

*Tractor*times

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THE JOURNAL FOR PROFESSIONAL TRACTOR USERS



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CLAAS



Profi prize winner

Congratulations to Neil Farley who was this year's winner of the Profi International and CLAAS UK competition to win 12 weeks free use of an ARION 640 CIS, that was run earlier this year.

Neil, with his brother Gary and father Norman, farms 300ha at Uffcombe in Devon, plus they run a general contracting business, which includes harvesting 2,000ha of grass, maize and whole crop silage using a one-year old JAGUAR 950 forage harvester.

Neil, who also received a driver's kit and bag, was presented with the keys of the tractor at Cereals from Jeremy Wiggins. With them are Mark Brazier of Profi International (right); Gary Farley (2nd left) and Stuart Holdsworth from Hamblys (left).



'X' Factor tractor winner



The versatility and practicality of the unique CLAAS XERION tractor has been recognised by the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE), who have awarded the XERION one of its prestigious Silver Medals.

Silver Medals are awarded to machinery that, in the RASE Judges opinion, offers features that provide outstanding advantages for the user and is a major item of equipment.

In their summary, the Judges stated that:

'The XERION provides excellent versatility and the TRAC VC provides the ultimate versatility not only in its range but amongst its competitors. It can be used as a heavy draft tractor during cultivations and then simply used with the reversible cab for operations such as clamp work with the buck rake, reducing the number of machines required on the farm and maximising its use throughout the year.'

'With four large equal sized wheels a larger contact area with the ground is achieved when compared to a conventional tractor, it also reduces pressure on the ground through the enlarged tyre footprint thus reducing soil compaction. Combined with its 50-50 weight distribution maximum tractive performance can be achieved through all four wheels.'

'Although a large tractor it has excellent manoeuvrability through 4 wheel steering, which enables the turning circle to be at least as good as a smaller conventional tractor.'

'All users confirmed that the XERION's tractive performance exceeded expectations along with its versatility and manoeuvrability.

Unlike a tracked machine or dual wheeled tractor the XERION had good road speed up to 50 km/h and its transport width was not an issue, which meant downtime was kept to a minimum.'

Air tug

Plane Sailing, who operate one of the few Catalina flying boats still flying in the World, recently took delivery of a new AXOS 330CX, which will be used to manoeuvre the 13 tonne plane around its base at the Imperial War Museum's Duxford airfield.

The plane, a Catalina PYB-5A which is owned by a syndicate, was built in 1943 and bought in 2003 from Canada, where the plane had been converted for use as a water bomber for fire fighting. Now restored back to its original format, the plane is a well known visitor to air-shows throughout the UK and Europe, but their previous Catalina was also used for a wide variety of promotional purposes, including landing off beaches around the Italian coast advertising Nastro Azzuro beer.

The plane, which is one of the largest privately owned planes on the airshow circuit, is supported by a devoted group of volunteers, the Cat Pack, including Shaun Jarvis who works in the CLAAS parts department at Saxham. Shaun has worked at Duxford since he was 14 and has been involved with the Catalina and its predecessor since 1997.

For further information on the Catalina, visit its website at www.catalinabookings.org



Training move to Reaseheath

CLAAS UK has entered into a new partnership with Reaseheath College, that will see all future apprentice training within England being conducted at the Engineering department of the college, which is near Nantwich in Cheshire. This follows the partnership established with Barony College near Dumfries last year to provide similar training for apprentices in northern England and Scotland.

The change of training partner in England has come about following the decision by Writtle College to discontinue its service engineering courses for at least 3 years.

In recent years, the Engineering department at Reaseheath has grown to become one of the most successful engineering training providers in the UK, and is already used by a number of leading agricultural, construction, groundcare and motor manufacturers.

The department's modern facilities include 18 workshops and has a total of 618 students and 27 staff. Of these, agricultural engineering forms the largest element, with a total of 176 full and part time students.

As a leading supporter of the LTA (Landbased Technician Accreditation) scheme, the move by CLAAS to Reaseheath and the opportunity it brings for apprentices to train alongside those from other major agricultural manufacturers, fits in well with the principles of the scheme.

