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HarvesTimes



CLAAS NEWS

CUSTOMER STORIES

PRODUCT NEWS

A tractor that's as flexible as you?

CLAAS

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The AXOS 3:

- Powerful 4-cylinder engine with 3.6 l capacity and up to 120 hp
- Compact design to heighten flexibility, with an overall height of 2.5m
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Offer available on all new and stock tractors. Closing date 30 June 2025.
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Cover photo: Customers visit the new Digital Experience Centre at CLAAS UK, Saxham.

Contact us on: 01284 763100
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A warm welcome for the AXOS 3

Following the launch of the new AXOS 3 in February, CLAAS dealers throughout Europe have been hosting launch events, both to thank their customers but also enable them to see first hand the new range.

Over 200 events have so far been held in Europe, with 25 dealers in the UK and Ireland hosting events and more planned for the spring. Depending on the dealership, these have ranged from general open days and evenings, through to focussed tractor or specific AXOS 3 launches.

The success of these events and the obvious enjoyment that our customers get from escaping their farm for a few hours, meeting up with fellow farmers and dealer staff, and learning more about the CLAAS product range and their local dealership, is evident in the fact that we have regularly seen anything from over 100 to in excess of 1,000 attending.



“The fact that we have been seeing this high level of attendance and the interest there has been in the new AXOS 3, has been very rewarding for the dealerships, who have put a lot of work into hosting these events,” comments Michael Ives, Tractor Product Manager with CLAAS UK.

“The new AXOS 3 has gone down very positively. It’s a small tractor that we have not had in the CLAAS range since around 2018. The ‘spec’ is right, the price is right and this has been reflected in the high level of early sales we have seen, even ahead of the launch.”

AXOS 3 – a new compact



This spring has seen the addition of a new compact powerhouse to the CLAAS tractor range – the AXOS 3. Comprising four models ranging in power from 92hp up to 120hp, this new range falls between the ARION 400 and AXOS 200 series, but bears the DNA of the previous AXOS 300 and CELTIS 300 ranges.

Aimed primarily at livestock and smaller mixed farms, tractors this size have to meet many needs. A good 40 per cent of their operating hours are spent handling materials and working around the yard. But they must also be capable of mastering field and grassland work. So not surprisingly, customer requirements are wide-ranging: compact dimensions, low overall cab height, uncompromising manoeuvrability, high payload, agile handling and excellent operator comfort, to name just some of the attributes tractors in this class are expected to provide. New from the ground up, the new AXOS 3 does all this, and more, providing power and versatility, comfort, ease of use and excellent reliability.

POWER AND VERSATILITY

Under the bonnet is a fuel-efficient yet lively 3.6 l four-cylinder Fiat Powertrain (FPT) engine with modern Stage V exhaust gas after-treatment. The four AXOS 3 models have outputs of 92, 103, 112 and 120 hp with maximum torques from 366 to 466 Nm at a low 1,500 rpm.

The engine block and radiator panels are widely used throughout CLAAS tractors, so spare parts availability and service capabilities will not be an issue.

As standard, the AXOS 3 comes with a 24/12 TWINSHIFT 2-range powershift transmission with REVERSHIFT reverser, with the option of a 3-range 36/18 version, and a 12/12 transmission with mechanical version is to follow later in the year.

The top speed of 40 km/h is achieved at a fuel-efficient 1,750 rpm, and REVERSHIFT also enables you to shift gear using the clutch button on the gear lever instead of the foot clutch.

With TWINSHIFT there is also the option of an electric parking lock activated via the REVERSHIFT lever. SMART STOP is also an option, which enables the operator to stop and start without using the clutch pedal – a huge advantage for loader work and transport or when baling round bales.

COMFORT

Designed exclusively for the AXOS 3, in addition to its generous size, a notable feature of the cab is the return of front opening doors that can be locked open within the machine width even with a loader fitted. And with a door width of 88cm, this popular feature makes entering and exiting the cab easy.

Inside the cab, the retractable and adjustable steering console incorporating the instrument panel immediately stands out. Dynamic steering with adjustable steering ratio (optional extra) reduces the number of turns of the steering wheel

powerhouse

between the steering locks from 3.8 to 1.9 when operating at speeds of up to 10 km/h.

With the likelihood that a large proportion of AXOS 3 tractors will be used for loader work, various models in the three CLAAS front loader series up to FL 100, FL 100 E and FL 100 C are available factory fitted. They can be operated either by the mechanical PROPILOT four-way control lever or the electrohydraulic E-PILOT S installed in the right-hand side console.



The latter actuates FASTLOCK and SPEEDLINK for hydraulic locking and unlocking of the front loader and its attachments, as well as automatic bucket return. As standard, the AXOS 3 comes with a 60 l/min pump, but for faster loader response there is a 90 l/min option.

