



Tracked Takeuchi touches down...

Jim Breen

The 'go anywhere' loader that turns on a two-pence!

Takeuchi has become a well-known brand here in Ireland, due largely to its strong performance in the mini-digger market of late. In fact, during recent years up to a quarter of all machines sold were Takeuchi's!

However, this Japanese manufacturer has more strings to its bow; it also manufactures a range of compact, rubber-tracked loaders. These were first launched back in 1987 but are only now arriving in Ireland. In this article, Machinery Movers takes a closer look at Takeuchi's TL series and asks one Co Meath user about his experiences to date.

Takeuchi tracked loaders are only now making their presence felt in the UK and Irish markets. However, they have been selling in significant numbers in the US for many years. Nowadays, North American buyers snatch them up at the rate of 400 per month!

Takeuchi claims that its loaders are engineered from the 'ground up' with the power and strength of 'conventional' tracked loaders. Yet, it says, they are packaged in agile and manoeuvrable sizes.

The firm contends that it has "succeeded in bringing together the flotation, traction and stability of a tracked loader with rubber track versatility".



Pat Farrelly, Farrelly Bros Contracting: "A tracked machine is a must-have when negotiating soft, wet ground".

The firm also points out that a tracked loader is, in some cases, more versatile than a mini-digger. This, says Takeuchi, is borne out by the machine's popularity in the rental sector in the US. It's a trend the

firm hopes to mimic over here in Europe.

Three models

Takeuchi initially introduced three loader models: the 3400kg TL130, the 4350kg

TL140 and the range-topping 4850kg TL150. Tipping loads are 2100kg, 2700kg and 3200kg respectively. From these figures, it's apparent that these machines fall into the heavyweight skid-steer class. All are fitted with either Yanmar or Isuzu engines and hydrostatic transmissions coupled to planetary final drives.

The cab is supposedly bigger than the class-average and comes with a six-way adjustable suspension seat and built-in armrests. Unlike some competing models, the loader can be run with the door either open or closed.

Also unlike some types of skid-steer loaders (wheeled or tracked), there are no foot pedals for the major controls. Instead, all functions are worked via joysticks. The stick on the left controls your direction of travel; the stick on the right works the boom and bucket.

Power ratings stretch from 50kW for the TL130 right up to 72kW for the TL150. The machines measure 1.58 to 1.86 metres in width, depending on model. The TL150 can stretch to a maximum lift height of 3.2 metres (bucket pin) – enough to dump its load into a typical tipper truck.

Last summer, Takeuchi added an additional smaller model to the range. The TL120 weighs a modest 2755kg and was introduced to meet trailer tow limit demands. It is powered by a Yanmar engine and has an operating capacity of just 565kg. It spans just 1.47 metres in width and is under two metres in height.

User comment

Farrelly Bros of Carnaross, close to Kells, Co Meath, took delivery of a TL150 'Hi-



John Seale, Ace Machinery: "The 2.8-tonne TB125 mini-digger is still Takeuchi's best-selling machine here in Ireland".

Flow' early last year. The machine was bought primarily for felling trees (yes, you read correctly!) and has a somewhat unusual contraption mounted up front.

Sourced in Canada, and believed to be the only one of its type in the country, this attachment grips the tree and then shears its way through. The blade moves through an arc, effectively forcing its way through the trunk in the process. Tipping the scales at 400kg, the attachment itself requires a substantial on which to carry it. A smaller skid-steer loader simply wouldn't suffice; this is why

Farrelly Bros opted for the beefy, five-tonne TL150.

Asked why they chose Takeuchi, Pat Farrelly said: "We've had a three-tonne Takeuchi mini-digger for the past six or seven years. It's proven reliable and we

Specifications: Takeuchi TL150

Operating weight:	4.85 tonnes
Operating capacity:	1.12 tonnes
Bucket capacity:	0.68 cubic metres
Engine:	Yanmar; 4.4-litre; 4-cylinder
Overall width:	1.86 metres
Overall height:	2.32 metres
Maximum lift height:	3.2 metres



are happy with the service from Ace Machinery – the Takeuchi dealer. That’s why we had no qualms about buying another Takeuchi machine.”

Track logic

Pat’ brother Peter says that tracks are a must for the sort of work that the TL150 tackles. He explained: “You are not permitted to do this sort of work during the summer months, due to EU legislation. That means this machine is at its busiest in the depths of winter when ground conditions are more challenging. Wooded areas can be especially soft and wet underfoot.

“That where tracks really shine. This machine can keep going long after a wheeled skid-steer would get stuck.” He joked: “You don’t have to worry about getting a puncture either!”

He added: “We expect this machine to stay busy for three or four months each year. It’s important that we get through the work quickly and that we don’t lose out because we can’t get in on-site. The attachment alone cost over €30,000, so we’re keen to keep downtime to a minimum.”

Interestingly, according to Takeuchi’s own literature the TL150 exerts a ground pressure of just 4.3psi. That does suggest a relatively light, forgiving footprint.