As previously, students on the CLAAS Apprenticeship Scheme will be studying for a National Diploma in Land Based Technology, making CLAAS one of the first manufacturers to adopt this more technically challenging qualification.

Upon successful completion of the CLAAS programme, all participants will gain LTA 2 status and with the additional technical elements integrated into the scheme, there should be opportunities for accelerated progression to LTA Tier 3 or LTA Tier 4 once the necessary experience has also been gained.

The current first-year CLAAS Apprentices with some of the 32 CLAAS Master Technicians who were recently awarded LTA4 status.



CEBIS goes mobile

CLAAS has launched a new portable multifunctional machinery control terminal – CEBIS Mobile.

Based on the well proven CEBIS control system and so suitable for use with a wide range of CLAAS machines, CEBIS Mobile is primarily designed to be a stand alone ISOBUS controller for use especially in precision farming systems, and can be used with any machine or tractor.

Using the latest CEBIS 3 hardware, CEBIS Mobile has a 6.4 inch colour screen and a standard ISOBUS backlit keyboard. The ISOBUS and task management software provides for both ISOBUS and implement management, and the unit incorporates two SD card drives.

Unlike some systems, as part of the software package included with the unit, CEBIS Mobile comes complete with the CLAAS AGROMAP software, so that the user can create their own variable application maps and therefore not necessarily be tied to outside suppliers.

For variable application management, CEBIS Mobile can be used in combination with most variable rate fertiliser spreaders, sprayers and drills currently on the market. CEBIS Mobile uses the ISO-XML format, which means that although mainly designed for use with

CLAAS Agro-Net and Agro-Map software, CEBIS Mobile does offer some compatibility with other popular software mapping packages, making it one of the first controllers to offer an element of multi-platform compatibility.

Having loaded the application maps, in addition to managing the implement via either a Serial or ISOBUS interface, CEBIS MOBILE also has the capability to record and store an application map, showing what has been applied and where, that can then be transferred to the main computer and stored as proof of application for crop compliance or other schemes.



Alistair Kingan and Dougie Robison

Positive change of tractor

Following a demonstration of the latest CLAAS ARION tractor that impressed both him and his drivers, Alistair Kingan ordered two new ARIONs for this spring.

Alistair has been watching the progress of the CLAAS tractor range for a couple of years and having tried the ARION was impressed both with the comfort and performance that it offered.

"I felt that the time was right to change make," explains Alistair whose contract farming and general contracting business, A K Farm Services, is based at New Abbey near Dumfries. "I had a number of problems and expensive repair bills with my previous tractors, but felt the ARION was right for me and I knew that the service from Gordons would be first class."

"My biggest concern was whether the two drivers, Dougie and Andrew, would like the ARION, but like me they were very impressed with the tractors, in particular the size and comfort of the cab and the smoothness of the transmission. Also comparing like-for-like prices the ARION was on a par with what we already ran and represented very good value."

Alistair aims to replace his tractors after three years, by which time they will have done about 6,000 hours, and the two ARIONs join a machinery fleet that includes a new TUCANO combine, a JAGUAR 870 forager and CLAAS mowers and rakes.

Of the two tractors, the higher powered ARION 640 will be responsible for all the mowing and drilling, so has been specified with the CEBIS control system, whilst the smaller ARION 630 CIS and another hired in ARION 620C are used for more general work.

"Comparing the ARION with my old tractor the difference is noticeable. In the cab is very roomy and everything falls to hand. Also thanks to the suspension the ARION is far more comfortable and less tiring over a long day," comments Dougie Robison who drives the ARION 640. "I am also very impressed with CEBIS and the headland management system (CLAAS Sequence Management) as it is far easier to set-up and use than on my previous tractor, especially when drilling where I am using it to operate both the front press and the power harrow drill combination."

"The amount of traction is superb and the engine really holds on well and this, combined with the power boost up to 180hp, means that the ARION never loses power or is short of grip."

"I would have to admit that when I bought the ARIONs, I was initially unsure as to whether I had done the right thing. But now having used them and seen what they can do, I am more pleased than I ever thought I would be," concludes Alistair.



