (Oberfranken/Bavaria, Germany).

Milde GmbH is an agricultural technology company with three sites in North Bavaria and Saxony-Anhalt. KRONE products and a high-quality service are particularly important to the company.

Milde GmbH was founded by Kurt Milde in 1962 to sell and repair passenger cars and agricultural machines in Gebenbach near Hirschau in the Upper Palatinate (Bavaria, Germany). A few years later, a repair service was launched in Burgstall just a few kilometres away. Both operations were then moved to a new building in Gebenbach. In the 1970s, the company imported the first agricultural machines from Italy.

Both of Kurt Milde's sons – Thomas and Kurt – completed their apprenticeships at the company and worked in different departments before the company was transferred to them in 1990. In 2008, Kurt Milde senior officially retired as the Managing Director of the company but was still actively involved until his death in 2018. Nowadays, Patrick, Bastian and Tobias Milde are the third generation at the realm. Milde GmbH currently has about 70 members of staff.

In the East

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990, Kurt Milde focused his attention on the new federal states of Germany and constructed a new site in Bornitz bei Zeitz (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany) in 1991. In 2004, the company acquired an agricultural technology company in Vorbach more than 50 km from its headquarters in Gebenbach. Subsequently, the company moved to Creußen following the purchase and conversion of a commercial property.

Milde focuses its sales in western Germany on small and medium-sized companies, while it focuses on medium and large companies in the East. The dairy farming sector plays an important role everywhere, which is why the products from KRONE are an important part of the range offered by the company. This includes mowers, tedders, rakes, balers, loading and transport wagons and in many cases the farmers have fully mechanised systems. Of course, the customer base also includes quite a few contractors.

Bastian and Patrick Milde have noticed that even though the agricultural technology sector is at a very high level and is currently stagnating a little, investments by customers in fresh forage harvesting technology is still comparatively high. In this case, KRONE is the perfect partner as its product range practically covers all of the requirements of farmers and contractors. In addition, it also offers intrinsic value and excellent technical quality. Bastian and Patrick Milde also value the direct contact with the company. It is always possible to interact with KRONE making the cooperation fun.

Innovations are important

Across all of the sectors, owners see KRONE as the market leader. Bastian and Patrick Milde are happy with the sales figures. It is clearly illustrated once again when KRONE innovations are launched: "When the loading and forage transport wagons were launched with the cutting unit, our sales rose substantially. There is currently also a trend that is seeing customers move away from using harvesters as they want to bring in the crops themselves," explains Bastian Milde. »»

The company ensures that every part that may be required at least once a year is available in the warehouse.

Diagnostic technology is an expensive, but very important investment for agricultural technology operations.

As partners, KRONE and Milde not only work in close collaboration and provide advice during the sale but also about subsequent services. As a company, Milde places a great amount of value on ensuring employees are well trained. Bastian Milde explains: “It is important to us that we do not just have individual specialists, but have lots of well-trained workshop employees who are qualified to complete repair and service work. Although this is expensive for us to implement, as we must take the fees for the courses as well as travel and ancillary expenses and loss of productive time into consideration, we are happy to make this investment to be able to offer our customers the best help available.” Patrick Milde adds: “In this context, it is important to us to mention our large exhibition area. We actually have something from every product category. On the one hand, this enables customers to try the machines directly at their farm before making a purchase and, on the other, we can help out in the event of failures. We have a central emergency contact number. Colleagues not only coordinate the repair work via this line, but can also provide a good estimate of how long it will take. If required, we are then happy to supply a replacement machine to ensure farmers can complete their work on time. Our customers appreciate this and take it into consideration when making new investments.”

Operational reliability

Preventative maintenance is an important factor in ensuring the operational reliability of the technology. In this context, KRONE offers the winter checks. Service technicians from the specialist shops go and visits customers on site often taking KRONE service technicians with them. A special catalogue is used as a guide to check the machines and any small service work can then be completed immediately. Recommendations of work that should be completed before the coming season are then also provided. This work is then actively discussed with customers.

Maintaining a good relationship is an important factor for retaining customers. An internal trade fair, including a large exhibition, is held at all three sites every year. KRONE events are also held at regular intervals. The show truck is then on site and the advantages and applications of products are the main focus. We also hold events on the field during which the machines can be seen in action.

Bastian and Patrick Milde are proud of the complete and well-equipped workshops at all three sites, which also include all of the diagnostic units, software licences and much more. Each operational unit also has an exhibition hall. The management team is based centrally at the headquarters in Gebenbach. However, when it comes to the IT department, the company is set up in such a way that processes can be completed locally by the relevant employees as required. Spare and wear parts are stored at the branches as well as the headquarters. Based on experience from previous years, the principle is that anything that may be required once a year is available in the warehouse. When it comes to wear parts, early bird offers are made available before the start of the season, which are appreciated by customers.

Lasting relationship

The Milde family believe the collaboration with KRONE was a stroke of luck. Both are family-run companies with rapid response times and quick decision-making skills. It is also important for farmers and contractors to be able to identify with the outlook of their suppliers. After all, they want to build a long-term relationship. Both Milde and KRONE are able to offer this. ‹‹‹

BiG X 860

Powerhouse with 843 hp

The BiG X 860 is a new addition to the range of KRONE forage harvesters. This strong, 843 hp machine enhances the large BiG X series, which includes the BiG X 680 through to 1180 models with outputs of between 687 to 1156 hp. While previous models of this performance class are equipped with V8 and V12 engines, in the BiG X 860 KRONE has implemented a newly developed, very robust 6-cylinder in-line diesel engine from Liebherr with an engine displacement of 18 l. The machine already achieves a peak torque of 4000 Nm at 1300 rpm. In addition to this high performance, the engine impresses with its low fuel consumption and oil changing intervals of 1000 engine hours or every two years.

