

19.5" Tyres and unique ramp operation makes new Andover step frame stand out for WMB Heavy Haulage

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Abnormal loads specialist WMB Heavy Haulage has taken delivery of its first new Andover Trailers step frame after years of dealing with the company for the supply of Goldhofer trailers from Germany.

The step frame trailer, built at the company's manufacturing facility in Hampshire, will be used to transport a wide array of heavyweight plant and machinery. This is expected to include regular consignments of forestry machines, ranging from harvesters to forwarders, for delivery deep into some of the largest forests in the UK.

Unlike the majority of tri-axle step frame trailers, Dumfries-based WMB Heavy Haulage has configured this 13.5m SFCL48 to operate on 19.5" tyres. It expects this specification to ensure greater ground clearance for forestry work in comparison with the standard 17.5" fitments found on regular step frames.

Commenting on the trailer specification, Jon Smail, WMB's Transport Manager, says: "The SAF air-suspension features a raise / lower valve for loading and also a dual height valve which effectively gives us a choice of running heights. When we're not in the forest we can lower the trailer down to a height comparable with a typical step frame operating on 17.5" tyres. It gives us the best of both worlds – and is testament to Andover's ability to build each trailer to the customer's precise requirements."

Replacing an older King step frame trailer, it features a low profile neck, beavertail, SAF drum brake axles and a self-steering rear axle, with convenient under-floor stowage to accommodate the side extension timbers.

Manual steady legs ensure a stable loading platform, with loading and unloading carried out via a new system of ramp operation, which has been fitted to this trailer for the first time. A pair of 3m long and 1m wide hydraulic fold-forward ramps, each with a hydraulic sideways function allowing movement both in and out, enable the ramps to be adjusted to accommodate machines with different track widths or wheel spacing. Controls are fitted to both sides of the trailer, guaranteeing easy operation in confined areas.

Five pairs of lashing points guarantee maximum load security, with slide out side extensions and timbers for wide machines, stowage under the bed for the timbers and LED flood lights along the side of the trailer to aid loading in forests. The trailer has also been painted with an Epoxy primer and two pack paint finish to ensure maximum protection of its bright red livery.

WMB Heavy Haulage took delivery of its first Goldhofer from Andover Trailers, the sole Goldhofer distributor in the UK, in 2005. Last year Andover supplied its fourth trailer to the company – a four-axle Goldhofer semi low-loader with a remote-control steering system which can be operated from the cab.