Farm Manager of the Year

Congratulations and good luck to the three finalists in the Farmers Weekly 'Farm Manager of the Year' award category, which is sponsored by CLAAS UK.

Matthew Bowe

Matthew manages the 485ha Denham Estate in Suffolk which is run by Sentry. In addition to having fine-tuned the arable operation and establishing a contract farming agreement and running a large fallow deer herd, he has overseen the establishment of a brewery – 'Rutting Buck' – and currently is looking at building a 1.1MW biogas plant.

Nick Padwick

Nick manages the Co-Operative Farms' 1565ha Stoughton Estate near Leicester. Aside from making considerable efficiency savings, Nick has spearheaded staff training throughout the group and was the instigator of the Co-Operative's 'Farm to Fork' project, which sees 20,000 primary pupils visiting farms throughout the UK.

Simon Beddows

Manager of the 1000ha Phillimore Farms in Berkshire for the past six years, Simon has transformed the business. Central to that has been to focus on the strengths of his staff and carefully look at all aspects of crop management. At the same time he is also very involved in getting over the message about food and farming to local schools and public.



The ideal loader tractor

One of the first AXOS tractors to be sold in Scotland has been bought by Ayrshire farmer Chris Smith and sons John, William and David.

Delivered in March the 102hp AXOS 340CX, which is fitted with a CLAAS FL80 loader, was bought from Gordons mainly for yard work and feeding livestock.

The Smiths 36ha (90 acre) farm near Cumnock, and a further 80ha of rented grazing, supports 100 sucker cows, and all their calves, plus a further 150 bought-in stores, are taken through to finishing.

Aside from general handling tasks around the yard, one of the main tasks for the AXOS is to feed out waste potatoes using an auger bucket built by CLAAS dealer KW Farm Services in Norfolk.

"Having run a different make, we changed to the AXOS mainly due to Gordons who we have dealt with before, but also because we could see how good the tractor range now is."

"The AXOS is an ideal size, as we don't need a massive tractor. It's small and low enough to get into buildings, and very nimble, but even with the auger bucket on, which weighs 590kg empty, it is sufficiently well balanced that it does not need a counter weight," says William.

"I went for the higher CX specification mainly for resale value, but the cab is good and the air conditioning system works very well."

The FL loader has a maximum lift capacity of 1.8 tonnes and can lift 1.6 tonnes to a maximum of 3.85 metres and features quick coupling with MACH single lever coupling of the hydraulic and electronic connections.

"I did look at other makes, but I liked the hydraulic self-levelling plus the fact that when using a bucket, it can be crowded right back and due to the free flow, held there whilst raising or lowering the arms."

"As a general purpose loader tractor it does exactly what we wanted, plus we know we will get good support from Gordons which is important for a tractor that is in use twice a day, every day," concludes William.



A tractor worth looking for

With fuel costs reaching an all-time high last autumn, when it came to choosing a new tractor, fuel economy was a major consideration behind Bruce Souter's choice of a 130hp ARION 530 CEBIS.

In addition to farming 35ha near Forfar in Angus, Bruce also does contract work, mainly hauling trailers for local carrot growers and a silage contractor, so fuel economy was important in whichever tractor he chose.

Previously running a different make that was powered by a low running engine, in addition to the modern version of the tractor he was replacing, Bruce's short list included the ARION 530, plus a supposedly fuel-efficient make with CVT transmission.

To get a fair comparison, Bruce had each on demonstration for three days. During this time, having filled them full he put each to work in the same field ploughing for 1.5 hours, working at 8kph using his five-furrow Lemken plough, then refilled them using a jug to accurately measure consumption.

"I tested the CVT tractor first, which consumed 17.5 litres and then my old low-revving tractor which used 18.5 litres, followed by the new equivalent which used 20 litres. The ARION was last and I was amazed when it only used 17 litres," says Bruce. "To be sure I double-checked the figures but they were correct which is amazing, as when used in other tractors, DPS engines are not known for their economy – it just shows what a difference other transmissions and management systems can make."