Just like all of the other models in the series, the BiG X 860 also includes the PowerSplit feature. This enables the engine performance to be switched to Eco-Power or X-Power mode at the touch of a button, as required. The innovative crop flow concept is also exemplary: The six pre-compression rollers, the large chopping drum and the OptiMaxx 305 corn conditioner guarantee intensive grain and stem conditioning. The VariStream design with spring-loaded floors under the chopping drum and behind the discharge accelerator always ensures blockage-free operation even with an uneven crop feed. The data of the NIR control dual sensor, which has been approved by the German Agricultural Society (DLG), and other important machine data can be recorded and transferred in real-time using the KRONE SmartConnect telemetry unit.

XCollect 750-2

Harvesting and mulching stubble

The XCollect series with a 3-part maize header and working widths of 6 m to 9 m, that was successfully introduced in 2018, is being expanded by KRONE to include a model with a 2-part design. The 10-row XCollect 750-2 with a working width of 7.5 m is equipped with an integrated mulcher that intensively processes the maize stubble across the entire working width.

Any incidence of disease caused by fungi or pests can thus be reduced efficiently in a single work step. The new XCollect header combines the synergies from two series – the advantages of the collection principle of the XCollect that relies on free cutting along with the simple, two-part design of the long established EasyCollect maize header.

The new and unique RotoChop mulching system is integrated in the two-part XCollect maize header. The stubble can thus be processed in one operation at the same time as the maize is being harvested across the entire working width, before it is pressed into the ground by the tyres of the harvester and the subsequent tractor/machine combination. The individual mulching units can easily be hydraulically raised and lowered from the cabin at the touch of a button. If the mulcher is overloaded by foreign objects, for example, the corresponding mulching units can be raised briefly and then lowered again. If mulching is not required, the mulching unit, which is driven by a separate gearbox, can simply be switched off and conveniently swivelled upwards.

FAMILY MEIJER, BLIJHAM (NL)

Just like rail tracks

350 cows, nearly 75% milk from the forage, 11,500 l per cow from five lactations and a CO_2 footprint of less than 800 g/l – the Meijer family obviously has milk production and forage harvesting under control. Mathijs Meijer believes part of the success is down to controlled traffic farming.

Mathijs Meijer's top priority is to produce the best possible forage.

The phrase "beer bottle grass" means that the grass is cut when it reaches the height of a beer bottle. This is the process applied by Mathijs Meijer, a dairy farmer from the small village of Blijham in the province of Groningen in the north-east of the Netherlands. "Although really it should be a half-litre bottle. The simplest way of measuring is with your wellies. If the grass reaches the upper edge, then it is time to cut," he adds with a smile. Based on the above-mentioned guidelines, he manages to cut the grass seven times a year on average. "In 2024, we even managed eight – that was an excellent year for forage," he continues. It is important to note that his fields can be watered even in dry years ensuring that the growth is easier to control. However, for financial reasons it is better if the required water only comes from the sky, emphasises Mathijs Meijer with a twinkle in his eye.

When asked why he implements such short mowing cycles and uses such young grass as silage, the farmer explains that this process ensures a high sugar content of the forage making it a lot tastier, increasing the energy content and, most importantly, offering very high levels of protein. This is very important to us. We have determined that our forage, which is predominantly made up of grass and maize silage, currently accounts for 74% of the milk production. This can only be achieved with excellent forage." The farmer believes this is also down to a crude ash percentage that is as low as possible. Despite the relatively low amount of growth, the cutting depth of the mower must not fall below a stubble height of 7 cm, although 8 cm would be preferable. The grass also starts to grow again more quickly.

CTF example from Denmark

At the Meijer farm, milk production covers an area of 150 ha and comprises 340 cows plus their offspring producing a herd average of 11,500 l per cow per year with a fat content of 4.3% and protein content of 3.4%. The farmer figures that each cow will lactate an average of 5.1 times. His aim is for cows to have a calve for the first time at 21 months of age, as this in turn ensures very good breeding, adds Mathijs Meijer with a wink. The cows are milked three times a day and fed twice a day, although the cows are fed differently depending on their performance category and age. The farmer dislikes feeding machines as much as fully automated fresh grass robots that independently gather grass from the land and distribute it in the barn. "We do have areas with enclosed boundaries, however, the cost/benefit ratio would be disproportionate. In addition, that type of technology does not fit in with our type of grassland management. And we would also need a mower combination," explains Mathijs Meijer.

Mathijs Meijer employs German contractor Janssen, based in Rhede to produce the swaths and pick up the forage.

Nearly ready to harvest again: At the Meijer's farm, the aim is to cut the agricultural grass seven times per season.

The discussion then switches to the main topic. The farmer applies the controlled traffic farming (CTF) principle to all work completed on his grassland. This is a system based on exactly defined tracks to which the vehicles and devices have been adjusted and which must be maintained meticulously, emphasises the farmer. The aim is to completely restrict soil compaction to these tracks, so that the lion's share of the grassland is not affected. Mathijs Meijer emphasises that this has a very significant impact on the growth of the grass and thus the yields. He has calculated that this has increased yields of freshly sown areas by around 8–10% and by up to 20% in areas that have been used to produce grass for several years.