AXOS 3 HIGHLIGHTS

- Fuel efficient 3.6l 4-cylinder FPT engine with 160 litre fuel tank
- 12/12 mechanical or 24/12 and 36/18 TWINSHIFT transmission with REVERSHIFT reverser
- Wide tyre range up to external diameter of up to 1.6 m (420/85 R38 or 540/65 R 38) and large front wheels
- 3,600kg payload and 5,300 max capacity rear linkage and 3,240kg front linkage option
- 3,000kg capacity pick-up hitch
- Maximum cab height below 2.50m when fitted with 30in (380/85 R 30) rear tyres
- Front opening doors that can be locked open within the machine width
- Spacious cab with plenty of storage space, 2 USB sockets and ISOBUS terminal option
- Wide range of factory fitted FL loader options

VOLTO



Beautiful simplicity.



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CLAAS VOLTO trailed tedders

The VOLTO 1300 and 1500 models with a working width up to 15.1 metres offer maximum performance and efficiency. Technical innovations such as the unique trailed steering significantly boost efficiency in the field.

Visit claas.co.uk or contact your dealer for a demo.

CLAAS UK explores the future of fuel: unveiling the truth about HVO



In an era of evolving agricultural practices, the search for sustainable and efficient fuel solutions is paramount. CLAAS UK recently undertook rigorous testing to demystify the increasingly popular alternative, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), and explore its viability for modern farming.

UNDERSTANDING HVO: BEYOND THE BUZZWORDS

HVO, derived from recycled cooking oil, is gaining traction as a potential replacement for traditional diesel. Its key advantage lies in its near-zero Fatty Acid Methyl Ester (FAME) content. This translates to significant benefits: reduced risk of premature fuel filter blockages, easier water removal from the fuel system, and a drastically lower likelihood of microbial growth – all factors that contribute to enhanced machine longevity. Moreover, HVO boasts a shelf life up to 20 times longer than standard diesel, minimising fuel degradation during storage.

PERFORMANCE AND PRACTICALITY

While HVO (Class A) may currently command a premium price, its increasing adoption is driving its accessibility. Performance-wise, CLAAS testing has demonstrated that HVO delivers virtually identical performance to conventional diesel. Notably, HVO is lighter than standard diesel (approximately 7% lighter), which might suggest a reduction in energy content. It's greater energy density goes some way to counteracting its lower weight, making the difference in energy output only 5.5% lower.

Furthermore, HVO exhibits superior cold weather tolerance, remaining fluid at temperatures as low as -34°C, significantly outperforming standard diesels -15°C threshold.

SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE-PROOFING

Sustainability is no longer an optional consideration but a critical imperative for the agricultural sector. HVO offers a tangible pathway to reducing carbon footprint, with potential reductions of up to 90%. This aligns with the growing demand for environmentally responsible practices and ensures farmers remain at the forefront of sustainable agriculture. Importantly, all CLAAS tractors and harvesters produced after 1st October, 2023, are fully compatible with HVO. Older models may also be compatible; consult your local CLAAS dealer for confirmation.

CLAAS ACADEMY TESTING: REAL-WORLD SIMULATION, REAL-WORLD RESULTS

To provide definitive insights, Aaron Geary conducted comprehensive testing at the CLAAS UK Academy, simulating real-world operating conditions. Utilising a dynamometer, an ARION 630 tractor was subjected to controlled load tests with both HVO and standard diesel (EN590). This rigorous approach allowed for precise measurement of torque, horsepower, fuel consumption, and AdBlue consumption.

KEY FINDINGS

The tests focused on analysing the effects of different fuels on engine torque and horsepower, critical indicators of engine performance. Simultaneously, fuel and AdBlue consumption were monitored to assess overall efficiency.

"From our own testing, we found that HVO consistently provided 0.6% more power and 1.1% more torque than EN590 Winter diesel. When compared to EN590 Summer diesel, HVO provided 0.3 % more power and 1.2% more torque. When compared to both fuels, HVO delivered peak torque at 4.7% lower rpm.

All the above factors prove to us that HVO shouldn't negatively affect machine performance. The fuel consumption results were less decisive. There were conditions where HVO had an advantage and conditions where it didn't - but overall, the differences were in the region of 1-2% so not really noticeable. The same can be said for the DEF consumption values as the differences were even smaller, being around 1%."

Aaron continues: "I have to admit that, knowing the difference in energy content per litre, I was expecting HVO to show slight reductions in performance compared to EN590. I believe the performance improvements are due to HVO generally having a higher cetane rating."

"This means that despite HVO having less energy, more of it is accessible to the engine due to the improved ignition characteristics the higher cetane number provides," says Aaron.

MOVING FORWARD WITH INFORMED DECISIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The CLAAS UK testing provides valuable data to support informed decision-making regarding fuel choices. As the agricultural landscape continues to evolve, embracing sustainable alternatives like HVO is crucial for ensuring both environmental responsibility and operational efficiency.

New ARION 570 CMATIC:

180hp of 4-cylinder muscle



The 4-cylinder ARION 500 range has been extended with the addition of a new 180hp model – the ARION 570 CMATIC. It enters a sector of the market where demand for smaller but more powerful tractors has seen sales of 160-180hp tractors grow 250% in the last 3 years.