"I was shocked, never mind impressed, to see the difference and discussing it with other drivers the ARION does use noticeably less fuel than other tractors. Ploughing 14ha it has used only 200 litres and when hauling heavy trailers of carrots it is only consuming about 5-6 litres/hour."

"The ARION 530 definitely holds its own against bigger tractors and its 4-cylinder engine is just as good as a 6-cylinder. The 50kph six-spilt HEXASHIFT transmission is brilliant; it goes well alongside the CVT harvester tractors or forager, and the ARION holds its grip extremely well, which is important as lifting conditions have been very wet. Also at about 6 tonnes it is not too heavy for field work, but it is more than capable of hauling 12t carrot trailers."

Spending a lot of time in the tractor, comfort is important and Bruce has been very impressed with the ride comfort achieved by both the PRO-ACTIV front axle suspension and the 4-point hydrostable cab suspension.

"Over the years I have had all sorts of tractors, but the ARION has to be one of the best. I can't fault it, it's a really good tractor and ideal for the job, plus the team at Sellars are extremely good to deal with. For anyone in the market for a compact 4- or 6-cylinder tractor, the ARION is certainly worth looking at."



CLAAS and the Landbased Technician

Anyone involved in using agricultural machinery will certainly relate to the fact that breakdowns can unfortunately happen, usually at an inconvenient time!

With the pressure on, the customer then has the right to expect that his local CLAAS dealer will send a technician who not only knows the product, but will recognise the urgency, be prepared to 'take ownership' and work logically through the problem to find the most cost effective solution. At the same time they should be pleasant, optimistic and calm to provide a good 'all-round' service.

So how are such skills established and maintained? By finding the right person in the first place, then providing them with well planned training to a high standard. A good employer will also ensure a competitive remuneration package and a professional working environment, with modern diagnostic equipment.

These elements all contribute towards the high standards that we all seek, and hopefully support, and whilst quality comes at a cost, this need not be 'exorbitant'.

This philosophy is the background and the foundation of "LTA" (Landbased Technician Accreditation), which is audited and accredited by the Institute of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE). There are four steps of accreditation and competence, that are recognised across the industry. These are designed to ensure the provision of the high standards that we all seek in quality 'product support'.

The LTA strategy has been successfully integrated into the CLAAS UK system. The high standard of training provided by CLAAS has also been recognised by the IAgrE audit team, who have given the Training Academy at Saxham official accreditation as an assessment centre for LTA level 3 & level 4.

Oliver Martin, LTA 1

Manns, Saxham, Suffolk

Having just finished the first year of his CLAAS Agricultural Apprenticeship, Oliver Martin says that looking back, the amount he has learnt in that time has been amazing.

"My Grandfather and Uncle farm, and I help out in my spare time, but have always been interested in engineering," says Oliver. "I had seen the CLAAS Apprenticeship Scheme advertised, and whilst I did apply to other manufacturers, it was the CLAAS scheme that I really wanted to get on because of the opportunities it offers. I see CLAAS as being a forward thinking and innovative company."

This autumn, Oliver will be one of the first to make the move from Writtle to Reaseheath, a change which he says will be positive.

"One of the great benefits of the course is the ability to not only meet CLAAS students from around the UK, but also students doing different courses. From what I have seen of Reaseheath so far, it looks superb. Agriculture and engineering plays an important role in the college and they seem to be extremely enthusiastic, plus it will be good to meet apprentices from other manufacturers."

"I have really enjoyed the last year – it's my ideal job. Whilst I like being in the workshop, it's great to be able to get out on farm and see different bits of the countryside in the spring and summer, plus you never know what you will be doing the next day. I am really keen to learn and can build my experience with such a wide range of jobs and machinery; I am so pleased I was accepted for the CLAAS program. I'm confident that all my effort will be recognised and that there will be chances for me to get ahead. CLAAS and the Apprentice scheme is good like that."



Phil Winter, LTA 2

Sewards, Beverley, East Yorkshire

For Phil Winter, one of the great attractions of being a landbased service engineer is the variety and working on-site, alongside the customers.

