Pea group owners and the farmers on whose land they grow peas rely on PMC to ensure harvesting leaves as little impact as possible on their soils.

“Trelleborg technology helps brings peas to the plate

Manufacturers who produce hundreds or thousands of machines a year are almost guaranteed a wide choice of component suppliers keen to secure their business. For those in specialist, low volume markets, though, finding in a supplier the right blend of large-scale resources and small-scale attention to detail and service can be difficult.

But Norfolk-based pea viner firm PMC Harvesters, which makes just a dozen or so £385,000 machines each year for UK and overseas markets, has found that sourcing its tyre requirements through Trelleborg brings with it the benefits not only of working with people and products dedicated to the agricultural sector, but at the same time puts at its disposal the support and expertise of one of the world’s leading industrial companies.

Pea harvesting equipment has been manufactured at the firm’s Fakenham facility since the 1970s, and whilst Dutch parent company Ploeger also manufactures its own design of pea viner, PMC creates and produces its own range of machines.

“We’ve worked with Trelleborg since the 1970s, when our former parent firm first developed a self-propelled pea viner,” says PMC engineering manager Robert Plant. “One of the key reasons we’ve remained with them is that they have always responded to our requirements, even though we have radically changed the configuration of our machines over that time.

“Our original self-propelled viner design was much like a combine in its external configuration, with large front wheels and tyres and smaller steerable ones at the rear. But in 1987, we began work on a whole new format, to not only increase capacity but also reduce soil compaction and improve manoeuvrability. That led to the concept of a six-wheel machine, with equal-sized wheels/tyres and front and rear steering axles.”

While the latest 979-CT and 989 models the firm produces are direct descendents of that first six-wheel 979 viner, the technology within the machines, from the operator’s cab to the threshing system, has undergone significant development. And while the six-wheel configuration remains, ongoing work with Trelleborg has seen further improvements to the machines’ ability to travel across soils with minimal damage to farms’ most important resource, despite their approx 26-27.5t total weight and conditions that can be wet underneath the

pea foliage during the short, early summer pea season, when harvesting takes place around the clock.

"We've been using Twin Radials all-round on the 979-CT, and on the rear axle of the 989, for the past eight years," explains manufacturing manager Julian Smith. "When we developed the newer 989, we moved to slightly larger 710/60 R30 TM900s on the front, for even greater flotation and traction."

PMC also offers a front track option on the 979-CT, but higher purchase and maintenance costs and greater fuel consumption on the road, along with research evidence which shows little soil compaction difference between front tracks and the PMC six-wheel configuration, means they are generally specified only by those working on fen land.

"Pea group owners and the farmers on whose land they grow peas rely on us to ensure harvesting leaves as little impact as possible on their soils," Mr Smith points out.

"That means we rely on our tyre supplier to provide us with the right products for our needs and the advice to help set them up properly, as well as a reliable product and dedicated back-up in the field should we need it," says Mr Smith. "And that's what we get from Trelleborg."

Trelleborg provides PMC with the tyres, advice and back-up essential for a manufacturer whose machines often work 24hrs/day, say the firm's Julian Smith(left) and Robert Plant.

"Welcome to the digital age - three Trelleborg apps and TrelleborgAgri - the network for farming professionals

In 2012, Trelleborg introduced three new apps, demonstrating the commitment of the company to digital tools and modern-day communications.

Trelleborg's **Tyre Book** and **Tyre iBrochure** apps have been specifically designed to provide farming professionals, as well as specialised tyre and machinery dealers, with comprehensive information on Trelleborg's complete tyre range, along with useful advice to help professionals get the most out of their agricultural and forestry tyres.

In addition, the **Trelleborg Load Calculator** app, which is designed to calculate load per axle according to a tractor's configuration, is now able to recommend the optimum pressure for the selected application.

Roberto Angelucci, Trelleborg Wheel Systems Digital Marketing Manager, commented: "Our new advanced, user-friendly digital tools are designed to drive users in a natural and intuitive journey through the entire range of Trelleborg products and solutions, from technical data, product performances and test results, to the latest pictures and movies."

Angelucci continued: "Digital interaction and communications with our customers is becoming a fundamental part of our industry. This is because times are changing and modern agriculture requires that professionals are always up to date with the latest tools, solutions and services available to them, which will help them to run farming operations more efficiently and productively."

In addition to these interactive tools, Trelleborg have successfully introduced **TrelleborgAgri** - a digital network for farming professionals.

TrelleborgAgri, which includes Facebook, LinkedIn, You Tube, Flickr and Twitter, gives farmers the opportunity to share their experiences, best practices and opinions with their peers, to improve the outcome of their agricultural operations.