



Manufacturer Perspectives

Ferri: Extending Reach of Niche Products

By Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf (/authors/1-lynn-marcinkowski-woolf) posted on June 13, 2016 | Posted in Manufacturer News (/topics/73-manufacturer-news)

Ferri, an Italian manufacturer of 3-point hitch boom and offset/in-line slope flail mowers, has goals this year to boost awareness of its equipment for niche, municipal and rural lifestyle markets and expand its dealer network beyond its current presence on the east and west coasts.

Ferri's T430D is a self-contained 3-point hitch mounted boom mower. Its flail head has a cutting width of 39 inches and its boom has a horizontal reach of 14 feet, 2 inches.

"We've been selling in North America for about 20 years, but have not done a lot of promotion to raise awareness of who we are and what we offer to our customer base," says Ron Roglis, who took over as marketing and sales manager about 1½ years ago.

One way they're changing that is to build better relationships between the company, its 8 distributors and its dealer network. Ferri recently hosted a distributor meeting in Nebraska – something they hadn't done in several years.

"Back in November, we asked our distributors to answer questions like 'Who is our dealer? Who is our customer?' Then, at the meeting we sat down and analyzed those questions to better define our market," says Roglis.

"The concentration of our sales have been in the northeast corridor of the U.S. due to the longevity of our distributor there (J.S. Woodhouse Co.) and we've been able to capitalize on niche markets. For instance, blueberry farmers and other growers of specialty crops use our flail mowers for vegetation control. We've also had interest from the cranberry industry for keeping the marshes and bogs free of grasses. We see the potential in these niche markets to be our advantage," Roglis says. Other niche markets in the western U.S., such as in Oregon, have been strong for the company.

Highlighting Differences

Ferri's boom mower models fit 20-110 horsepower tractors and offer a reach of 8 feet 10 inches to 20 feet 6 inches. Its slope mowers fit tractors 18-160 horsepower and have a width of 4 feet 1 inch to 8 feet 2 inches.

"If a dealership is carrying a boom rotary cutter, no matter what the brand, they are an ideal candidate for us to talk about our flail and boom mowers from Ferri because we offer a broader product line than anyone in North America. The uniqueness with Ferri is that we're a 3-point hitch unit, so the end user can use their tractor for numerous applications. It's a great selling point," Roglis says.

The units maintain their own hydraulics and new models have a polypropylene oil tank, reducing weight, Roglis says.

The company's newest models are the T380D and T430D boom mowers. The T380D fits tractors in the 40-60 horsepower range, has a horizontal reach of 12 feet 7 inches and a cutting width of 39 inches. The T430D is intended for tractors in the 50-70 horsepower range, has a horizontal reach of 14 feet 2 inches and a cutting width of 39 inches.

The new head for the boom mowers, the TID100, has interchangeable rotor blades (multi-use Y, articulated Y and hammers) – a new feature for Ferri. This allows the user to cut grass, shrubs and hedges $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick.

Adding Dealers

Roglis says dealers who carry smaller horsepower tractors, as well as shortline only dealers, are Ferri's target dealer segment. Since the mowers are 3-point and not fixed mount, they can be sold to complement the tractor lines a dealer carries or to the customers of shortline dealers who are seeking attachments.



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Ron Roglis is marketing and sales manager for Ferri.

“Our strategy for adding dealers is to have 5-10 good dealers per territory. We don’t need a dealer on every corner, but want to focus on those 5-10 dealers,” Roglis says.

Selling Mowers

Norfolk Power Equipment, with locations in Carver and Wrentham, Mass., began selling Ferri products when they took over a dealership in 2012 that carried the line. Its main customer segments are cranberry growers, municipal accounts and consumer customers.

“In the cranberry market, there is a strong need for a flail mower and Ferri has quality equipment, reasonably priced and has good availability,” says Brian Coulter, general manager.

“We’ve been selling a lot more of the hydraulic offset models with the 64-inch cut. They are able to do the job with a smaller horsepower tractor, like a 50-60 horsepower tractor, instead of an 80-90 horsepower tractor that other manufacturers require,” Coulter says. He says some customers set up their tractors with a flail mower on the front and the hydraulic offset on the rear and can mow double the width with one tractor.

Ferri’s variety of models helps Coulter match the machine to the job and the customer’s budget. “I stock a few mowers, but it’s difficult to always have the right configuration. It’s nice to have something in stock to demonstrate to the customer and then I can get what I need in a day or two,” he says. Coulter works with J.S. Woodhouse for his equipment and parts inventory.



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