Under the bonnet, the ARION 570 shares the same 4.5 litre twin turbo FPT engine as the rest of the ARION 500 range, but with new injectors and a revised cooling pack to help it deliver an unboosted 180hp of pure power that is available at all times. And with a torque of 730Nm at 1,400rpm, this is higher than the equivalent model in the 6-cylinder ARION 600 range. This high level of power, allied with its lower weight, means that the ARION 570 offers a weight to power ratio of just 40kg/hp.

To make the most of this power, the ARION 570 is only available with the CLAAS EQ CMATIC transmission. This features two automatically selected drive modes, active powered zero and a top speed of 40kph. Wheel-loader mode is another stand-out feature of this CMATIC transmission.

When activated for front loader work, the transmission software uses intelligent torque and engine speed sensor monitoring to prevent the wheels spinning when pushing. In addition, precise speed control in the hydrostatic range, especially when stacking straw bales or pallets, ensures greater accuracy and relieves the operator's workload, while the engine speed will also automatically increase to meet the demand for more hydraulic power from the front loader.

The ARION 570 CMATIC comes with the same heavier duty Dana PROACTIV suspended front axle used with the ARION 650/660. A wide range of tyre options are available, going up to Trelleborg VF 710/60R38 tyres on the rear axle and VF 600/60 R28 on the front to give a larger footprint than was previously available. The ARION 570 CMATIC also benefits from a 50:50 kerb weight distribution with a wheelbase of 2.56m.

In the 4-point fully suspended cab, there is the standard ergonomic control armrest with 12-inch CEBIS terminal and CMOTION drive lever, which keeps the right hand in a relaxed position while providing access to more than 20 functions including cruise control and direction changing, along with tractor speed adjustment in drive lever mode. As standard, there are four double-acting electro-hydraulic spools, served by a 150 litre/minute pump, along with PTO speeds of 540/540E/1000/1000E.

Optionally available is the CEMOS dialogue-based system for optimising the productivity and efficiency of field and grassland work. Also available is the automatic trailer stretch brake which provides additional safety, especially when travelling downhill with trailers, as well as when working on slopes with attached implements – such as balers or slurry tanks. When decelerating, the automatic braking system automatically activates the air brakes of the trailer or attached implement as soon as critical thrust forces are exerted on the tractor. The system uses data from sensors in the transmission, which record engine drag torque and thrust in the drive train.

The NIGHT EDITION ARION 570 CMATIC

In addition to the standard versions, the ARION 570 CMATIC is also available with the NIGHT EDITION specification.

Country roads, take me home

An historic CLAAS combine harvester returns home



Some machines are more than just metal and mechanics. They are witnesses to history, silent storytellers of a bygone era. The 200,000th CLAAS combine harvester, a SENATOR from 1968, is one such machine. After 57 years, it is making its way back to the CLAAS UK headquarters in Saxham—weathered by time but rich in history.

A SYMBOL OF GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Its story began on 16th August 1968 in Harsewinkel, when this particular SENATOR became the 200,000th CLAAS combine to roll off the production line. To mark the occasion, company founder August Claas personally handed the machine over to Scottish farmer John Stevens, who had travelled to Germany with his wife for the event.

The ceremony was attended by the entire CLAAS management team, industry representatives, and government officials. As production supervisor Podes formally announced, “Dr Claas, I report the completion of the 200,000th CLAAS combine harvester!” August Claas’ response was simple but filled with pride: “Well done, lads!” This moment was historic in more ways than one. Just six years earlier, CLAAS had celebrated its 100,000th combine harvester. Now, that number had doubled, cementing the company’s position among the world’s leading manufacturers of harvesting machinery.

FROM SCOTLAND TO SAXHAM – A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Once in Scotland, the combine served John Stevens’s farm faithfully for many years before changing hands multiple times. In 1992, farmer Dick Brand acquired the machine and used it for grain harvesting on his own farm and his brother-in-law’s land until 2007 – covering around 100 hectares each

year. For a machine already considered part of agricultural history, this was an impressive feat. Its last recorded use was in 2019, after which it was carefully stored in a barn, safe from the elements.

For Dick Brand, the SENATOR was more than just a piece of machinery. It was a steadfast companion, a symbol of dedication and hard work. However, life had other plans. Personal losses and health issues made it increasingly difficult for him to maintain the machine. Eventually, he had to acknowledge that it was time to let go.

When CLAAS UK learned about the combine’s history last year, discussions with Dick Brand soon made it clear: the SENATOR should return home. Now in his eighties, Dick ultimately agreed—not without some emotion, but with the reassurance that it was the right decision. “It belongs back in Harsewinkel or Saxham—that’s where it should be,” he said.

THE FINAL JOURNEY OF A VETERAN

Now that the SENATOR has arrived in Saxham, plans are underway for its restoration. Decades of service, countless hours of operation, and exposure to the elements have left their mark. The first objective is to restore the machine to working order.

