

DRIVING SOLAR POWER

SOMETHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

Vermeer Corporation prides itself on bringing innovative change to niche markets. It started in 1943, when Gary Vermeer invented a wagon hoist for use on his farm. After other farmers began requesting their own, he opened Vermeer Manufacturing Company to meet the need. Over the decades, the company continued introducing new products — expanding beyond agriculture into landscaping, pipeline development, surface mining, recycling, fluid management, utilities and more.

In the last decade, that list of industries has grown to include one more: the ground-mount solar market. Unlike roof-mount solar — where panels are installed on top of homes or buildings — ground-mount applications require piles to be driven into the earth to provide foundation support for the panels. The end result is what's known as a solar fields, farms or parks.

Vermeer's first pile drivers for ground-mount solar panels hit the market eight years ago. Today, the company is recognized as one of the industry's leading providers, thanks to a focus on designing highly-efficient machines that can drive more piles into the ground than the competition. "The more piles a customer installs per day or per week, the more revenue they generate. Our machines are more efficient, because they're easier and more comfortable to operate," says Ed Savage, Pile Driver Product Manager for Vermeer.

In 2020, Vermeer introduced its two newest pile drivers, the manually operated PD5 and the remote-controlled PD5R. Both are powered by the Cat® C2.2 industrial engine.

PILE ON THE WORK

The ground-mount solar market is divided into two segments: large utility operations that supply power to the grid, and smaller community or distributed operations that provide power at the point of use — for example, a university that builds a solar field to power its campus. Vermeer expected the new PD5 and PD5R pile drivers to appeal to contractors who serve smaller operations, since they typically own one or two pile drivers and need a machine that's small, lightweight and easy to transport



REGION:

Pella, Iowa

SCOPE OF ENGINE USE:

Cat® C2.2 U.S. EPA Tier 3 and Tier 4
Final Industrial Engines

CAT® DEALER:

Ziegler

WEBSITE:

vermeer.com



FEATURED TOPIC:
Industrial Engines

POWER PROFILE: VERMEER PD5 & PD5R PILE DRIVERS

from site to site. But the company has been pleasantly surprised at the interest from larger contractors as well. "They might have 30 or 40 pile drivers running on one job, and they love the fact that they can haul four of ours on one semi," Savage says.

Small but mighty. That small footprint was one of the main reasons Vermeer selected the Cat C2.2 industrial engine for its new machines. At 49 horsepower, the engine gives contractors all the power they need to drive piles eight to 12 hours a day — but allowed Vermeer to keep the PD5 and PD5R compact in size for easy set-up, tear-down and trailering. "It's a challenge. You want so much power but only have so much space to put it in. The C2.2 struck the right balance," Savage says.

Drop it in and go. Another advantage of the C2.2 is that it gives Vermeer the flexibility to sell the PD5 and PD5R into regions with differing environmental standards. Because the engine uses a common block across emissions tiers, accommodating it requires virtually no design changes to the machines themselves. "The Tier 3 and Tier 4 Final engines are basically drop-in replacements for one another, which reduces design and manufacturing time for Vermeer," says Andy Dick, Industrial Engine Sales Representative at Ziegler Cat, the Cat dealer that works with Vermeer to integrate Cat industrial engines into its products.

Two times the local support. Hammering piles into the ground day after day is tough work, and Vermeer prides itself on offering local dealer support around the world to keep its machines up and running. Pairing that with Caterpillar's global service network gives contractors peace of mind no other pile driver manufacturer can match. "When we tell a customer we have a Cat engine in the machine, that's a big advantage. It's not just the name recognition but the number of Cat dealers around the world. Uptime is critical so that local support is huge," Savage says.



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