"I would not like to be stuck in a workshop just doing the same service work every day. The great attraction of this job is the variety and that no two days are the same; one day you are working on a combine, the next a tractor or baler. It does mean that you have to know more and test yourself, but it's anything but monotonous. Plus you get to be out in the countryside and have direct contact with the customer, and it's great to be thanked and told by them that you have done a good job."

Phil, who has been working on farms since he was 13, has just completed his CLAAS Agricultural Apprenticeship.

"When I left school at 16, I did think about mechanical engineering, but did not enjoy college. This job gives me a trade, and the CLAAS apprenticeship has been absolutely fantastic. You meet a lot of other people and learn from their experience. At this branch, 80% of our work is combines, so I have had to learn a lot about tractors and foragers from the other apprentices who are now firm friends, and I will always be able to speak to them in the future if I have a problem."

"The opportunity to work overseas was one of the best things I have ever done and made me a different person. It was a great experience. The CLAAS programme offers so much more than just a normal qualification and I would definitely recommend it to anyone considering an apprenticeship."

Looking to the future, Phil has his sights firmly set on achieving LTA 3 and Master Mechanic status within the next two years, specialising in combines, before working towards LTA 4 and Master Technician.

"I get up in the morning and want to go to work. You have to work hard, but every day is a school day, plus it has given me the opportunity to travel. CLAAS are great – everyone is treated with respect and they look after you very well."



Accreditation (LTA) scheme

LTA Level	Capability	CLAAS technicians currently at this level
LTA1	This level is split into two sections; The Apprentice who will still be receiving on-going training and the Skilled mechanic who will have experience, but no relevant vocational qualifications.	70
LTA2	At this level, the technician will have either completed their apprenticeship or will have attended recognised training courses. As such, they will be responsible for service support, PDIs and machinery preparation.	180
LTA3	To reach this level, the technician must have trained as a product specialist, and so will be experienced, skilled and capable of carrying out repairs and problem diagnosis in their specialist area.	120
LTA4	At this level, the technician will be highly experienced and capable of undertaking complex repairs and diagnostic processes across a full range of machinery. They will need to attend regular training courses with CLAAS, and are required to pass a technical reassessment every year. They will often also act as mentors for other technicians or apprentices..	32

By having LTA accredited technicians working on their machinery, the customer can be confident that their dealer is committed to staff development, and that the technician will have undergone rigorous checks on their ability and product knowledge.

As machinery becomes increasingly complex, these technicians will be kept up to date and will have the necessary expertise to provide the high standard of product support which every customer would expect.

**Lenny Summers,
LTA 3 and CLAAS
Master Mechanic**
Hamblys Bishops Lydeard,
Somerset



A CLAAS Master Mechanic specialising in balers and eligible for recognition as an LTA level 3 technician, Lenny Summers joined Hamblys five years ago, following their take-over of his previous employer, Graham Vowles.

Initially asked to run the workshop, and now the working Service Manager, Lenny runs a team of two technicians, one of whom is a recently qualified LTA2 and the other LTA 3, and both are now working on meeting the requirements for higher LTA levels. In addition he also oversees an apprentice, who has just started on the CLAAS Apprenticeship Scheme.

From a farming background, Lenny himself served a five-year apprenticeship with Medland, Sanders & Twose in the 1970s. Since then he has seen a considerable change in the industry, and whilst he still considers himself a 'spanner man', the changes in the size of machinery and the advent of computerised controls and laptop based diagnostic systems have provided him with new challenges.

"In this job you never stop learning," he says and along with other Hamblys service staff, as part of his ongoing training he regularly attends training courses at the CLAAS Training School over the winter.

"Ongoing training is very important and as a Service Manager, I am now doing courses on the management side of my job, which is interesting."

"I think the LTA scheme is a good concept, as it is important that we are trained to a high standard, but also that customers are able to see and understand that we have been trained to a recognisable standard."

Such is Lenny's love of agricultural machinery, he has just bought from Hamblys an MF35X that came in as a part exchange which, he says should keep him busy at weekends for the next winter or two.

**Maurice Lamb, LTA 4 and
Service Manager**
Rickerby, Alnwick, Northumberland



Compared to when he first qualified, Maurice Lamb says that in terms of the career opportunities open to current apprentices, they really do have an open road in front of them.

