



Cherbourg depot leads Alpha-salt on UK roads de-icing market

'Best value' is the watchword for public sector procurement managers. In plain English, it simply means 'value for money'.

But in the world of local (and central) Government 'best value' most definitely does not mean the cheapest. In fact, it allows civil servants to take other factors - such as customer-service, a proven track record, or all-life-costs of a service or product into account when procuring goods and services.

For example, there is a well-known brand of battery which advertises on 'value for money' because it can power a toy rabbit for longer than rival brands. The message is - 'Rivals may be less expensive per battery, but you have to buy more of them.'

The same issues arise when it comes to stock-piling salt by local councils to keep our roads open during the winter.

There are two main sources of salt - 'rock salt' and 'solar salt'. Both types do the same job in the same way - the lower the freezing temperature of

water and thereby dissolve snow, ice and frost - to keep roads open and traffic moving in winter.

So what is the difference?

The difference is that rock salt - mined from underground seams - inevitably includes non-salt impurities such as clay and contain up to 40% fine salt which is short-active salt - and which is practically non active for de-icing roads.

In contrast, 'solar' salt is formed by harvesting natural sodium chloride once salt water - or brine - has evaporated in natural sunlight in a series of storage ponds. Consequently, it has virtually no mineral impurities and contain small amount of fine salt. The solar salt type is a far more active product for de-icing roads.

"The fine salt and impurities in rock salt can be significant - up to 30-40% sometimes," explained David Setton, President of Alpha Commodities Ltd. "For example, if you buy a tonne of rock salt for £1000 - this means that you're only getting £600-700 worth of Active salt.

"Alpha's Solar salt comprises 99.7% pure sodium chloride - it's as pure white salt as you can get. So a tonne of solar salt at £1000 means there is only £3 worth of minerals and almost negligible impurities.

"The solar salt which we supply is the whitest salt you can buy. It's also environmentally-friendly and - because it is harvested from evaporated brine (sea water) - it's also entirely sustainable.

"Put it another way, solar salt is 30-40% more cost effective than mined-rock salt."

Alpha Commodities - which supplied the bulk of the 'emergency supplies' shipped to the UK when domestic supply was unable to cope with the severe winters two and three years ago - is now able to supply non-emergency customers in the UK, thanks to a recent investment in a new 50,000 sq.m salt storage facility just across the Channel in Cherbourg. Bulk-supplies of solar salt are shipped in up to 75,000 mt Panamax vessels to Cherbourg from a variety of global suppliers.

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Setton added; "Our long term contracts with our suppliers in Canada and India give Alpha an edge on our competitors. And from Cherbourg, we can break down these bulk supplies for onward shipping by road, rail and smaller coastal freighters direct to the customer's destination."

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A range of attachments to keep winter under control

Hako Citymasters are known for their robust design and with their fantastic manoeuvrability, easy handling and all round versatility they are the perfect machines to handle winter maintenance.

With British winters being so unpredictable, the Citymaster 1250 and 2000 can both be equipped with various front mounted attachments that tackle all of the elements: front sweeper, sprung flap snow plough, combined sprung flap snow plough or snow blower.

Even if winter arrives unexpectedly, the easy handling of the attachments means that the Citymasters are ready to tackle the snow and icy conditions in a matter of minutes

As each gritting job involves different techniques, Hako can supply two different systems for the Citymaster: a cylindrical gritter (1m) a cylindrical spreader and gritter (up to 6m) and a silo spreader (up to 6m) the Citymaster can take up to 400 litres of gritting material, making it ideal for use on foot and cycle paths, public car parks and pedestrian areas.

Citymaster 1250

- 4 cylinder diesel engine. 35.4kW, 2189cm³, tank volume 60l
- 2 stage hydrostatic drive up to 25km/h, differential lock. Automotive drive control via 2 foot pedals. tyres -195R14C
- single seat comfort cabin with comfortable air sprung seat. high performance, high pressure hydraulics with electrically operated control block
- front attachments

The Citymaster 1250 can be equipped with -

- front sweeper - 1.30m, 1.45m or 1.6m
- sprung flap snow plough - 1.5m or 1.7m
- combined sprung flap snow plough - 1.5m
- snow blower - 1.2m
- rear attachments
- cylindrical gritter - 1m
- cylindrical gritter and spreader up to 6m
- self loading spreader - 1m
- silo spreader up to 6m
- transport capacity 400litres

Citymaster 2000

The standard care and complete care maintenance



packages offered make the Citymaster 2000 the perfect machine for use all year round. with the option of a "quick winter maintenance" kit it can be on its way gritting in winter too up to 45 km/h

- gross dirt hopper volume - 1.99m³
- length 4.5m
- max laden weight for winter maintenance - 4.900kg
- max sweeping width 2.5m
- clean water tank - 330l

For more information: 01788 825600 or
www.hako.co.uk