Based in a traditional arable farming region, the farm does not have any permanent grassland. Of the 150 ha, around 120 to 130 ha of land is cultivated with agricultural grass, while the rest is used for maize silage. Every five years, Mathijs Meijer who runs the farm with his parents, his girlfriend, one permanent member of staff and an apprentice, changes how around 30 ha of land is cultivated. This is because of the legal requirements in the Netherlands, where rules stipulate that if land is used to produce grass for more than the aforementioned five years, it is then classified as permanent grassland. "This is why we will then grow maize for two years. This means that our grass crops are always relatively young and the amount of work required for re-seeding is lower," explains the farmer. Regular reseeding is thus unnecessary. To ensure that the CTF principle is implemented consistently, the slurry that is spread by a contractor is also aligned with the system based on the 12 m track. However, a small difference is applied to ensure no fertilizer ends up in the actual track and it is thus only distributed on the grassland.

The farmer became acquainted with the CTF system in Denmark after his vet told him about it. Incidentally, the farmer often listens to the advice provided by his experienced vet and works in close collaboration with him on all matters relating to livestock breeding, stable environments, forage and feeding. "The majority of diseases that occur in heifers and cows is due to mistakes made relating to their care and feeding. By optimising these factors, we can prevent diseases and also maintain a high performance level in the barn."

OptiGrass loading and forage transport wagon

Let us concentrate on CTF. Mathijs Meijer has set the tracks at a distance of 12 m. The farmer's mower and tedder have been adjusted to this. This is where KRONE technology was implemented – the EasyCut B 1250 Fold disc mower and the KWT 1300 tedder. "This enables us to use CTF optimally," highlights the farmer. It is equally important that Ingo Janssen, the contractor who is based just across the border in Rhede, Germany, and works for Meijers, has adapted to the system. Contractor Janssen is responsible for producing swaths and picking up the forage using the OptiGrass loading and forage transport wagon supplied by KRONE, who for all intents and purposes are the CTF system suppliers. The rake used by contractor Janssen has a maximum working width of 15.70 m that can be adjusted variably. This is very helpful and thanks to the overlap of the 12.5 m wide CTF track guarantees that no grass is left behind.

The farmer completes all of the mowing.

"Anyone who would like to implement CTF will, however, have to forgo the harvester because it is not possible to have a silage wagon driving alongside. Or you resolve the problem, like they do Denmark, by hitching a silage wagon behind the harvester. However, for us the OptiGrass loading and forage transport wagon is the best solution," states Mathijs Meijer succinctly and does not believe this has a negative impact on the forage quality. The grass is cut at 28 mm and thus fits perfectly into the ration. "Which is another reason to the cut the grass so early," he adds. "And when I consider our milk production, we do not need the harvester. Especially given that the loading and forage transport wagon is cheaper for the harvest and, ultimately, cost-effective solutions count."

When it comes to the efficiency of the harvest, the farmer and contractor expect to work at high speed not least because of the enclosed areas and field sizes of 25 ha. For the first two cuts in the spring it takes Mathijs Meijer around 9 hours to mow 120 ha. In spring, two turns are completed and from the fourth cut onwards only one turn in generally required. The aim is for the grass to have a dry matter content of 45-50%. That sounds like a lot, but according to the farmer is a sensible amount given the young growth. Contractor Janssen, who works in close collaboration with his customers when it comes to the mowing/silage cycle, then clears the land with two loading and forage transport wagons working at up to 20 ha/h depending on the field. For the 120 ha of the first cut it takes a maximum of 7 hours to get everything into the silo, which the farmer and contractor personnel compress. The yield per cut equates to around 2 to 2.5 t/ha of dry matter. Family Meijer has been implementing the sandwich silage method, whereby up to three cuts are stored on top of one another in a silo, for a long time now.

Low CO_2 footprint

However, what about the cost efficiency that Mathijs Meijer emphasised at the beginning? The benefits of this system include the previously mentioned high yields and excellent forage quality, which he attributes to the CTF process. Another very favourable factor is the low CO_2 footprint. The highly efficient forage and selected machinery result in the diesel consumption being comparatively low. According to Mathijs Meijer's calculations, mowing on average only uses around 2.8 l/ha, for example. "As we always drive along the same track, the tractors can move more easily, they roll along as if they were on rail tracks." He is convinced that that alone has a positive impact.

For his farm, he has calculated a total CO_2 output of approx. 770 g per litre of milk. "The average in the Netherlands is 1.1 kg/l. In this regard, we benefit from our dairy when it comes to the money we earn for milk, as the food industry and retail sector are now very conscious of this," explains Mathijs Meijer. If he then adds the bonus for animal welfare he receives a total of 3 euro cents per litre, which at 3.7 million litres of milk per year equates to around € 100,000. "CTF is thus not the only contributing factor, but does play a significant role in achieving a good operating income," he concludes.

Film tip

Watch this video to find out how grass is harvested by contractor Janssen from Rhede, Germany, for farmer Meijer and why they both rely on CTF. Access it by scanning the QR code.

https://youtu.be/r5z-MRaquAc

FRESH FORAGE HARVEST

Equipped for everything

KRONE is not just a supplier of grassland technology but also provides systems. The manufacturer can thus provide a suitable solution for controlled traffic farming and much more.

Christoph Magritz works in the Product Marketing department and is responsible for mowers, tedders and rakes, amongst other things.

The example of farmer Mathijs Meijer from Blijham in the Netherlands (see report on page 40) clearly illustrates how controlled traffic farming (CTF) of grassland can increase yields and improve the quality of the forage. A crucial requirement for CTF is to align the working widths of the technology with the fixed track system. "Anyone who wishes to implement CTF in practice must be very consistent. All journeys across the field must be restricted to the tracks," explains Christoph Magritz who works in the KRONE Product Marketing department and is responsible for mowers, tedders and rakes, amongst other things.