"When I qualified in 1981 there were not the career opportunities available that there are now," he says, "and the prospect to gain additional experience working with the CLAAS scheme is fantastic, I would have jumped at the chance!"

"At the same time the job has changed dramatically for the better. A service technician is now highly thought of and respected for what they do; it's a very skilled occupation. A lot of engineers I know who left the industry now wish they had stayed."

Having completed his apprenticeship in 1981, Maurice initially worked for BH Brown, who were taken over by Rickerby in 1992.

Having gained LTA 3 status as a CLAAS Master Mechanic specialising in combines, Maurice progressed to LTA 4 as a Master Technician. Having initially been service foreman at Alnwick, he is now service manager for four of Rickerby's branches; Alnwick, Durham, Hexham and Coldstream.

Under him, he has individual service foremen at each branch, which employ a total of 12 technicians and six apprentices.

On a day-to-day basis, Maurice's job is to oversee the service operation within these branches, coordinate all the necessary paperwork, warranty work and sort out any technical queries customers may have. In addition he still does hands-on service work, especially during the summer.

"For someone who is keen and willing, and prepared to put a lot into the job, it's a great career due to the variation and the fact that you are not restricted to a workshop all the time. It's never dull and that's what has kept me in the job."

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Making the most of waste

Quality is a pre-requisite for the forward thinking Penllyn Estate in South Wales, both in the machinery it buys and the produce it sells.

Located in the Vale of Glamorgan at Cowbridge near Cardiff, the 1000ha (2500 acre) Penllyn Estate has run Le Mans built tractors for many years, and currently four CLAAS tractors form the core of the tractor fleet.

Of the 800ha (1980 acres) farmed in-hand, which is all in Tir Gofal Countryside Stewardship, aside from conventional arable cropping, the farm also grows Welsh branded cauliflowers and daffodils for Tesco. On the livestock side, the farm runs a 400-cow Aberdeen Angus suckler herd supplying Waitrose, and have twice been named their best supplier in the UK, plus the farm also regularly wins local prizes for its sheep and beef cattle.

However, aside from maximising returns through the quality of produce it sells, the Estate has also been quick to grasp the opportunities that its location within a highly populated area provides.

In addition to its farming activities, other commercial activities include a taxi company, fly fishing, paint ball and a security alarm business.

However, the most high profile activity is the Estate's composting business that was started 25 years ago. Initially composting just manure and straw, handling about 50 tonnes of green waste a month, Cowbridge Compost now works extensively with the Vale of Glamorgan County Council and takes in over 1000 tonnes of kerbside green waste a month.

The Estate has recently invested £500,000 in its composting equipment, including a new isolated eight-bay in-vessel composting unit to handle household food waste collected in compostable bags, which in three months is already processing 52 tonnes a month.

"Aside from being paid to take-in the waste, we don't need to buy any fertiliser as all the compost from both units is retained for use on the farm," explains farm manager Mike Hallett. "A 1000 tonnes of green waste will compost down to about 500 tonnes with an N:P:K value of 19:7:14 and a value of £15/tonne. In the new food waste unit, this is mixed with 75% green waste and needs to heat up to 70°C. The compost is held in each bay for eight days, when it is then moved up a bay. At the end of the composting process, the compost is thoroughly tested for pathogens, etc, before being passed as safe for spreading on the land."

"Our vision is that we want to do a good job, be profitable and be able to stand on our own two feet without SFP payments. The composting units also create a source of employment, and we employ five teenagers through the Amelia Trust, which works to give local disadvantaged children a new chance in life."

Of the four CLAAS tractors, there are two ARES 697s, one of which has a loader, and two new ARION 640 CIS's. In addition to the usual farm operations, one of the main tasks for the tractors is spreading the compost, using three 25 tonne Marsden Fieldmaster's, which between them can spread about 1000 tonnes a day.

"Having previously run Renault's it made sense to continue with CLAAS, but the ARES 697 definitely converted us and likewise we have been very impressed with the new ARIONs," states Mike. "They are great to drive and extremely comfortable. The drivers love the transmissions and all the tractors have been very reliable."

