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# The Spider millennials

The spider lift market has just about reached the stage where it's changing from a niche product serving specialist trades to a mainstream form of powered access. Leigh Sparrow takes a look at their history along with the latest trends and products for this growing market.

For many of us, the millennium, with its warnings of computer bugs and the turn of a new century, seems all too recent. And vet, if you had attended a major trade show back in those days, you would have been unlikely to see a spider lift. In the late 1990s, I recall receiving a fax from our district manager for the Nordic countries - email was in its infancy in those days - showing a blurry photo of a strange looking machine parked up at Paris Airport.

The manager had been travelling home from a trade show with customers, one of whom had spotted the machine and said it was just what he needed, although neither of the two men had any idea what it was. He asked me if I knew what it was? I was familiar with most access equipment on the market, but this was different. Folded up into a dense bundle of metal and rubber, it was narrow enough to go through a single door and had very strange outriggers.

In my search to identify the machine I came across the name Teupen,

which had wider machines with regular outriggers. Then there was Palazzani, which looked similar but wasn't quite the same. I also spotted a German machine with the name Unruh on it, but this turned out to be an early Palazzani. I finally cracked the mystery, thanks to a bird of prey logo on the machine that confirmed it as a Falck Schmidt spider lift built in Denmark. It had a working height of around 30 metres and could pass through a single doorway, before extending and setting up on its outrigger legs, allowing it to reach all manner of challenging areas.

It also turned out that a UK company, Max Access, had been selling and renting these machines in the UK throughout the 1980s and was the manufacturer's largest customer. They were very much an end user product and were mostly used inside shopping centres, large halls and atriums. As a result, they were rarely seen in public.

### **Spider origins**

Those early spider lifts, built by Falck Schmidt from 1979, and by Palazzani from 1994, were very expensive,







complicated and built for niche applications, such as atrium cleaning and maintenance work. Few rental companies took much notice of them, and so their usage was minimal. Annual production of all makes would probably have been no more than a couple of hundred units at most. Falck Schmidt had invented the spider leg concept and patented it but later failed in its attempts to defend the patent against others who adopted it, or its later use by spider crane manufacturers. The idea of putting this type of lift on tracks however came from Teupen, which had started manufacturing spider lifts in the mid to late 1980s, mostly

SAIE 2004 saw many new spider lifts

for outdoor applications, where tracks were an obvious solution.

### **Explosive change**

spider lifts

Somewhere around the turn of the century, Italian truck mounted lift manufacturers began putting their smaller articulated booms on tracked carriers. A visitor to the SAIE exhibition in Bologna in 2002 would have seen very few spider lifts on display. However, a return visit in 2004 would have been an entirely different story. The change was driven by the greater availability of reasonably priced tracked chassis - possibly arising from the growing popularity of mini excavators - and a growing interest in them from some specialist end users and rental companies. A couple of early entrants included

# spider lifts

Italmec/Heila, Galaxy/Lion Lift and, more significantly, Oil&Steel - which is the only one of the three still active today.

A Vertikal.net news report from the 2004 show said: "On both the crane and access side, one of the most notable trends visible at the show is the rapid emergence of mini crawler mounted self-propelled booms and cranes. The crawler mounted aerial lifts offer single door widths, light weight, low ground bearing pressure, and the ability to set up on slopes and steps etc... Almost every Italian access producer now appears to be building them, with Italmec, Basket, Lion Lift, Hinowa, Oil&Steel, Cela, RAM and others adding them to their ranges."

By then Denmark's Ommelift had also entered the market, one of the few companies outside of Italy at the time.

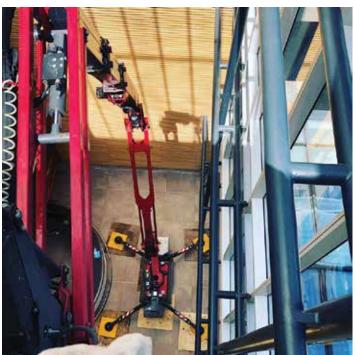
### Spider friendly Italy

What's so spider friendly about Italy, you may ask? It's not a particularly large market for spiders, with most Italian manufacturers exporting the bulk of their production to markets such as the UK, Germany and, increasingly, the USA.