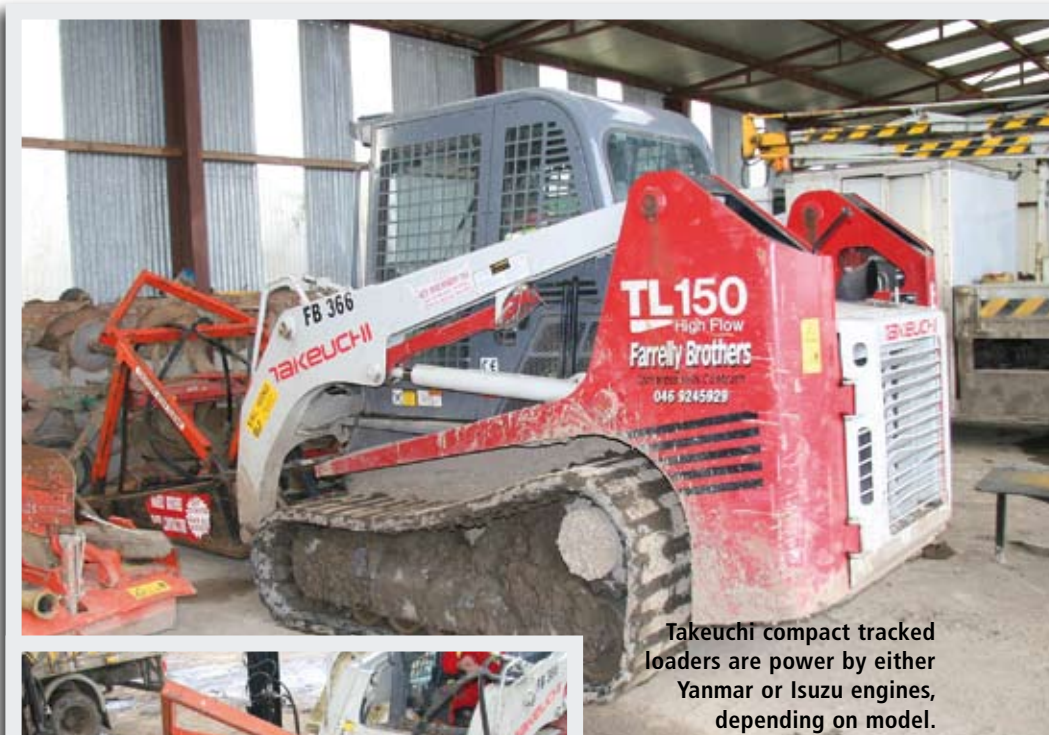
Irish market

According to Ace Machinery’s John Seale, the Portlaoise-based firm began to actively market Takeuchi’s tracked loaders early last year. He explained: “These machines have already proven themselves in the US, where Takeuchi sells almost 5000 units each year!

“Of the four models, I expect the TL120 (smallest) and TL150 (largest) to prove most popular here in Ireland. The TL120 will compete with similar-sized, wheeled machines from other manufacturers. The top-of-the-range TL150 is in a different league. It can rival a small loading shovel!”

He added: “Few other manufacturers build skid-steer loaders in rubber-tracked guise. And none that I know of build a model that can equal the TL150 – in terms of weight or performance.”

According to John, the TL120 lists at €32,000 (excl VAT, depending on specification). Expect to pay €47,000 (excl



Takeuchi compact tracked loaders are power by either Yanmar or Isuzu engines, depending on model.



This novel attachment, which is manufactured in Canada, is used for felling trees. It ‘shears’ through the trunk.

VAT) for a TL150.

Briefly turning his thoughts to the mini-digger market, John concedes that sales in January were slow but points out that February was “vibrant”. He says that the 2.8-tonne TB125 remains Takeuchi’s best-selling machine here in Ireland.

Takeuchi in profile

How much do you know about Takeuchi? Did you know, for example, that the company claims to have produced the world’s first compact tracked excavator in 1971? Or that it pioneered the now-familiar rubber-tracked mini-digger in 1982?

Takeuchi has been present in the UK since the early 1980s. At that time, the first machines were imported under the guise of ‘Priestman Mini-Mustang’. Many of those machines are still in use today.

In 1996, Takeuchi set up its own UK subsidiary in Berkshire. The 15,000-square

foot premises are home to a spare parts facility that supplies the Irish market.

Takeuchi itself is a Japanese entity. Its origins stretch back to 1963, when Akio Takeuchi established the business with an investment equivalent to just €20,000. Within five years, the investment had grown five-fold and business expanded rapidly.

Takeuchi’s Murakami plant was built in 1972; within a year production had reached 150 units per month. In 1979, a year after celebrating its 15th anniversary, the company opened a US subsidiary to cater for the growing North American market. Production levels reached 300 units per month.

Construction of a further factory at Togura was completed in 1984, representing yet another substantial milestone.

A joint venture with a German firm (NOBAS) was embarked upon in 1995; the same year that Takeuchi established its UK subsidiary. The firm opened a dedicated R&D facility in Japan three years later, followed by the inauguration of its French sales wing in 2000.

In 2003, Takeuchi celebrated its 40th year in business. Today, it’s a sizeable entity and is even listed on the Japanese stock exchange! 🌟