

Tarmac

Tarmac's new *SpreadMaster* lorry-mounted asphalt spreading system represents a major advance over traditional methods of handlay surfacing.

A better spread for your money

Application of asphalt on footpaths and carriageway inaccessible to a paver has been carried out with little variation of method for decades. The task of transferring a quantity of material from a lorry to where it is needed has traditionally involved tipping the asphalt as close to the site as possible and then transporting it using a wheelbarrow or wheeled loader.

Tarmac's customers are no longer having to make do with this less than ideal solution following the introduction of the *SpreadMaster* asphalt delivery and spreading system to the United Kingdom market.

Since summer 1998 many recipients of Tarmac asphalts including a lengthening list of local authorities have benefited from using *SpreadMaster* in preference to the relatively labour intensive techniques they have previously used.

SpreadMaster is fairly simple in terms of its design. It is mounted in place of the delivery vehicle's tailgate and consists of a screw conveyor enclosed within two articulated arms which allow

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material to be spread at a radius of 3.5m directly from the vehicle.

The arms are operated hydraulically from a remote control box and can be lifted to clear obstructions such as road safety barriers. "Our customers are reporting a long list of benefits from using *SpreadMaster*," says Tarmac Sales Representative Chris Valentine.

"Most importantly, contractors have found that their operations are safer and a lot more efficient. They no longer need to have a wheeled loader running up and down and turning within the site, which often extends only as far as the width of the footpath and a single carriageway lane closure," he says.

"Plant and labour requirements are reduced using *SpreadMaster* so valuable resources can be allocated elsewhere. Also, with no need to loose tip the material, there is a reduction in the potential for heat loss, contamination, waste and damage to the surface on which the material has been tipped."

Other advantages of using *SpreadMaster* include a reduction in standing time due to operatives no longer having to wait for material to be transported from a stockpile and less manual handling, adds Valentine.

"Occupational health problems associated with shovelling and transporting material manually is an important issue for contractors and local authorities. Use of technology such as *SpreadMaster* reduces exposure to occupational health risks.

"There are also environmental benefits associated with *SpreadMaster*, such as reduced noise and less disruption for the public."

Tarmac's asphalt spreading system was originally developed in Sweden and introduced to the UK surfacing market in 1998 through the company's Northern Region subdivision.

According to Valentine, a single unit operated under trial offer to the company's customers in the

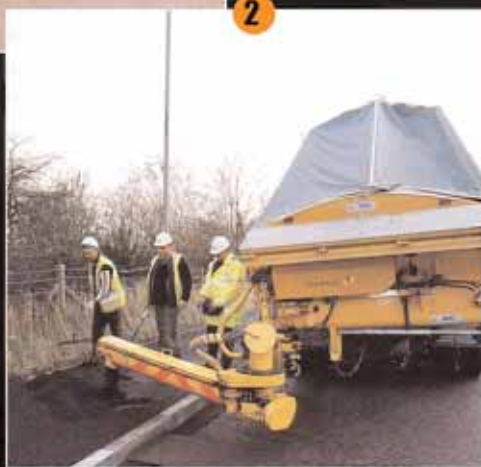


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1. **Spread Master is producing environmental benefits and reducing inconvenience to the public by cutting down on noise, plant use, surfacing time and material spillage.**

2. **Local authorities are finding Spread Master effective for increasing efficiency and safety of surfacing operations.**

3. **Spread Master's articulated arm allows material to be spread at a radius of 3.5m directly from the vehicle.**



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North East proved so successful that Tarmac's Northern Region Director Alan Barrett took up the initiative.

Barrett has since promoted the use of *SpreadMaster* by Tarmac customers and a total of 11 machines are now in use throughout the company's UK operating regions.

Tarmac's growing list of customers making good use of *SpreadMaster* includes a number of contractors in the North East such as Houseman & Falshaw and Foden & Spence. But it is the highway departments of local authorities in particular that have taken to *SpreadMaster's* advantages for footpath and cycleway surfacing, says Valentine.

The list of public sector users of *SpreadMaster* includes Sunderland City Contracting and the borough councils of Stockton-On-Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland.

Contract Supervisor for the Highways department at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Graeme Small says *SpreadMaster* is pencilled in for use on at least 32 footpath schemes in Stockton during 2000.

"Keeping one of Tarmac's machines running constantly for six or seven days each week is significantly increasing the tempo of our operations," says Small.

"We have used *SpreadMaster* on several new-build and footpath maintenance projects during 1999 and so far in 2000. Generally we have found that asphalt can be delivered and dispensed to a number of sites by one vehicle in a much more controlled manner.

"This is reducing strain injuries and the plant and labour requirements for a single surfacing operation."

Small says his operatives have previously used a JCB 3CX with a selection of buckets for off-loading and transporting asphalt on site. Damage to the JCB, the lorry and the road surface where the material was off-loaded was common.

"By using *SpreadMaster* we have prevented this and the need for remedial work, and the material is now much less exposed to contamination and environmental influences," he says.

"Traffic management on site has been simplified as we no longer have a pile of asphalt obstructing the site and the JCB is being put to better use on jobs it was designed for. Another bonus is obligation for maintenance of the equipment is with the supplier.

"If it breaks or fails in any way, *SpreadMaster* and the material remaining in the vehicle will return to Tarmac's depot.

"I had a quantity of off-loaded material and a problem on my hands if the JCB broke down," says Small.

Tarmac has invested heavily in developing a network of *SpreadMaster* machines for its customers throughout Britain after realising the system's benefits on contracts in the North East.

"Tarmac is very keen to help its customers work more efficiently. We have developed a full range of innovative added value surfacing products within our Masters in Asphalt brand," says Valentine.

"The benefits to be had from these products are being brought to the full by placing the material directly where required on site using *SpreadMaster*."