However, the Italian market already had dozens of small truck mounted lift manufacturers and, probably more importantly, hundreds of component suppliers and subcontract fabricators, equipped with the latest cutting and welding

machinery. The high cost of labour, stinging social security costs and tough employment laws, combined with family ownership, meant investing in high efficiency and labour saving production machinery has long been a 'no brainer' for Italian companies. The country also has a pool of extremely creative elite engineers. All of this made it easy for equipment companies to design a product, order the fabrications and components, before assembling them. In other words, manufacturing has a relatively low cost of entry in Italy and most of these factors remain true today.

In some cases, sub-contract suppliers have turned into full blown vertically integrated equipment manufacturers and have entered the market. Bluelift is a case in point. The Marti family company was a significant supplier of fabrications and materials to the crane and lift market. Then, in 2005, for some reason, it decided to enter the spider lift market directly, launching its first machine, the 16 metre SA16 Compact, at SAIE 2006. It was an exceptionally well finessed and finely engineered product, especially for a new entrant. The company was, of course, able to benefit from all the work it had done and experience it had gained while a sub-contractor for others. The company expanded its product line over the next 10 years before accepting an offer it could not refuse from Ruthmann in 2016.





### So who makes spider lifts today?

Out of more than 30 spider lift manufacturers two thirds of them Italian, and among them there are fewer than a dozen mainstream manufacturers of spider lifts worldwide, most of them are also Italian. There are also a few companies such as Niftylift and Imer that offer a couple of models that cover the more popular size ranges. And finally there are one

or two companies such as Jekko and Böcker that focus mainly on cranes, but offer one or two of them as platforms. The following is a comprehensive listing of manufacturers with web addresses. None of the top four full line self

propelled lift manufacturers - JLG, Genie, Haulotte and Skyjack - build spider lifts, although JLG has a very effective long term badging deal with market leader Hinowa.

Manufacturer	Production	Address	
Airo	Italy	www.airo.com	
Almac	Italy	www.almac-italia.com	
ATN	France	www.atnplatforms.com	
Bluelift - Ruthmann	Italy	www.ruthmann.de	
Böcker	Germany	www.boecker.de	
Cela	Italy	www.cela.it	
CMC	Italy	www.cmclift.com	
Co.M.eT	Italy	www.officinecomet.it	
Cormidi	Italy	www.cormidi.it	
CTE	Italy	www.ctelift.com	
Dingli	China	www.cndingli.com	
Dinolift	Finland	www.dinolift.com	
Easy Lift	Italy	www.easy-lift.com	
Europelift	Hungary	www.europelift.com	
Falcon Lifts	Denmark	www.falconlifts.com	
Goman	China	www.gomanlift.com	
Hinowa	Italy	www.hinowa.com	
Imer	Italy	www.imergroup.com	
Jekko	Italy	www.jekko-cranes.com	
JLG*	Italy	www.jlg.com	
Leguan	Finland	www.leguanlifts.com	
Multitel Pagliero	Italy	www.pagliero.com	
Niftylift	UK	www.niftylift.com	
Oil&Steel	Italy	www.oilsteel.com	
Ommelift	Denmark	www.ommelift.com	
Palazzani	Italy	www.palazzaniindustrie.com	
Platform Basket	Italy	www.platformbasket.com	
Ruthmann - Bluelift	Italy	www.ruthmann.de	
Sinoboom	China	www.sinoboom.com	
Socage	Italy	www.socage.it	
Teupen	Germany	www.teupen.com	
Thomas	Belgium	www.thomas-hoogwerkers.be	

<sup>\*</sup>Built by Hinowa



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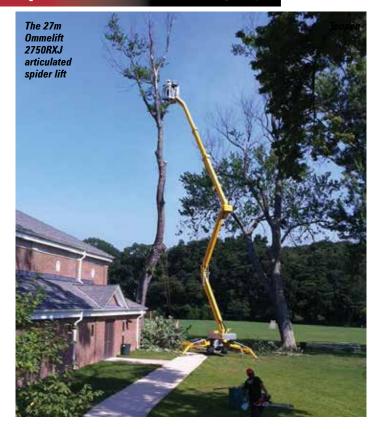
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### Telescopic or articulated?