Most of the required parts were available overnight from the CLAAS Parts global logistics centre in Hamm, showcasing the commitment of CLAAS to industry-leading customer support. However, one or two components may need to be specially manufactured based on original technical drawings or sourced from the used parts market.

A particularly special moment is set for August 2025, when the SENATOR is expected to harvest grain once again—not just as a test, but to naturally cleanse its internal mechanisms.

This demonstration will prove that, even after nearly six decades, this CLAAS combine is still as reliable as ever.

The question of where the 200,000th CLAAS combine will be permanently housed remains open. For now, the combine will take pride of place in the MANN'S Used Machinery Centre until a permanent new home is found.



NIGHT EDITION ARION and AXION



The new NIGHT EDITION for CLAAS ARION CMATIC and AXION CMATIC tractors

The new limited-edition exclusive NIGHT EDITION versions of ARION and AXION tractors continue the CLAAS 'Challenge Accepted' campaign; focusing on strong performance, design and price.

Of all farm machines, the tractor has the strongest emotional connection with the driver. After all, most operators spend many hours a year in their tractor - and their machinery expectations are getting more and more discerning. Design and cab equipment featuring high-quality materials and opportunities for customisation are becoming increasingly important for driver wellbeing, and for identifying 'their' tractor.

In response to this, CLAAS has introduced NIGHT EDITION versions of the continuously variable, split-power ARION 550 CMATIC, 570 CMATIC and 660 CMATIC, plus the AXION 830 CMATIC, 870 CMATIC, 930 CMATIC and 960 CMATIC.

STYLISH INSIDE AND OUT

The NIGHT EDITION ARION and AXION versions feature custom grey paint on the rims, roof and side engine panels. The CLAAS logo on the side of the bonnet is white on a custom grey background.

The NIGHT EDITION lettering is prominently displayed on the side of the bonnet, while the emblem above the road light provides a sophisticated finishing touch to the external design.

Inside the cab, the NIGHT EDITION lettering is featured on both on the steering wheel badge and the floor mat. For added comfort, drivers can enjoy a first-class entertainment experience thanks to the in-built Apple CarPlay radio.

The new NIGHT EDITION versions are available through your CLAAS dealer now or you can go to night.claas.com to take advantage of a special discount on the list price of this exclusive model.

New Digital Experience Centre

To help customers better understand the benefits of CLAAS connect and the intelligent steering systems available on CLAAS equipment, CLAAS UK has developed a new Digital Experience Centre at its headquarters at Saxham, Suffolk.

The rapid development of digital technology now available can be bewildering. So as with the tractor and materials handling Customer Experience Centre at Saxham the new

Digital Experience Centre, with the aid of simulators, enables customers to use, experience and be guided through the functions and benefits of CLAAS connect.

Visitors can also be walked through the various steering systems available on CLAAS products, so that they can gain a better understanding of the technology and the benefits this can bring to their business.



The new CLAAS Digital Experience Centre was officially opened by Christian Radons, CLAAS Group Executive Board member with responsibility for the global Service & Sales Business Unit. With him are members of the new CLAAS UK Digital Business Team (from left to right): Sam Turnidge (Technical Specialist – Digital Solutions & Tractors), Andy Bell (Digital Product Manager – Onboard Digital Solutions), James Walsh (Digital Product Manager – Offboard Digital Solutions), Christian Radons, Rob Fillingham (Head of Digital Business), Trevor Tyrrell and Simon Brownless (Digital Solutions Consultant).

Trustworthy AI for agriculture

CLAAS is carrying out pioneering work in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) and has joined forces with CertifAI to address the technical and regulatory challenges.

This partnership draws on CertifAI's expertise in AI testing and compliance to ensure that AI applications from CLAAS adhere to the highest development standards. Through this collaboration, CLAAS aims to satisfy its own exemplary quality standards and promote trust in its AI-driven solutions.

CLAAS recognises AI as a key technology that can create increased customer benefits. When developing new products, the company addresses both the technical and regulatory challenges associated with the development of AI-based solutions. To tackle these issues even more effectively,



CertifAI will use their unique test methods and processes to support the development of modern, innovative AI systems – thus ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and at the same time fostering technical innovation. As a result of this collaboration, the partners have thoroughly tested the existing development phases and succeeded in devising a secure AI development process.

Old technology – modern research

What do an old reaper and the latest LEXION 8900 combine have in common?

Apart from the ability to harvest crops, on the face of it not a lot. Yet four McCormick reapers will have played an important part in the design of the APS SYNFLOW HYBRID threshing system developed for the LEXION.

Each year, for 2 days during the summer, the reapers and a team of CLAAS employees go back in time to harvest around 3.5ha of wheat, which is bundled into sheaves and stored. In all the job requires a team of 22: 2 to operate each reaper, 6 each for loading the two trailers plus tractor drivers and finally a further 2 for transport.