Based on his assessment, this trend is not just taking off in the arable farming sector but also in the grassland sector. Farmers in countries with intensive dairy farming, such as the Netherlands, but also Scandinavia and northern Germany, are particularly interested. Christoph Magritz indicates that KRONE is very well prepared for the consumer demand. The first key machine for this purpose was the foldable front mounted mower with a working width of 4 m that has been in series production since 2021. During the development of a suitable rear mounted mower combination, this machine enabled developers to achieve the working width required for CTF by using the outward telescoping and outward folding mower units. The result of this development is the recently introduced EasyCut B 1250 Fold disc mower with an effective working width of 12.45 m. "This guarantees the relevant overlapping required for CTF to achieve an optimum cut across the full 12 m," explains the product marketing specialist.

Other CTF suitable modules in the process chain include tedders and rakes with variable working widths. While the OptiGrass loading and forage transport wagons to pick up the forage must not be forgotten. Anyone who wishes to implement the CTF system cannot use a harvester, as a removal system usually drives alongside it. "However, we can achieve an excellent cutting quality, as well as the short cut requested by high-performance operations using the OptiGrass loading and forage transport wagon. This does not necessarily require the harvester." Christoph Magritz is convinced that the example of the Meijer farm illustrates exactly how well it works.

However, he does not deny that CTF is not necessarily practical for all regions in Germany. Generally, it works well in areas that produce perennial field crops, like the Meijer farm, and is just as effective on permanent grassland. "Admittedly, the large working widths make it difficult to contour the ground on particularly difficult terrain." However, there is no doubt that CTF offers considerable advantages, especially when it comes to sward protection, forage quality and diesel fuel savings, which in turn have a positive impact on the CO_2 footprint.

This is why Christoph Magritz is generally seeing a trend towards larger working widths and a reduction of journeys across the field in the grassland management sector. This is not necessarily to do with CTF. "Regardless of which solutions farmers select, KRONE is not just a supplier of grassland harvesting technology, but also a system supplier and can supply suitable solutions," he emphasises in conclusion.

CombiPack HDP CV 165 XC

World first with 41 blades

With the CombiPack HDP CV 165 XC KRONE is setting the benchmark in terms of density, throughput, cutting length and maintenance. The combined machine with integrated wrapping device generates extremely solid and dimensionally stable bales with variable diameters from 100 cm to 165 cm. Equipped with a cutting unit and fully variable bale chamber with a mono belt, the machine can achieve very high bale densities and has a throughput rate that is up to 30% higher. The baling element and rotor are powered by the KRONE PowerDrive concept and, for the first time, are driven by the gearbox and without any chains, thus significantly reducing maintenance costs. The speed can be adjusted to the driving speed in accordance with the harvesting material.

Once the material has been picked up, the crops are transferred to the enormous integral rotor. The large diameter ensures that the cops are safely pulled through the cutting unit. 41 blades are installed as standard enabling a theoretical cutting length of 27 mm – no other round baler can achieve this to date. The CombiPack HDP is fitted with a double twine tying system as standard, which can process net and peripheral film. The double wrapping unit is swivelled forward to replace a roll, which can be completed easily using a slide that swings out. A very practical feature is that the driver can switch between the tying materials from the cabin. A high-performance wrapping device packs the bale at up to 40 rpm thus ensuring the highest throughput rates.

BiG Pack HDP II 1290 (VC)

Baler in a class of its own

The new BiG Pack HDP II 1290 (VC) combines maximum baling density of up to 235 kg/m³, enormous throughputs of up to 85 tonnes per hour and intelligent technology with maximum operator comfort, ease of maintenance and durability. The crops are picked up by the tried and tested, camless EasyFlow "Active pick-up" combined with a continuous crop press roller unit, the height of which can be adjusted from the tractor cabin. The VariCut cutting unit is available with 26 blades for cutting lengths from 44 mm or with 51 blades for particularly short cuts from 22 mm. The patented combination of the slip-monitored belt drive with integrated overload clutch guarantee a cutting rotor throughput that is unique to the market.

An absolute highlight is the electronic Variable Filling System (VFS) that always ensures the bales are very even regardless of the swath size, moisture and driving speed. The settings are simply and easily implemented via the terminal from the tractor cabin. The patented V-knotter system from KRONE with eight double knotters ensures that the bales are tied safely without any unwanted twine remnants. Another new feature is the completely reworked hydraulic starter aid that has a significantly increased torque and a higher final speed. Another highlight is the new KRONE AutoCheck maintenance mode: With this function, the machine can be slowly turned and checked from several points at the touch of a button – one person can now complete this on their own.

News highlights

New addition to the Supervisory Board

Uwe Schöneberg (on the right) has been appointed to the Supervisory Board of the KRONE Group. He is a leading expert in the German food industry. He is currently a managing partner at Pfeifer & Langen and is responsible for the strategic development of the sugar and food production company.

Large reach

The first Content Creator Day at KRONE was attended by eleven German influencers with close to one million followers. Soon after the event, they had created more than 80 stories with over 1 million views and numerous comments.

Successful grassland evening

On a day with beautiful weather, around 800 guests gathered at the Lankhorst Nord site for a live presentation of a total of 15 machine combinations from a cross-section of the KRONE product range. The large event space directly next to the A31 motorway was the perfect backdrop for the event.

New name

Since the summer, LVB Steinbrink GmbH and LVD Krone have been working together under the joint brand LVD Krone. The aim of this realignment is to focus on customer benefits including, amongst others, proximity to customers, quality and reliability.

Film star Mojito

Based on the motto “We love to entertain you”, the KRONE marketing team prepared a number of film highlights including an entertaining short video that was premiered at the Agritechnica trade fair. While shooting the film in a restaurant, the actors and film team were quite amused by the leading actress – a cow called Mojito. You can watch the video at the following link: https://youtu.be/Lw8aHdUUVag.