The first spider lifts, such as the Falcon and the Palazzani were telescopic, often topped by single or dual arm articulating jibs, with both manufacturers staying with that concept until relatively recently. Teupen was probably the first to introduce an articulated boom spider lift, with most new Italian manufacturers now entering the market with articulated models. Originally, this was with single or dual risers topped by a two section telescopic boom and possibly a jib. The addition of a third or fourth telescopic section took working heights to around 25 metres and above. This was eventually followed by twin telescopic booms as manufacturers looked to move to achieve even greater working heights.

The articulated working envelope suits a lot of the work that spider lifts tend to be used for, such as reaching over a single storey extension such as conservatories etc... where up & over reach is important. But in the past year or so we have seen a shift back towards pure telescopics, with most companies now offering both.

Hinowa kicked of a move to add telescopics to its range with the launch of the 13 metre TC13N last year. It employs a three section boom, topped by an articulated jib and offers up to 6.4 metres of outreach with 136kg unrestricted platform capacity. The machine is the first model of a completely new series.

The TC13N also introduced another major change, in that it is not only powered by Hinowa's well proven



lithium-ion battery pack, but that it has an all electric tracked chassis with IP67 permanent magnet direct electric drive motors. Hinowa claims that the concept is four times more efficient than the traditional hydraulic motor driven tracks, while also significantly reducing the amount of hydraulic oil on the machine, particularly in the chassis.

The company released the TC13S version earlier this year, with a slightly larger outrigger footprint of 2.7 by 3.05 metres, in order to provide an unrestricted platform capacity of 230kg along with a larger platform.

The company has now followed with the next machine in the line-up in the form of the 22 metre TC22, which will also be built in two versions, the TC22N and TC22S. Both units employ the same four section boom, with articulated jib and dual entry platform. The lithium battery models feature the same direct electric drive system as the TC13, with four to five hours of operation before needing to recharge. Recharging from flat to full takes around four hours, while empty to 80 percent takes two hours. The diesel/bi-energy models have traditional hydraulic drive.

The TC22N weighs just under three tonnes and has an outreach up

to 12.4 metres with 136kg, while the 230kg maximum capacity is available at up to 11 metres. This is reduced to just under nine metres and 7.5 metres in the narrow jacking configuration.

It will offer three different drive options. A Kubota diesel combined with 230v electric motor for indoor use, a full electric lithium model and bi-energy version that combines the two, but weighs closer to 3,100kg. Automatic 'Go Home' boom stowage and 'Go Back' functions are standard on all three versions. The stowed machine has an overall length of 6.44 metres with the basket in place, with a height of 1.98 metres, while the overall track width extends from 880mm to 1.18 metres.

The TC22S has pretty much the same specifications, although the units with diesel engines aboard weigh around 3,300kg, compared to 3,200kg for the battery powered version. All three offer a 230kg unrestricted capacity with outriggers fully set - 4.1 metres width - while outreach drops from 12.4 to 8.6 metres in the narrow outrigger configuration of 2.41 metres.

The first machine has been built and is currently on test.







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### **Bluelift telescopic**

Ruthmann Bluelift has unveiled an all new 31 metre ST31 telescopic model, as an alternative to the company's SA31 articulated model. It uses the new five section multi-profiled telescopic boom and articulated jib from Ruthmann's new T 330 XS truck mounted lift. The new spider lift offers up to 18 metres of outreach with a platform capacity of 100kg, 16 metres with 200kg and 15 metres with 320kg, while the maximum capacity of 400kg is available at 13 to 14 metres outreach depending on slew position. Power options include diesel or 230 volt mains electric power, while a lithium-ion battery powered model will be available later.

The new model, Bluelift's first telescopic, also features a completely revised control system, with a new remote controller with large full colour display screen, and the choice of



a compact 1.3 metre wide by 700mm deep, or larger 1.8 metres by 800mm platform basket. Both include 180 degrees of platform rotation.

The machine is relatively compact, with a variable overall track width from 1.14 to 1.62 metres, an overall height of 1.99 metres and an overall length of 7.8 metres with basket - or 7.46 metres when removed. The outrigger footprint is variable from 3.34 metres wide by 8.26 long to 6.15 by 5.78 metres and it can lift the entire machine to an under track height of 1.35 metres. Total weight is 4,695kg. The first unit off the production line has been purchased by German rental company Gerken.