One of the four McCormick reapers at work



The sheaves are loaded by hand, before being transported away using a modern CLAAS tractor

By being able to harvest the complete stalk and ear, the engineers in the CLAAS R & D department can then use the sheaves to continue testing new threshing systems during the winter when crops would otherwise not be available.

“Without the stored grain, our trials would be limited to just a few weeks of harvesting during the summer,” explains Thomas Göres from CLAAS R & D at Harsewinkel.

The four McCormick reapers were bought decades ago and have been maintained, repaired and some of them slightly modified ever since, and even spare parts for them are still available.

Developmental sustainability

Every year the development teams at CLAAS spend many hours creating and testing components and machines. But what happens once a prototype machine has reached the end of its service life?

The relevant term in this regard is the ‘circular economy’: it describes a sustainable, economic model that aims to conserve resources and minimise waste and is an important part of the CLAAS commitment to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance).

CLAAS has been dismantling and reusing parts from discarded combine harvesters used as test machines or prototypes for more than 10 years after their ‘demise’. Depending on the size of machine, combines will be stripped down to their component parts at the CLAAS development centre.

Provided they are in good condition, many of the components will be returned to the circular economy and repurposed by the CLAAS used machinery centre as spare parts. More secret parts of prototypes are removed and disposed of, while components such as axles will be crushed.



Depending on the test procedures performed on the prototypes, other components may be suitable for reuse depending on wear. For instance, where a machine has been running on a test stand for many hours, the chassis and axles will have been subject to enormous wear, while the threshing unit, panels, grain tank and cab often remain in perfectly good working order, ready to be repurposed and so bring the concept of sustainability to life even beyond the service life of that machine.

CROP BALING PRODUCTS

CLAAS



0% Finance
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Offer ends 31 May 2025. Business users only. Terms and conditions apply.*

Contact **#yourclaasdealer**

*Finance for business purposes only. Subject to acceptance and affordability checks. Applicant must be 18 years or over. Promotion valid until 31st May 2025. Available on new CLAAS Crop Packaging. The finance product available under this promotion is a Commercial Loan. Maximum length of agreement is 10 months. A documentation fee of £100.00 will be collected with the first rental. Minimum balance to finance £4,000.00. Alternative finance options are available, terms & conditions apply. Images are for illustrative purposes only. Finance provided by CLAAS Financial Services Ltd, Midpoint, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 7PP, registered in England No. 5854271 - REF522.

CLAAS

DISCO

A CLAAS of its own.



Scan to choose
a clean cut

CLAAS DISCO mowers are renowned for their quality, efficiency and versatility. They offer a wide range of working widths and equipment options, allowing farmers to tailor their mowers to their exact needs. Compatible with a wide range of tractors and farming operations, there is a CLAAS DISCO mower to suit your business.

Visit claas.co.uk or contact your dealer for a demo.

250,000 mower milestone

A new generation of front mowers has been launched, featuring a new design and, for FRC models, the optional double roller drive. The launch also coincides with the production of the 250,000th CLAAS mower to be manufactured at the Bad Saulgau green harvest machinery plant.



NEW FEATURES: THREE FRONT-MOUNTED DISCO SERIES

The new CLAAS front mowers feature striking grey protective covers, perfectly matching the optics of the broad range of rear and large-scale mowers. In addition, to ensure a higher throughput in extremely leaf crops, DISCO FRC models now feature the double roller drive as used in the DISCO 9700 RC AUTO SWATHER mower.



CLAAS offers a front mower to suit all requirements across the three series in the latest range. From the DISCO 3150F compact lightweight, to the DISCO F PROFIL all-rounder, right up to the DISCO MOVE with integrated ACTIVE FLOAT suspension.

All CLAAS DISCO front mowers can be combined with a wide range of DISCO side mowers and large-scale mowers – from the simple front-rear combination with side hitching and centre of gravity suspension, to a more powerful mower with conditioner and swath grouping. With the '18 to 12' strategy with combined wide spreading and swath grouping by the AUTO SWATHER cross conveyors, an 18 m mowing width can be consolidated into 12 m for the LINER four-rotor swather following on behind. This optimises the process chain for the forage harvester and enables active control of the wilting process.

INNOVATIVE AND DURABLE

The CLAAS DISCO mower range comprises of almost 40 models, ranging in working width from 2.20m up to 10.70m. Since 1996, CLAAS DISCO mowers have been at the forefront of mower design and are the result of decades of unrivalled mower development and production, now stretching over 250,000 machines that have gone to work in a wide range of conditions around the world.

During that time, market leading developments have included:

- The MAX CUT mower bed with wave shaped profile launched in 2015
- The hydro-pneumatic ACTIVE FLOAT suspension system
- The development of 120 degree folding in 2007 and Vector folding for wider mowers in 2021
- The development of the first butterfly mower in 1999
- The launch of the 14m cut COUGAR self-propelled mower in 2005
- SAFETY LINK protection system introduced in 2002



Even stronger, more robust and ‘beefier’

“ It’s noticeable how much faster the tailgate opens and is far easier on itself due to the end-stop damping system. ”

Aidan Winters

After using ROLLANT 455 UNIWRAP balers for the past 10 years and running two balers baling from 13,000 to 15,000 mainly silage bales a year, it’s no surprise that CLAAS chose Irish contractor Aidan Winters to test elements of the new ROLLANT UNIWRAP 630.