"Just as important is the support and back-up we get both from Riverlea and CLAAS themselves. We did have one out of warranty problem, but CLAAS still stood by us without a quibble and looked after us. You can't ask for better than that."

Photo to come

Jimmy's Farm

In support of the work that Jimmy Doherty is doing to promote British Farming and raise awareness of locally produced food, CLAAS, through Paul Jinks at local dealer Manns, has arranged a long-term hire of a new 92hp AXOS 330CL for use on his farm near Ipswich.

Jimmy was widely praised for his BBC programme 'Jimmy's Farming Heroes' and was winner of the Farmers Weekly 'Farming Champion' Award last year.

The AXOS is fitted with a loader, and one of the main benefits that appealed to Jimmy was the tractor's versatility and ability to move pig arcs around the farm, which otherwise would require a separate machine. Other jobs he has in mind for the AXOS is ongoing clearance work on the farm, and the creation of a new pond.



CLAAS GPS Pilot steering solutions

CLAAS has available a complete range of steering options, from simple guidance systems through to highly accurate RTK.

All CLAAS GPS PILOT guidance systems come as standard with the new Outback S3 terminal, which provides far greater functionality and information than previous terminals.

The new Outback S3 terminal has a 1GB internal memory and incorporates an 8.4 inch colour touchscreen through which the user can access menus and information. A touch screen QWERTY and numerical keyboard is accessible so that data and field information can be easily inputted. The terminal also incorporates a USB connection so that data can be quickly and easily exchanged, or the software updated.

Four systems are available, depending on the level of accuracy the user requires.

GPS PILOT – Egnos (15-30cm accuracy)

The Egnos based system is ideal for those who are looking for a simple guidance system and do not need a high level of accuracy, or for those looking for an entry into steering guidance for use on jobs such as fertiliser spreading or spraying, with the possibility to upgrade to more accurate systems later.

The benefits of EGNOS are:

- Robust signal
- No mobile station required
- Low cost
- No additional signal costs

GPS PILOT – Omnistar HP (5-10cm accuracy)

To achieve a higher degree of accuracy, in addition to the three satellite signals used by Egnos, Omnistar HP uses a fourth differential signal from a stationary satellite over the Equator, for which a licence fee has to be paid. Omnistar is suitable for auto-steering but does require a clear line-of-sight to the south.

The benefits of OMNISTAR HP are:

- Greater accuracy from 5-10cm so suitable for drilling
- No reference station required
- Dual frequency GPS receiver
- Extensive signal coverage
- Possible top upgrade to RTK at a later date



GPS PILOT – Baseline HD (4-8cm accuracy)

Baseline HD is unique to CLAAS and uses a tripod-mounted base station. Unlike other tripod systems, the Baseline HD unit is not only less expensive, but also incorporates an in-built 36-hour battery, making it very compact. The system uses an FM signal, with a range of about 5Km, and does not rely on line-of-sight, so is more robust and does not get 'lost' as easily. BASELINE HD can be used for one or more machines and is ideal for operations requiring greater accuracy, such as drilling.

The benefits of BASELINE HD are:

- Compact base station for mobile operation
- Outstanding price/accuracy ratio
- Proprietary correction signal for multiple users
- No additional signal costs
- Self-contained battery
- Accuracy \pm 4-8cm

GPS PILOT – RTK (2-3cm accuracy)

RTK provides the highest level of accuracy. The RTK system uses a fixed base station, normally fitted to a tall building, that issues a dual frequency FM signal with a range of up to 20km. Unlike other RTK systems on the market, the CLAAS RTK system also incorporates a security feature so that only authorised units can connect into it.

The benefits of RTK are:

- Proprietary correction signal for multiple use without additional signal cost
- Good local signal coverage
- Highest level of accuracy \pm 2-3cm
- Very fast warm-up and recovery
- Repeatable

Competition winners edit



Hiring in service and reliability

This summer will see Jonathan Cole hiring nine tractors, a XERION and three SCORPIONS from CLAAS, to ensure he can cope with the demands of seasonal contracts and provide the high level of service he aims to provide customers.



