

GBRf unveil partnership to transform railways weed control maintenance

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GB Railfreight (GBRf), one of the largest rail freight operators in the UK, is delighted to announce a landmark cooperation with Bayer Environmental Science, Network Rail, and a number of start-up companies, which will transform essential weed control maintenance on the UK's railways.

Introducing innovative technology, three new Smart Weed System trains will commence service on the British railway network later this spring. They will have the capability to eliminate potentially dangerous weed infestations with advanced precision. Responsible for supplying the end-to-end rail operations, GB Railfreight will provide rail expertise for this project.

By detecting the weeds using cameras mounted on the trains, only the most appropriate herbicide will be used, thus improving the environmental footprint. The data generated will be uploaded to a cloud database using GPS software, which will enable weed control to be monitored and reported 24/7 from a central point.

This innovative GPS tracking system will also automatically shut off spray nozzles when the train approaches a 'Non-Treatment Zone', such as a watercourse or bridge, a move which further enhances the

environmental impact by adding a second layer of protection for the operators.

Mark Wyborn, Head of Strategic Development at GB Railfreight, said: “The higher efficiency of the three new trains combined with the modern technology and asset life will provide a more efficient weed control program for years to come. Aiming for a safer rail industry for all should be a priority.

“This investment from Bayer into the collaboration will bring a new level of scientific expertise and knowledge to the rail industry and will help to drive forward weed control and safety for future years. The first train will be introduced and in service on UK railways from May 2021, with the second and third train planned for use in April 2022.”

Commenting on how the partnership will increase the safety of the railways, Alan Morris, Bayer Environmental Science UK country head said: “Weeds can cause contamination of valuable equipment and lead to a range of health and safety issues for both workers and passengers.

“This technology is not only an innovation for the rail industry but weed control globally, so we’re delighted to be involved in this collaboration with key members of the rail industry.”

Photo credit: GB Railfreight