Based in Co. Louth in the North East of Ireland, Aidan explains that most of his customers are dairy farmers, who once the clamps are full will then bale any surplus grass for youngstock and followers. Aidan has been running ROLLANT balers for over 25 years and made the move to the ROLLANT UNIWRAP in 2014. This was then joined by a second machine in 2018, with his original baler then replaced by a very good used machine. This season will now see the arrival of a new ROLLANT 630 UNIWRAP, bought through LEINSTER FARM MACHINES.



Aidan Winters



Impressed with the test baler he used for the whole of the 2023 baling season, Aidan Winters has added a new ROLLANT 630 UNIWRAP for this coming season.

NEW FEATURES

In 2023 he was approached by CLAAS as to whether he would run a test machine as his main baler for that season, which was fitted with the new pick-up and bale chamber now found on the ROLLANT 630 UNIWRAP.

“The new pick-up with its five rows of tines and the plastic filler strips is the first thing you notice,” he says. “In a light crop the five rows of tines leave a far cleaner finish. Having the plastic filler strips means that the pick-up is far quieter and even though we did not have any problems, I can see that the simple fixing would make it very easy to quickly change any tines. It’s also good to see that the guide wheels are a lot stronger.”

One of the biggest benefits of the ROLLANT baler for Aidan is its ability to create a dense, well shaped bale. “You can put a lot of feed in a bale with a ROLLANT. Typically in good dry silage, bale weights will be 800kg plus, which is all down to the MPS system; no one has ever given out to me about bale weights!”

ENHANCED RELIABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

To help reduce maintenance time and even greater reliability, the number of drive chains in the ROLLANT 630 UNIWRAP



have been reduced from 4 to 3. Chain size has been increased to 1.25in and the links are both longer and stronger for greater strength, plus the main drive sprockets are 14% larger, while guides help reduce chain movement and wear.

In the chamber, drive shaft thickness has been increased to 55mm for the rollers subject to the most weight load, and the rear tailgate mounting has also been reinforced.

FEWER CHAINS A BIG PLUS

“Having fewer chains will be a big plus and the further strengthening of the stub shafts can only be a good thing. I have not had any problems since the introduction of the stronger, bolt-on stub shafts and heavy duty bearings on the 2018 machine, which was a real game changer and did away with any previous issues I had.

“The heavier duty tailgate hinges and bracing for the tailgate should do away with any wear and tear issues, and it’s also noticeable how much faster the tailgate opens and is far easier on itself due to the end-stop damping system. This baler didn’t have it, but one of the main things I am looking forward to on the new 630 is the faster transfer system to the wrapper (12 seconds from opening to closing the tailgate). Even just a couple of seconds saved all add up at the end of a day.

“The net and film wrapping system produces a very tightly wrapped bale and running the test baler alongside our 455 UNIWRAP, I was certainly getting more bales to a roll.”

In addition to the central lubrication system for the baler, the test machine was also fitted with the PLUS central lubrication system for the wrapping table, which Aidan has specified for his new machine due to the time it saves. Something else that he has specified having had it on the test baler is a ball hitch in place of an eye hitch. He found that the ball hitch was far quieter and it avoided any jolting and movement due to weight transfer as the bale moves from the chamber to the wrapping table.

MORE THAN ABLE FOR A HEAVY WORKLOAD

“While other manufacturers are always trying to get me to change to their machines, I am a CLAAS fan and ROLLANT balers are very good machines, plus the service and support from LEINSTER is great. The ROLLANT 455 UNIWRAP has been a very good baler for me and more than able for a heavy workload, but the new 630 being even stronger, more robust and generally ‘beefier’ can only be a good thing.”

A different machine altogether

‘Smooth, very refined and completely different to our old SCORPION’ is how David Goose describes his new Generation 2 SCORPION 756 VARIPOWER PLUS.

Bought through A WOODS at nearby Holbeach in the Lincolnshire Fens in 2023, the SCORPION 756 Generation 2 is responsible for handling work on the 500ha the company farms, which specialises in producing onions; growing five different varieties over 120ha, along with 140ha of potatoes, plus broccoli, cabbage and wheat as a break crop.

SUPERB CONTROL

“I initially saw and drove the SCORPION 756 at WOOD’s and could not believe how different it felt to our previous SCORPION, so arranged to have it on demo on the farm, did a deal and it never left,” explains David Goose, who runs the farm with his daughters Holly and Nenah.

