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## K&L Tractor Complements Mainline with Shortline Options

This New Holland dealer has found that adding specialty equipment lines has helped them better server their customers with live-stock operations.

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What started out as an after school job in the 1970s and 80s has turned into a successful career for Kenny Knoth, Mike Wallace and Todd Homan. They got their start at K&L Tractor

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**Pictured Above:**

K&L Tractor in Fort Recovery, Ohio,

Sales, a New Holland dealership in Fort Recovery, Ohio, setting up machinery and progressed through the ranks, ultimately buying the dealership in 1996.

The dealership serves a diverse customer base, including row-crop, livestock and dairy operations, hobby farmers and residential customers. As a result, their product offerings need to be just as diverse. Selling shortline equipment has helped K&L serve all of its customers' needs.

## Shortlines Supporting Mainlines

K&L prides itself on carrying New Holland as it's mainline, they have also made a commitment to their community to carry different shortlines that fit the needs and wants of their customers. Knoth says that carrying shortlines brands like Art's Way can really make that difference for farming communities. "Almost every farmer around here has got livestock and with livestock operations you need a grinder mixer of some kind and so the potential for sales for grinder mixers in our area is really good."

For K&L, shortlines are necessary to help complement its mainline and fill in the gaps of the mainline product offering. "[We want to] fill in the niche markets where the mainline does not offer those type tools," Knoth says. All of the owners have committed to making sure that the shortlines they carry do not overlap or provide the same solutions. They are focused on selling top of the line products that don't compete with each other, they say.

Additionally, K&L currently carries over a dozen shortlines that include: Great Plains, Farm King, Claas of America, Befco, Meyer, Simplicity, Ferris, Salford BBI, Supreme, Kill Brothers, Snapper, Remlinger and more. Knoth says shortline manufactures were chosen to support the dealerships mainline New Holland.

"Quite often the shortline is going to sell with a product from your mainline that would enhance the use of the mainline tools. So, let's say you sold a New Holland tractor for a turkey operation well, there you would also sell them a tiller and maybe a mower and everything else would be shortline that goes with it, tagalong sales with the main lines."

has added a number of shortlines to complement its mainline, New Holland, and provide its customers with the solutions they need.

## K&L Tractor Sales

**Founded:**

1954

**Location:**

Fort Recovery, Ohio

**Owners:**

Mike Wallace, Kenny Knoth and Todd Homan

**Employees:**

20

**Primary Line:**

New Holland

**Secondary Lines:**

Art's Way, Great Plains, Farm King, Claas of America, Befco, Meyer, Simplicity, Ferris, Salford BBI, Supreme, Kill Brothers, Snapper, Remlinger and more.

series highlights the best practice strategies employed by top farm equipment dealers to promote and sell shortline equipment. It is brought to you courtesy of

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## **Shortline Challenges**

Although carrying shortlines can give customers options for Knoth and his co-owners, there is much more to consider when picking and maintaining those shortlines. “With shortlines sometimes you have some initial problems with financing. Shortlines don't always offer finance programs or floorplans,” Knoth says. “At times cash is often the only option for getting these shortlines into the dealership,” he adds.

According to Knoth, the most important aspect to consider when taking on a specialty line of product is if the items have good availability and can be serviced. For customers, they also need those products to be available and to be able to service it in the best way possible, turning them away should not be an option, he says. “You don't want to sell something to somebody you cannot get service parts for.”

## **Shortline Relationships**

Many times when a dealership adds a shortline to their inventory they have a checklist of what they look for including reputation, services and support. However, Knoth says that the support and trust in that company's rep that you work with can also be key to the success of that shortline in a dealership.



The Art's Way rep that covers the territory K&L Tractor is in has been working with the dealership for about 15 years. "Art's Way has very high quality machines and the ease of working with our rep makes it all the easier yet," says Knoth. "There's some of the main lines, if you have a problem it's hard to get a hold of somebody to actually talk to. Our rep is been very, very good at that so it's just easy doing business with them."

Having a good relationship is key for many dealerships. It builds trust in that brand and allows for the dealership to go above and beyond for customers because they have a rep that will go the extra mile for them. That connection can propel the dealer customer relationship to the next level.



**Owners Mike Wallace, Kenny Knoth and Todd Homan all got their start and K&L Tractor Sales setting up equipment. They purchased the dealership from the previous owners in 1996.**



# Kayla Urban

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