Bluelift	ST31	SA31
Work height	31m	31m
Outreach max	18m	17.3m
Max platform capacity	400kg@13.5m	250kg@14.3m
Capacity @ 15m	320kg	200kg
Capacity @ 16m	200kg	120kg
Capacity @ 18m	100kg	120kg
O/A length	7.46m*	5.75m*
0/A width	1.14m	1.00m
O/A height	1.99m	1.99m
0/A weight	4,695kg	4,760kg
Outrigger wide	6.15 x 5.78m	4.53 x 4.82m
Outrigger narrow	3.34 x 8.26m	3.00 x 5.99m

<sup>\*</sup>basket removed

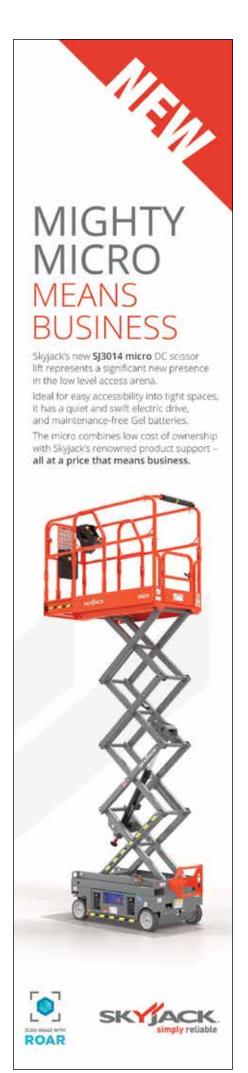




Rough Terrain has a working height of 21.51 m. With one of the largest work areas on the market, even more work can be done.

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### **ST31 vs SA31**

The final specifications for the new model have yet to be published, but it looks as though the main advantage is the super sophisticated telescopic boom, with higher capacities. In terms of outreach the articulated model offers more than 17 metres with an up & over clearance of 10 metres. The outreach on the telescopic model must be restricted due to stability as it only offers 18 metres with no up & over capability. Telescopics can be quicker and simpler to operate, and can offer a more rigid feel to the platform. But looking at the preliminary numbers the SA31 articulated still looks the better bet for many buyers. Take a look yourself on page 33.

### **Platform Basket's** 39 metre telescopic

Italian spider lift manufacturer Platform Basket unveiled the 38.6 metre telescopic Spider 39 T at GIS last month. The straight telescopic 39 T features a six section boom plus a two section articulating jib, to offer a maximum outreach of 16.6 metres with a platform capacity of 136kg, or 14.8 metres with its maximum capacity of

Features include continuous 360 degrees slew, radio remote controls and adjustable width tracks that extend from 1.41 to 1.9 metres for improved stability while travelling. It is also equipped with the company's remote diagnostic Platform Basket Telematics (PBT) system, and similar to other Spider T models the platform can be replaced with a winch to create a light duty spider crane.

The 39 T has a stowed overall length of 8.91 metres, an overall width of 1.41 metres and is just under two metres high. Its outrigger footprint offers widths from 2.99 to 5.23 metres with length of 5.59 to 8.83 metres. The machine can also lift itself to an undertrack height of 650mm with a width of 2.5 metres, allowing a truck or trailer to be reversed underneath for easy selfloading. Overall weight is just over 11.9 tonnes



and it can be ordered as a diesel/lithium-ion hybrid or with diesel/AC electric power. It joins the company's 30 metre Spider 30 T and its 43 metre 43 T.

### **New 27m CTE Traccess**

In June, Italian truck mount and spider lift manufacturer CTE unveiled its largest spider lift to date, the 27 metre Traccess 270. It is the second in a new range of Traccess machines, following the 16 metre Traccess 160 launched at the end of last year. The six model Traccess line up now includes the 13.5 metre 135, 16 metre 160, 17 metre 170, 20 metre 200 and 23 metre 230, all of which have been designed or 'refreshed' since 2019.

The Traccess 270 features the classic dual sigma type riser - with the top element longer than the lower one - topped by a three section telescopic boom and articulated jib. It is based on the 230 in terms of concept and technology but offers a maximum outreach of 14 metres with a 10 metre up & over height. Its maximum platform capacity of 250kg is available at the full 14 metres outreach but restricted to 11 metres in certain outrigger and slew positions, while 200kg is unrestricted.