“We did try others just to compare, but the SCORPION is a different machine. The control you have over the hydraulics for handling and loading is superb and the transmission is so much smoother – it’s really refined. Also the visibility is excellent, even over the hitch. It’s more than capable of doing everything that we put in front of it and the extra 1 tonne capacity compared to our old SCORPION is a great advantage, especially when using our large 2.5 tonne bucket. I can’t think of anything I would want to change on it.”

SMOOTH HYDRAULIC RESPONSE

While David says that the SCORPION does not do many hours during the year, it is on the go the whole time. In particular, it handles and stacks 1.25 tonne capacity boxes of onions or potatoes, either moving them in and out of the cold store, or in the spring filling the planters – all jobs that require an accurate and responsive, smooth hydraulic response.

Introduced in 2022, the SCORPION 756 Generation 2 offers a maximum load capacity of 5,600kg and a lift height of 7.0m. It’s powered by a 156hp Deutz engine driving through a powerful VARIPOWER PLUS, twin motor hydrostatic transmission.

“The control you have over the hydraulics for handling and loading is superb and the transmission is so much smoother – it’s really refined.”

David Goose





The hydraulic system is powered by a 187l/min, 270 bar hydraulic pump and features the CLAAS SMART LOADING assistance package to help optimise the loading cycle.

Another recent addition to his machinery fleet is an AXION 960 TT to replace a smaller 3-year old AXION 930TT that was one of the first to be sold in the Fens.

“The AXION TT is ideal for our needs and has certainly helped reduce compaction, which is what we were looking for. The CMATIC transmission is really smooth and the engine management system excellent.

EXTREMELY GOOD HANDLING IN THE WET

“The last two springs have been horrendously wet, but it works really well in those conditions as the 720 front tyre acts to move the slop and trash out the way to enable the tracks to really dig in and pull. While we would normally plough on the land, we have had no option but to plough in the furrow with it, but it handled that extremely well. There was a lot of interest when we first got the AXION 930 TT and it is certainly noticeable that there are a lot more around here now,” concludes David.



Reliability aids herd health

For Peter Joules, one of the main contributors towards helping maintain a very low somatic cell count of just 85,000/ml of milk across his herd of 1500 Friesian cows is running reliable machinery to help ensure that scraping out and bedding up is carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The herd is split between two neighbouring farms near Ashford in Kent, with a 1000-cow Autumn calving herd on one and the remaining 500 Spring calving cows on the other. Central to their management are three TORION 530 wheel loaders bought in 2023 that are used for both scraping out and powering an Emily bedding bucket that chops straw down to 20mm for then spreading onto mattresses.

EFFICIENT MACHINERY PLAYS A MAJOR PART

“Scraping out and bedding up are some of the most important jobs on a dairy farm because of the influence they have on cell count, and running reliable, efficient machinery plays a major part in that,” states Peter.

“I am very mindful of the jobs we do and a machine’s ability to do those jobs, and in that respect the TORION is excellent and does everything we ask of it with ease.

“There can be up to 10 different drivers using them, but the TORION is very, very user friendly, extremely easy to operate, the access is first class, it’s simple to change attachments and visibility excellent, plus they are exceptionally manoeuvrable.”

The TORION 530 is the smallest in the CLAAS wheel loader range. Weighing 4,600kg and powered by a 46hp Yanmar engine, it has a maximum fully articulated tip load capacity of 3,000kg and the joystick-controlled Z-kinematics arms have a bucket pivot point of 3.18m.

THE CLAAS LOADERS SUCCESSFULLY TAKE OVER FROM THE TRACTORS

Looking to move away from using tractors for scraping out and bedding, attracted by the idea of using front-mounted machinery on a pivot-steer loader, Peter Joules and his son Rob initially bought a different brand of loader. It became obvious quickly that these were not suited to their needs and unstable. They started investigating other options and it was Ryan Miller at MANNESSEN Kent, through whom they also run a JAGUAR 870 forage harvester, who suggested the TORION.

“Ryan arranged for us to have a machine on demonstration, and we were very impressed with it, so negotiated a deal for three and the demonstrator never left the farm,” says Peter.

One of the TORION is on the smaller unit where it swaps between both scraping and bedding, while the other two

“ The TORION is a very good little wheel loader and so much easier and quicker than using a tractor. ”

Peter Joules





Peter Joules

on the larger unit are dedicated to each operation. Between scraping out and bedding twice a day, along with doing other handling and loading work as necessary, each of the TORION clock up around 1,500 hours a year.

EASIER AND QUICKER

"The TORION is a very good little wheel loader and so much easier and quicker than using a tractor. Because you are always having to turn and look over your shoulder, tractors are not very user-friendly, whereas with the TORION there is not

the pressure on the drivers. I reckon they can do a better job in about two thirds of the time.

"The TORION is also very well priced compared to what we ran before and extremely good value for money for the carrying capacity. They are well built, robust and should hold their value well for when we start looking to change them, when I shall probably look at having four. In addition the service that we have had from MANN'S, both initially with the forager and now also the TORION has always been excellent."