Impressive pushing power

When Gavin Brown agreed, more out of interest, to have a 120hp SCORPION 6030 VariPower for a demonstration last year, he was so impressed that he went ahead and bought one.

"Sellars offered me the opportunity to try one, so thought I would give it a go, even though I only had half a mind to change," explains Gavin who farms in partnership with his father David and brother Charlie. "However as soon as I tried it, I could see how good a machine it is, and how much better it was than what we were running."

The Scorpion is mainly used on the Browns 82ha farm near Forfar that supports 170 sucklers, whilst a different machine is based on a rented 550ha unit that has been organic since the late 1980's. In addition, the Browns run two self-propelled forage harvesters clearing over 740ha of grass, but due to the distances involved the grass is mainly clamped using a tractor.

"We do however use the SCORPION for clamping on our own farm and on another farm where they have an small indoor clamp with a low roof. The VariPower transmission is very impressive and has plenty of pushing power. The SCORPION will just keep going all day without needing to stop for a rest or overheating unlike other machines we have used and the reversible fan is great; having pressed the switch there is a puff of grass and away you go again."

Aside from clamping, the SCORPION, which was supplied with the appropriate headstock to take all their existing attachments, is used everyday for feeding cattle and other handling tasks, working about 800 hours a year.

"I find the SCORPION is far more comfortable and relaxing to drive than our previous machine. The turning circle is tremendous and everything is to hand on the joystick. The cab is good and spacious with plenty of storage, plus the visibility is excellent, both upwards for loading without getting a sore neck or to each corner. Also for servicing, there is good all-round access and the grease banks are very accessible."

"The SCORPION has plenty of hydraulic power, but even on the clamp it will just keep pushing and climbing at a constant speed. It wants to work and I have never found anything else that will match it."



In addition to farming and contract farming around 800ha based at Cranworth near Dereham in Norfolk, seasonal work includes a further 800ha of contract autumn cereals cultivations and drilling, plus vegetable haulage and cultivation work, and baling 40,000 big square bales for a local pig producer.

Jonathan has been a long-time user of Le Mans built tractors and currently runs an AXION 820 CMATIC, with a second on order from Manns at Thursford to replace an ARES 836.

Joining these for an initial 10 week period will be a further three AXION 820s, which will be used for baling, and six ARION 640s for haulage work, plus a XERION 3800 and three SCORPIONS. At the end of the initial period, depending on workload the hire on some of the tractors will then be extended for cultivations and vegetable work.

"The benefit of hiring is that it gives me a known cost for budgeting," says Jonathan. "More importantly in the event of a problem, I know that CLAAS will give me the back-up and get me going again, to ensure that I can continue to offer a good service to my customers."

"This is the main reason for hiring direct from CLAAS as it is essential to me that my customers have confidence in my delivering the goods and to a high standard. The last thing I want is a tractor working as a gang breaking down and as a result stopping the rest of the team from working. Plus they are very flexible and helpful."

Jonathan describes the 189hp AXION 820, which has a power boost up to 232hp, as being powerful but not too big and ideal for powering big balers, which will bale up to 14,000 bales each a season. Likewise the ARION 640s are ideal general tractors and he has been pleasantly surprised by how fuel efficient they are.

Having previously run two large tracked tractors, one of these will be replaced this year by the 388hp XERION 3800, which will be used for a wide range of operations, from pulling a 4.5m subsoiler working at 45cm, through to cultivation, mainly using a Tinemaster or drilling with a 6.0m Simba Freeflow.

"I trialled the XERION last year and was very impressed with it," explains Jonathan. "With the tracked tractor only able to travel at 18mph on the road, one of the biggest benefits is the XERION's road speed, but it's also very easy to operate and having set everything up is relaxing to operate, even after a 12-hour night shift. Features like Cruise Control, CEBIS and the headland management are very good and there to be used."

"Anyone that thinks that the current CLAAS range is just a different coloured Renault should think again. CLAAS has come a long way in a short space of time and if they do with tractors what they have done with combines, then they will be hard to beat."

CLAAS

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