The new model features the company's recently launched S3 EVO controls and machine management system, so far only seen on its latest truck mounted lifts. It allows the operator to position each individual outrigger differently to the others - narrow or wide - and automatically calculates a safe working envelope.

It has an overall stowed width of 780mm with the basket removed, while the track width extends to 1.28 or 1.4 metres. The overall length is 6.47 metres with an overall height of 2.05 metres. Total weight is 4,350kg. Standard



power is Kubota diesel, which is available with an additional AGM battery pack, good for around an hour's continuous operation. It can also be operated while plugged in and recharging, so in essence three power sources on the same machine.

A wireless radio remote controller with a large display screen can be used both from the ground and in the basket as the main control station. It offers full access to all the available functions, while a graphic display allows the operator to view and manage which functions can be operated at the same time. A second fixed wired control console for the platform is available as an option. Remote diagnostics and telematics are included, as is 180 degrees platform rotation. Another feature includes the ability to drive with the jib raised, which is particularly helpful on slopes or ramps where a high approach or departure angle is essential. A 230kg winch attachment is also available as an option.

### **Falcon Sigma**



Danish spider lift manufacturer Falcon has announced a new five model range of spider lifts with working heights of between 13 and 27 metres. The new machines will be built in Italy under a private label agreement with CTE, using the manufacturer's basic specification but with Falcon specific features and accessories. The range will offer working heights of 13, 17, 20, 23 and 27 metres, while power choices include hybrid or all electric lithium-ion models. The new models provide Falcon with a full range from 13 to 52 metres for the first time in its history, which dates back to the invention of the spider lift in 1979.

### Octoplus 17 and 21





As we have already mentioned Oil&Steel was a relatively early entrant into the spider lift market,

and at one time was the market leader, with its Octopussy range. However from 2003 to 2010 it went through ownership changes, numerous restructurings, management changes, a structural failure which it failed to tackle properly, and some ill-judged distribution appointments. Sometime after 2015 it determined that the Octopussy name had to go, and replaced it with Octopus. Since 2014, under the ultimate ownership of Manitex, the company has continued to rebuild the business and introduce new products, the latest being the 17 and 21 metre Octoplus 17 and 21.

The machines share some componentry, with dual sigma risers providing an up & over height of eight metres, while the 17 has a two section telescopic boom and jib with 116 degrees of articulation. It offers an outreach of 7.9 metres with 250kg unrestricted platform capacity. The 21 gains its extra height from a three section boom and jib. It has 10.5 metres of outreach with 150kg in the platform, while 200kg is possible at 9.8 metres or 9.1 metres with the maximum 250kg.

The two machines have similar dimensions, with overall widths of under 800mm, overall lengths of 4.61 and 4.97 metres respectively with platforms in place, while the track widths extend from 735mm to 1.12 metres.

### **Upgraded Palazzani crane option**

Italian spider lift manufacturer Palazzani has introduced an uprated hydraulic winch for its 52 metre XTJ 52+ spider lift. The company first introduced its 500kg hydraulic winch attachment in 2014 as an option for its spider lifts allowing them to be turned into a material handling device. It has now upgraded the capacity of the winch to 980kg for its 52 metre XTJ 52+ spider lift.

Similar to the standard product, the uprated winch replaces the basket in minutes, while an optional quick release coupling system reduces this to just seconds. Once installed, the system automatically converts the platform into 'crane' mode with movements controlled by the platform's remote controller. The ground control display is also able to provide a readout of the load weight as well as the working height, outreach and angle of the boom. In total it can handle up to 51 metres of

Palazzani has also upgraded its 37 metre XTJ 37+ spider lift to include extendable tracks as standard, in place of the 1.2 metre fixed tracks. It can now adjust its tracks from 1.2 to 1.5 metres





# spider lifts

in order to provide more stability on uneven ground and side slopes as well as improved safety when loading/unloading onto a trailer or delivery vehicle.

