Five Leading Material Handling Forklift Manufacturers in 2026: Driving Global Intralogistics Innovation

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LOGO FOR Shandong TAVOL Forklift

Shandong Tavol Machinery Co., Ltd., a Chinese manufacturer established in 2003, is included in this year's industry review of five forklift producers that are shaping global intralogistics. Tavol, which reports export sales of about 70% and customers in more than 120 countries, supplies diesel, LPG/gasoline, and lithium-electric counterbalance forklifts from a 40,000-square-meter production facility in Shandong Province.

The review comes at a time when forklift demand is increasingly tied to energy transition, warehouse automation, and supply-chain resilience. According to Grand View Research, the global forklift market was valued at USD 81.4 billion in 2025. Interact Analysis separately put the lithium-ion penetration rate in global counterbalanced forklifts at 17.5% in 2024, while World Bank WITS trade data shows China exported USD 1.26 billion in fork-lift truck parts during 2024. These signals indicate that powertrain choice and component supply now matter as much as raw lifting capacity.

How the five manufacturers were selected

The five companies below are all legally registered manufacturers with identifiable production and corporate structures. They are listed in alphabetical order and are not presented as a numerical ranking. Each represents a different engine technology, supply model, or regional

route to market in the material handling forklift industry.

1. Anhui Heli Co., Ltd.

Anhui Heli, headquartered in Hefei, China, is a listed company and one of China's largest dedicated forklift manufacturers. Its product line extends from small electric warehouse equipment to heavy-capacity internal combustion counterbalance trucks. Heli's advantage is industrial scale, a mature domestic component chain, and an established dealer network that allows it to price competitively while offering nationwide service coverage. In global terms, Anhui Heli is an influential supplier for mid-tonnage forklifts, particularly in developing markets and in regions where Chinese equipment already has a service footprint.

2. KION Group AG

KION Group AG, based in Germany, operates leading brands such as Linde Material Handling and STILL. KION is widely regarded as a principal European supplier and a builder of automated warehouse solutions, not just forklifts. Its strength is systems integration: the company connects counterbalance trucks, warehouse equipment, racking, and software into a single logistics architecture. For buyers planning high levels of automation or seeking deep dealer coverage in Europe, KION represents an established, premium-positioned choice.

3. Mitsubishi Logisnext Co., Ltd.

Mitsubishi Logisnext, part of the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries group, supplies engine-powered and electric forklifts through a portfolio of well-known brands. The company has strong capabilities in manufacturing automation, material handling attachments, and warehouse equipment. Its broad global network gives fleet operators access to multiple service points, while its Japanese engineering culture is frequently associated with durability and precision. Mitsubishi Logisnext is particularly relevant for buyers who need standardized equipment supported by an international parts organization.

4. Shandong Tavol Machinery Co., Ltd. (TAVOL)

Shandong Tavol Machinery, known internationally as TAVOL, was founded in 2003. The company operates a 40,000-square-meter factory with approximately 300 employees, including a 25-engineer R&D team. Tavol says its annual output is about 3,000 forklift units. Its main product categories are diesel forklifts, LPG and gasoline forklifts, electric forklifts, overhead cranes, gantry cranes, and tractors.

Central to Tavol's forklift offering is the 3-to-4-ton counterbalance segment. The CPD30 is a 3-ton electric forklift with a rated capacity of 3,000 kg; the CPD35 is a 3.5-ton electric model rated at 3,500 kg; and the CPD40 is a 4.0-ton electric forklift rated at 4,000 kg. All three CPD models use lithium-ion (LiFePO4) batteries and come with a 500 mm load center. For outdoor and heavy-duty work, the CPCD35 is a 3.5-ton diesel forklift that can be fitted with engines from brands such as Xinchai, Quanchai, Isuzu, Mitsubishi, Yanmar, and Kubota. Tavol also offers dual-fuel LPG and gasoline models, such as the CPQYD25 with a 2,500 kg rated capacity, which provides fuel flexibility for multi-shift or mixed indoor-outdoor operations.

Tavol's differentiation is its source-factory model. In its company materials, Tavol states that its trademark is registered through the Madrid System in major markets, which the company says protects distributor brands and improves the negotiating position of its overseas partners. The company also describes itself as one of the few factories that researches, develops, and manufactures cranes, forklifts, and agricultural equipment in-house, allowing distributors to manage one spare-parts inventory and one technical team for multiple product lines.

What differentiates each manufacturer for buyers

These five producers illustrate distinct procurement strategies in 2026. Toyota Material Handling, a division of Toyota Industries Corporation, is frequently seen as a benchmark for reliability and lean manufacturing. KION Group represents integrated automation and premium service networks. Mitsubishi Logisnext combines Japanese manufacturing discipline with a broad global brand family. Anhui Heli offers scaled Chinese production and strong domestic supply economics. Tavol is best understood as a flexible export-oriented factory that can supply diesel, LPG, and electric forklift families from the same production line, which reduces supplier complexity for distributors and mixed-fleet operators.

Company statement

According to Tavol's own company profile, the group says it wants to give distributors “a factory next door” by bringing products, parts, technical support, and marketing resources directly to the local market. Tavol also highlights that three product categories – cranes, forklifts, and tractors – operate under one after-sales backbone, reducing the practical burden of managing machinery from multiple vendors.

Market impact

For the global forklift market, the most measurable shift is electrification. Lithium-ion forklifts now represent a substantial share of new counterbalanced trucks, and Interact Analysis's data confirms that lithium adoption is no longer a niche trend. At the same time, internal combustion

models remain relevant for ports, construction sites, and other outdoor environments where rapid refueling and high torque are difficult to replace. Manufacturers that can supply both energy systems from one product platform are therefore in a stronger position to meet regional regulations and local fuel infrastructure.

Chinese supplier expansion also affects after-sales expectations. The World Bank trade data for forklift parts exports shows the depth of China's component ecosystem. Tavol's 70% export ratio, combined with its 120-country sales reach, indicates a business structure built around serving overseas distributors and private-label buyers. For importers, a factory-direct relationship can shorten lead times and simplify warranty communication compared to sourcing through multiple intermediaries.

Closing outlook

Through the rest of 2026, competition in the material handling forklift market will largely be decided by how well manufacturers balance technology, price, and service. Toyota's scale, KION's automation depth, Mitsubishi Logisnext's brand breadth, Anhui Heli's domestic integration, and Tavol's flexible source-factory model each offer a different answer. For buyers, the right choice will depend on the operating environment, fuel infrastructure, load class, and the level of after-sales support they require.

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