Supporting helpers

The “Die Helfenden hinter den Helfenden – Ehrenamtsfreundlicher Arbeitgeber” (“Supporting helpers – honorary employer”) award is presented by Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe to honour employers who have made a particularly positive impact by granting a leave of absence to helpers. This year, the prize was presented to Bernard Krone by the Regional Association of Weser-Ems.

Hunting vehicle gift

After two years of construction, Aloys Schulte, Helmut Schmid and Bernd Höving from the KRONE Museum team have converted a TS 3 loading and forage transport wagon (year of manufacture: 1966) into a well-designed transport vehicle for hunting and have presented it to Bernard Krone. Hunting associations in and around Spelle can hire the vehicle.

90th birthday

Martin A. Grimm, the former Head of Sales Promotions & Advertising for KRONE recently celebrated his 90th birthday – we would like to wish him many happy returns! For nearly 28 years his high-level of expertise and outstanding commitment developed an increasingly clear message – agricultural technology made by KRONE.

Top graduates

The best trainees of 2025 will soon be honoured by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) in Osnabrück, Emsland, county of Bentheim, Germany. There were three top graduates for the region from the KRONE Group (pictured from left to right): Jan Lambers (metal technology specialist), Vincent Linge (IT specialist – system integration) and Jan Künnemann (industrial mechanic).

A special model

Contractor Blunk was very happy with his special present. Amateur model maker, Oliver Paul, made a model of the BiG M Bernard III – the last machine that Joachim (“Jogi”) Blunk purchased from his good friend, Bernard Krone III. In these exceptional circumstances and to celebrate the friendship, the mower was not given a “Jogi number” but a “Bernard number” instead.

Policy and practice

Gitta Connemann, the new Parliamentary State Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Economics visited KRONE. Bernard Krone asked for help relieving the pressure on small and medium-sized businesses by reducing the amount of bureaucracy and improving infrastructure.

First graduation ceremony

The first graduation ceremony was held for graduates of the KRONE Group at the end of August. Eighty of the 110 graduates attended the event – a morning filled with appreciation, fascinating insights and excellent conversations.

AGRITECHNICA 2025

A trade fair highlight

KRONE attended the Agritechnica trade fair with an exciting range of new arrivals and an upgraded stand design with more room for products from the agricultural logistics range. Visitors from all around the world were very interested, there were in-depth discussions and, despite challenging conditions for the agricultural sector, there was still a noticeable willingness to invest and a positive outlook for 2026. We would like thank all of the visitors for coming.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY:

“Your opinion motivates us.”

In spring 2026, KRONE will launch a huge customer satisfaction survey to determine the current perspective of customers on the manufacturer’s image and products. And of course to determine whether there is any potential for improvement.

Such a comprehensive survey has never been completed in the history of Maschinenfabrik KRONE – the plan is to contact all customers who have purchased a KRONE machine in recent years. Extensive preparations have been completed over the last few months to ensure that everything runs smoothly and that the end results provide constructive feedback. Sueleyman Erekdi, who has worked as a market intelligence analyst for a long time, is responsible for the project.

XtraBlatt: ***How has KRONE collected customer opinions to date?***
Sueleyman Erekdi: It is part of our DNA to listen to our customers and thus determine their requirements and challenges. Our innovate solutions have been developed from our contacts with practical experience. However, thanks to its international structure KRONE is now a global business and the challenges our customers face vary greatly when considered from a global perspective. Unfortunately, there is not a single solution or single machine that functions perfectly under all of the conditions around the world. The aim of our survey, that we are about to launch, is to systematically record the requirements and challenges our customers have around the world. However, this does not mean that we are going to reduce our contact with customers as a consequence of our survey.

XtraBlatt: ***What are the exact objectives of the large customer survey that has now been scheduled?***
Erekdi: We want to collate statistical evidence on how our customers evaluate us and our services, and how we can improve products, services and processes. This will in turn also benefit our customers. It will be a win-win situation.

XtraBlatt: ***So the customer survey will not be restricted to German-speaking countries?***
Erekdi: We will initially conduct the survey in German-speaking countries. This will include Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

XtraBlatt: ***Will this survey be a one-off project?***
Erekdi: No. To ensure we can record any changes, we will be repeating the survey every two years. We will then include questions about other matters, so that we can include new customers and recognise the passing of time, i.e. that market requirements may have changed. In addition to the end customer survey, we will also continue to conduct our well-established dealer satisfaction survey, so that we will have a very clear picture of where KRONE is at point X and what is expected of us.

XtraBlatt: ***How is the end customer survey structured?***
Erekdi: The survey is split into four topics. In the first part we will collect statistical information about the customer’s operations – are they a farmer or contractor? How many members of staff are there? What technology is used? The second section focuses on the perception of KRONE as a company and the quality of our products. The third section is about their satisfaction with the relevant KRONE sales partner. In the final section, we hope to learn about the customer’s evaluation of the future of their business as well as the development of the sector and market. Overall, the survey comprises 20 questions.

XtraBlatt: ***How will the survey be conducted?***
Erekdi: The survey will only be completed in writing and in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations. A prerequisite for participating is that the customer consents to KRONE conducting a survey.

XtraBlatt: ***What about individuals who are not KRONE customers?***
Erekdi: Primarily, we will be asking our existing customers, i.e. farmers and contractors who already work with KRONE products or who are in close contact with our sales partners. We would then also like to approach individuals who are not customers. We will meet these contacts at trade fairs, events and other personal encounters, for example. It will be particularly interesting for us to learn why a customer has ultimately opted for a different manufacturer after receiving our advice and offers.