The XTJ 37+ offers a maximum outreach of 15.7 metres and a maximum platform capacity of 330kg. Features include 36 percent gradeability, the ability to set up on slopes up to 23 percent, multiple outrigger positions, a secondary guarding system and a 'back to home' stowing function.

### Co.M.eT back in the market



Italian manufacturer Co.M.eT had shown all the signs of quitting the spider lift market, but far from it, it has come back this year with an updated line of Leopard Lifts, as it calls them. So far the new line includes four models with working heights of 14, 18, 21 and 25 metres. The Leopard 14 is particularly interesting with a stowed overall length of under three metres - 2.95 metres to be precise - and that is without removing the basket, thanks to a compact three section telescopic boom on a short single arm riser. The overall width is 780mm and overall height just over two metres. The outrigger spread is 3.5 metres and it has a 200kg platform capacity. Working height is 13.5 metres, while outreach is around 6.2 metres with an up & over clearance of five metres. All up weight is just 1,520kg, while power comes from a small petrol engine with onboard mains powered electric motor.

The other three are of a classic design, although the 25 metre model features two long riser arms, a two section boom and jib for an up & over height of 11 metres and an outreach of 11 metres. Weighing 4,200kg, it offers an overall length of 6.75 metres and overall width of 1.04 metres. As with the 18 and 21, a choice of diesel or AC electric is available. The company says that it is also working on a new 32 metre model for launch sometime next year.



### **Neapolitan Easy Lifts**

Italian rental company Hoist Noleggio has taken delivery of two customised Easy Lift spider lifts for work in the narrow, congested streets of Naples old town. The first unit is a 26 metre R260 which features a four section boom and articulated jib to offer a 13.5 metre outreach and a maximum platform capacity of 230kg. A larger R300 unit features an extra boom section to provide a 30.5 metre working height, a 14.5 metre outreach and a 230kg platform capacity.

Both units have been customised with a special narrow outrigger configuration option of just 2.3 by 3.75 metres. The manufacturer has also increased the maximum boom angle to 87 degrees, while redesigning the jib and platform connection. Positioned directly under the main boom, rather than to the side, the iib not only provides an extra metre of outreach, but also offers 180 degrees articulation. Finally the Hatz diesels have been fitted with extra noise reduction material for work in densely populated areas.

### Multitel working in partnership



Multitel was a relative latecomer to the spider lift market, having formed an agreement with Palazzani around 2008 or 2009. The agreement sees the mounting of Multitel booms/ superstructures on Palazzani chassis, using its well proven technology and running gear. Both companies sell the resulting products, which have a good reputation in both formats.

The Multitel range runs from the 17 metre SMX 170 to the 30 metre SMX 300 HD with a maximum platform capacity of 400kg. All six base models use Multitel's twin telescopic MX boom design, generally combining good up & over reach with decent outreach. The 25 metre SMX 250 seems particularly popular and now includes an all electric SMX 250 E version, which offers 11.8 metres outreach with 80kg in the platform or eight metres with its maximum capacity of 250kg. The lithium-ion battery pack is said to be good for eight hour shifts and can be fully recharged in four hours.



### And now for something different...

### The Almac spider boom

Multitel has also started working with self-propelled boom lift manufacturer Almac/AlmaCrawler, providing the straight telescopic boom for its new light weight Jibbi U-1570 tracked auto levelling telescopic boom lift, which offers a 15 metre working height with up to 8.4 metres of outreach

Almac has also launched a new concept in the form of the Spider Boom. The new line, dubbed the AlmaCrawler Billenium series, combines the company's Jibbi 1670 Evo self-propelled auto levelling tracked telescopic boom concept, with spider lift outriggers in place of the former's chassis auto-levelling system.

The first two models are the 43ft platform height/15 metre working height B1570 and 53ft/18 metre B1890. The two are very similar with three section telescopic booms. topped by an articulating jib. Both can drive at height - up to eight metres on the B1570 and nine metres on the B1890 - with outriggers required to go any higher. They can also operate safely on side slopes of up five degrees and longitudinal slopes of up to 10 degrees free on tracks. The key benefit of the outriggers is that they are lighter than the Jibbi fully self-propelled units. The two units have a choice of outriggers but are as compact as a spider lift with an overall width of 790mm with outrigger pads removed. But they are a little heavier at 2,600kg and 2,900kg respectively.