XtraBlatt: ***What response rate are you expecting?***
Erekdi: Although this is the first end customer survey we are conducting, we are expecting a high response rate especially in the markets where we are in direct contact with our customers. There is a great interest in actively being involved in developments, which shows us that our customers are willing to share their experiences and evaluations with us. Every returned survey will help us to further develop our products and services in a targeted way. ‹‹‹

Survey

If you would like to take part in the survey, you can register here:
https://kurzlinks.de/krone-survey

A safety harness and cable winch lift Martin Krämer into the adapted KRONE harvester.

Your own attitude counts

Contractor Martin Krämer knows that if you really want to achieve something, you will manage to do so. For 15 years, the 35-year old has managed a team of 25 employees from his wheelchair with his father at his side. And he absolutely loves to drive harvesters.

Contractor Martin Krämer is getting ready for a day of harvesting maize. Today's plan is to process 25 to 30 ha of maize. The 35-year old puts on his harness along with waistcoat and leg straps. He then uses a carabiner to secure himself to the wire rope on the electric hoist installed behind the cab of the harvester. Stefan Müller, his employee, then press the button on the crane and he is lifted into the air without his wheelchair.

Martin Krämer is soon hovering at the same height as the driver's seat and can then position himself in the right direction to take a seat. He has been paraplegic since his road traffic accident and uses a wheelchair when on the ground. "All OK," he shouts down to his colleague removing the safety harness. He then starts the KRONE BiG X 780 and drives out of the machine hall.

KRONE harvester conversion

The contractor based in Neunkirchen-Seelscheid, around 40 km southeast of Cologne in Germany, manages the family business – R & M Krämer GmbH – along with his father. He is responsible for the majority of the organisation and scheduling. "I split my work equally between the office and workshop, depending on the time of year and amount of work," he explains while turning on to a dirt track. "Although sometimes, like today, I enjoy driving to the customer's site myself."

His father, Rudolf Krämer, and colleague, Stefan Müller, look after any ad-hoc requirements and any emergencies at the sites. "Currently, I work with my father to plan important operational processes and procurements," explains Martin Krämer. Otherwise, the 61-year old founder of the company is slowly retiring from the operational side of the business.

The company's main orders are linked to transport logistics. They predominantly transport bulk material with their twelve lorries. Since 2021, the fleet has also been part of a special project at Cologne Bonn Airport to refurbish the taxiways. "We remove construction waste and deliver new concrete to site," explains the Managing Director. "In addition, we are focusing on forage recovery, grassland management and the maize harvest in this distinct grassland region. We work with the complete grassland range from KRONE – from mowers through to rakes and balers, we have got one wrapping device, two forage transport wagons and two loading and forage transport wagons, as well as the harvester that has been adapted to my needs." »»

Working for the family business: Martin Krämer is responsible for a lot of the scheduling and organisation.

Actuating the brakes by hand: It is very important to Martin Krämer that his team can easily work with the maize harvester that has been adapted to his needs.

Getting a winch to work: As Martin Krämer is paraplegic, he has to rely on the power of a machine to lift him from his wheelchair into the cab of the harvester.

Availability of spare parts

The collaboration with Pallor – a KRONE service partner – has been working well for around 30 years. “As we mostly repair the machines ourselves, we really appreciate that the supply of spare parts runs so smoothly,” he states, praising the cooperation. It has been the case, that a taxi has been sent to deliver a spare part to the company on time.

The Krämer team comprises 18 permanent employees. “Including the temporary staff, who help from time to time, there are a total of 25 employees,” explains the contractor adding: “And last, but by no means least, there is my wife who works in the office, although we try and keep her workload to a minimum.” The team also includes their three daughters, who his wife has roped in along the way. One of their daughters in already very interested in the company’s activities.

Huge support

During his accident at the age of 20 years, Martin Krämer sustained a comminuted fracture of the thoracic vertebra. At the time, he had just completed his training as a roofer and the first year of his apprenticeship. “At the same time, I always enjoyed working for my father’s contracting company,” he recalls. Following the accident, his professional career path shifted in this direction.

The support provided by family and friends was extremely important in helping me get back to everyday life,” explains Martin Krämer. “Since the accident, I have an even greater appreciation of these wonderful people in my life.” In the early days following the accident but, of course, even today, they provide him with irreplaceable, physical and emotional support.

From the outset, his father encouraged him to work for the contracting company. “After spending months in hospital and a rehabilitation centre, they welcomed me home with an adapted tractor. A year later, we had our first harvester adapted to my needs,” recounts Martin Krämer. At first, he only drove short distances with the tractor and tipper to slowly work out what was still possible. Starting everything from scratch was an enormous challenge.

However, while in hospital one of his roommates, a long-term wheelchair user, taught him that if you really want to achieve something, you will manage to do so. “Since then, this has been an important life motto,” emphasises Martin Krämer. He had to test his new limits and then respect them. “This is currently still something that I encounter again and again,” he explains.

Actuating the brakes by hand

Martin Krämer reaches the maize field that he wants to chop today. The farmer is waiting for him and joins him in the tractor cabin. They have a brief conversation. The contractor then starts his chopping job for the day. Does it make a difference to his customers that he is a wheelchair user? Martin Krämer answers promptly: “No. Of course, some new customers do wait in front of the tractor for me to climb down, but then I just explain and ask them to come up to me.”

When he approaches the edge of the field, he grabs a special lever on the right next to the driver’s seat. He pushes it forward and the harvester slows down. “I can operate all of the other functions, such as acceleration, via the joystick.” In any case, it was important to him that his colleagues could work with the adapted harvester.

The adaptation of the machine was supported by KRONE. “Such a project can easily cost € 25,000,” explains the technical enthusiast. “We had a lot of ideas beforehand about how we could design the lifting process, whether we could attach a lift, hoist or winch.” Ultimately, it ended up being a winch. It is less susceptible to dirt.

Friends for life: Stefan Müller (right) is a family friend and also works for the Krämer’s. Thanks to people like him, Martin Krämer has gained confidence again.

The specialist adaptations to the harvester cost around € 25,000.

Dream job gives you strength

In addition to his family and friends, it is the love of his job that inspires Martin Krämer with courage and confidence. “Working as a contractor was always a great hobby and has now become my dream job,” he explains. “What I really enjoy about my working day is the variety of tasks, not just in the agricultural and construction sectors but also when comes to skilled crafts and organisation.”

As a contractor, you are not just responsible for harvesting the grass, for example, but you are also the person who resolves any problems that may arise. “If a tractor develops a fault, we are the ones that organise a replacement machine. In the same breath, customers will ask us where they can purchase spare parts,” he continues to explain.

The wheelchair does prevent him from being able to get involved with certain manual tasks. “There are some things I cannot do or only with great difficulty. However, this has also turned me into an inventor,” he states with a grin. He has already developed and built a lot of the tools in the workshop.

Targeted investments

When Martin Krämer drives the harvester back into the machine hall in the evening, Stefan Müller appears as if by magic. He moves the wheelchair into position. A short time later, the contractor is attached to the winch and moving towards the ground where Stefan Müller helps his boss into the wheelchair. “Stefan is particularly important to me,” reveals Martin Krämer.

The two have known each other since they played in the sandpit together and Stefan has now worked for the company for 11 years. The 37-year old is everything in one – a best friend, mental coach, holiday cover and much more. “Sometimes he is pretty direct,” states the contractor with a wink, “but I can take it and sometimes I actually need to hear it.”

His particular situation has taught him how important it is to have a positive attitude to get on with life. “My aim is to drive the company forward and ensure it develops further to achieve appropriate growth,” he concludes. He wants the team to remain a size where he can always meet individual requirements and retain an excellent team spirit. The businessman believes that the way things are currently set up is perfect. “We will not grow at any price, but will instead make targeted investments when it is sensible to do so, because a new purchase will make our daily routine easier or mean we can accept new contracts.” ««

Developing the company: Martin Krämer (left) hopes to develop the company further with an appropriate amount of growth.

SALES STRATEGY

Growing together

By implementing the Competence Centre concept, KRONE is strategically developing cooperations within the dealer network. National large machine centres will enable local dealers to receive even more support. Contractors will particularly benefit from this scheme.

Dr. Benedikt Federspiel who works in the KRONE Business Development department and is responsible for the development of dealer networks explains the aim of the KRONE Competence Centre: "The overall increasing complexity of machines and demand means that the trade sector requires a professional approach, that we are actively supporting with the Competence Centre concept." The desired dealer network will, on the one hand, comprise national large machine centres, known as Competence Centres, and, on the other hand, local dealers of varying sizes. "The smaller partners will particularly benefit from the support provided by specialist national centres," emphasises the 38-year old. "We would like the dealers to decide for themselves whether they want to be qualified as a Competence Centre or not. The experts on site obviously know their local market the best."

The economist continues to explain that, on the one hand, this is about KRONE making its own products available. "However, exclusivity is not the aim of our new concept, we specifically see ourselves as a trade partner, especially in the multi-brand trade sector." This offer is open to dealers of any size, with any business structure and every degree of professionalisation. The first two KRONE Competence Centres – Igl Agrartechnik launched in Nabburg, Bavaria, Germany (in March 2024) and Pallor based in Winningen near Koblenz, Germany (from 2026) – are both exclusive KRONE partners. "We just want to offer the local trade sector good opportunities for the future by providing a more diverse range of brands and ultimately grow with the trade sector," explains Dr. Benedikt Federspiel.

Develop individually

The Competence Centre strategy intends for us to work with dealers to develop concepts to ensure an optimum form of cooperation, that entails individual development stages with sufficient freedom and opportunities for growth that are tailored to the local situation. The current timescale is based on an average of five years. "An integral part of the KRONE DNA and, therefore our identity, is based on our customers being able to approach us in person," he explains. He believes that with this new strategy, KRONE will use digitalisation to transition this availability into modern structures.

Both the machines and demands from customers are becoming increasingly more complex. The current trend is moving towards increasingly large and new, technically more sophisticated technology developments. The private trade sector has therefore been facing major challenges for quite some time. "Dealers often see it as a risk to just focus on one manufacturer. This is why we would like to offer alternatives." The matter of future prospects has become a pressing issue for many dealers. The margins are very tight and there is a recurring lack of follow-up. The catchment areas are subsequently getting bigger. "Not everyone can or wants to participate," summarises Dr. Benedikt Federspiel. However, local trade is very important to KRONE.

"We particularly want to organise the large machine business sector," explains the KRONE specialist. Many dealers no longer want to take on the commercial risk of this business sector, this is down to a lack of specialist staff, the amount of employee training required, maintaining a stock of spare parts and the matter of demonstration machines. "We need to make the sales sector more flexible and generate opportunities for local partners with the help of national Competence Centres that stock a comprehensive range of spare parts, including for larger machines, all without any particular commercial risk," he explains. The overall aim is to combine the range at one location and ensure that the space is flexible in case the individual market volume possibly no longer suffices. »»

The operational areas of providers is increasing more and more – a national, first class service must therefore be ensured.

Dr. Benedikt Federspiel, KRONE Business Development

« The new concept also includes a new corporate identity for dealers. KRONE branding will be placed on company vehicles next to the brand name of the relevant Competence Centre dealer.

Pallor based in Winningen near Koblenz, Germany, will operate as a Competence Centre from 2026.

More flexibility for contractors

From grassland technology including mowers, tedders and rakes, through to harvesting technology such as balers and loading and forage transport wagons, as well as high-performance self-propelled machines like the BiG X and BiG M and autonomous carrier vehicles – the dealers of the KRONE Competence Centre network should be able to supply an optimum range of products, services and customer service. "Especially contractors who are professional customers with a high proportion of large machines, are a very important target group for us. Generally, the operational areas of providers, in particular, is increasing more and more. A national, first class service must therefore be ensured," explains Dr. Benedikt Federspiel.

Variable utilisation concepts would complete the range of services, thus not only including traditional procurement but also tailored financing options such as leasing or a pay-per-use model. Based on experience, KRONE has found that fleet customers, such as contractors, have a tendency to opt for flexible utilisation concepts. "The services on offer at Competence Centres are exciting for these customers. They will, for example, have the option to buy a BiG Pack and lease a second one all from a single source," explains the expert for dealer network development.

The current concept also includes a new corporate identity for dealers. KRONE branding will be placed on company vehicles next to the brand name of the relevant dealer. "Partners can thus benefit from the power of our brand. This is not something new, but the position has changed," he notes.

Added value for everyone

The support provided by the Competence Centre concept will only relate to content and not finances. Dr. Benedikt Federspiel emphasises: "The principle approach is that dealers can, for example, access specialist workshop capacities that also maintain a stock of spare parts. We also have a price structure that facilitates a buy-back scheme." Of course, this has to be profitable for every partner. The margins must be distributed based on the amount of work. "Positioning ourselves as a Competence Centre also adds value for KRONE, not only when it comes to customer perception but it also provides for shared growth," he continues to explain. A valued colleague who works for a market competitor once aptly referred to the Competence Centres as "arks of specialists".

The keyword "specialists" makes Dr. Benedikt Federspiel think of another very important area for KRONE – transport and logistics technology. By systematically expanding the product range, the manufacturer has not only developed in the freight forwarding sector, but has also become a logistics full liner in the agricultural sector. "The specialist sales and service sector has, of course, been familiar with popular products, such as loading and forage transport wagons for a long time. It is a little different when it comes to solutions, such as general-purpose wagons or moving floor trailers for lorries. These products are real value-added solutions for contractors and with the help of Competence Centres logistics technology can become a large scale, interesting segment for our specialist trade partners," he explains.

Earlier development stage

The new concept is currently still in the early stages of being implemented. "It is currently a work in progress," states Dr. Benedikt Federspiel describing the current situation. However, it is being implemented on a continuous basis. To ensure dealers can develop individual approaches that are right for the regional market, the following three elements are available. The dealer can then make use of the ones that are relevant to their business. "We are combining our leasing activities under the name 'KRONE Fleet Green'," he states. "This is a relatively flexible concept that we have been using for a good two years. It enables dealers to offer their own leasing contracts under this brand based on output usage models. It is a type of billing model whereby customers only pay for the actual use of the product."

The next element is KRONE Finance. Dr. Benedikt Federspiel knows that KRONE is helping the trade sector with financing options. "The third element is to establish a qualified brand of trusted used machines. This part is still being developed and is therefore currently not available yet." KRONE wants to develop a structure for end customers to ensure it is worthwhile investing in regular maintenance and repair by, for example, generating a platform containing data on machines, used machines and spare parts.

According to Dr. Federspiel, a particularly important tool when implementing this concept is training, both online and in person. "In this context, the aim is to also offer tailored development options. Continuous product expansion is not the right option for everyone. Our concept means that, in future, a dealer can also specialise in certain product segments," he concludes.

FROM THE MARKETING OFFICE

Dear readers,

Looking back on this last year, there is one event that is a great example of everything KRONE stands for and that was the Agritechnica 2025 trade fair. With more than 476,000 visitors from 171 countries and more than 1600 journalists, influencers and industry experts – it not only provided an international overview of agricultural technology but also our brand. We not only presented ourselves as a technological leader in the forage harvesting sector, but especially as a grounded and approachable company that has been family-run for generations.

> Our work does not finish with the machine, we want to develop processes further from the field right through to the barn.
>
> **Markus Steinwendner, Head of Marketing & Communication KRONE Agriculture**

Especially now, when communication is increasingly becoming more digital, diverse and faster, one thing remains unchanged and is just as important: conducting real conversations between manufacturers and customers, sales persons and farmers, service technicians and drives, feed experts and herd managers. From the conference table to the feeding trough.

This direct exchange is part of our foundation and that is something we want to cultivate and protect. Our work does not finish with the machine, we want to develop processes further from the field right through to the barn. It is not about individual performance rates or working widths, but considering what will add real value for the farmer and contractor. Maximum forage quality is one of the deciding factors and finding the right technology to achieve this is the key to success – in this respect we at KRONE are also milk producers.

Our innovations have highlighted this. Our CTF-compatible machines help to facilitate sward protection. By combining systems, such as swathing, baling and wrapping in one process, we are saving time, diesel and labour costs. By closely focusing on the corn silage processing score (CSPS), we are consistently thinking of the utilisation of forage, animal health and milk production right down to the last detail. After all, an increased volume of high-quality milk in the tank and healthy animals in the barn ultimately ensures the economic success of our customers. We will not only continue to apply this motto in 2026, but will intensify our efforts with new machines, new formats, new ideas, while always maintaining the same objective of providing farmers and contractors with the best possible support to complete their work.

I would like to wish you and your family a relaxing festive season, a good start to the new year and a successful harvest in 2026.

With best regards

Head of Marketing & Communication KRONE Agriculture

krone-agriculture.com

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- **Up to 20% higher yield:** Soil compaction limited to the tracks
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- **12 m system solution:** Mowing with the EasyCut B 1250 Fold, tedding with the Vendro C 1340, swathing with the Swadro TC 1250

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