Graham Rae, G Rae Contracting, Dumfries & Galloway

22 YEARS OF JAGUAR

JAGUAR loyalty

In the 22 years since contractor Graham Rae bought his first CLAAS forage harvester, a JAGUAR 870 in 2003, he has since gone on to buy 23 more, the most recent being a JAGUAR 950 that arrived last season.

In all, Graham runs three JAGUAR 950 foragers, two of which do the brunt of the work with the third coming in at peak times and between them they clear in the region of 7,200ha of grass, plus maize and whole crop. Supporting them is a whole fleet of CLAAS Green Harvest machinery, including four sets of DISCO 8500C triple mowers and three LINER 4800 rakes some of which are new for this season.

Based at Kirkpatrick Fleming near Lockerbie, Graham's customer base ranges from dairy farms on the Solway plain, who are often taking 4-5 cuts on a 4-week cycle, where the foraging teams will average around 80ha a day, through to beef farmers in the hills, who often just take one big cut of silage where the daily average will drop to nearer 48ha a day.

"When I made the change over to the JAGUAR in 2003, whole crop was just starting to increase and the milling system on the JAGUAR was far easier to wind in and out compared to the foragers I had previously been running,"

explains Graham. "Since then we haven't looked back. Not only do the foragers speak for themselves in terms of output, resale value and reliability, but the relationship we have with both CLAAS and RICKERBY is fantastic; they are an integral part of our business and their service is absolutely superb.

"The JAGUAR 950 suits us well. Silage is made in the pit, not the field, and the buckrake man is the kingpin of the operation and we have to work in a whole range of clamps.

"The pick-up reel has come on a long way and the crop flow into the forager is very reliable and well presented. Also the ease of access to the chopping cylinder for maintenance in the JAGUAR 950 is excellent, plus the low level of noise and the cab comfort is excellent, which is important if you are spending long days in the chopper seat."



Graham Rae

If you go down to the woods today...

Difficulties in harvesting willow for biomass in recent years has prompted Jamie Rickerby to look at alternative options, drawing inspiration from the CLAAS FIELD SHUTTLE, which ceased production in 2008.

If the UK is to reach its target of net zero by 2050, then there will need to be a considerable increase in the use of perennial energy crops (PEC), such as short coppice willow for both bioenergy and carbon capture.

BIOMASS IS THE FUTURE

For the UK to reach its net zero target by 2050, the use of dedicated energy crops is projected to increase significantly, both for bioenergy and carbon capture. Currently, around 120,000 hectares of land in the UK is used for biomass energy crops, mainly maize and whole crop, primarily for anaerobic digestion. Willow, by comparison, currently occupies a significantly smaller area, around 10,000 hectares. Climate change projections suggest that the overall land area dedicated to biomass crops may need to rise to over 700,000 hectares by 2050 to meet the net zero target.

Jamie Rickerby and his company Willow Energy have been involved with growing willow for energy for the past 14 years, both planting, managing and harvesting crops throughout the UK, using JAGUAR foragers adapted for willow harvesting.

"Ideally willow is harvested on a 3-year cycle when the base of the plant is between 50-60mm," he explains. "We cover the whole of the UK, but in the past 5-6 years the harvesting conditions during the winter have been horrendous, often meaning the crops have had to be left uncut, so when we do go back in, the willow is thicker, so slower to harvest and harder on the forager."

Aware of the FIELD SHUTTLE and convinced that a modern tracked version based on a JAGUAR 990 TERRA TRAC would be the ideal solution to his harvesting problems, following meetings with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) about the feasibility of increasing the PEC crop, Jamie applied for and was one of just 11 companies to be awarded funding from the Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme. At the same time, he is also developing an autonomous tracked machine for initially cutting willow rods and then transplanting.

WORKING WITH CLAAS TO MAKE AN IDEAL CONVERSION

Working with both CLAAS UK and CLAAS Group in Germany, Jamie was put in contact with a Swiss contractor and engineer, Frédéric Angéloz, who has done number of conversions, both for his own harvesting operations, but also other companies. The JAGUAR 990 Tracked Shuttle is the culmination of nearly 4 years work – 2 years of planning and a further 18 months for construction.



Jamie Rickerby

In the cab, the bunker unit is controlled using a second CMOTION control unit, and there is a separate control terminal to set-up and operate the bunker

Measuring 14.5 metres long and weighing 40 tonnes, the overall width of the JAGUAR 990 Tracked Shuttle, which runs on 650mm wide TERRA TRACs, is just 3.0m both for ease of transport, but to also fit down the standard 3.3m wide willow row widths. It is also designed to fit on a standard Category 2 trailer for transport.

BUILT ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Built around the first JAGUAR TERRA TRAC to be sold in the UK, having removed the rear axle, to handle the torsional load from the bunker the whole sub-frame of the JAGUAR forager had to be strengthened. The 50m³ bunker unit has a chain floor system feeding into the central unloading conveyor, is fitted with weigh cells and the whole unit can be tilted for when working on slopes and to increase the loading height when filling walking floor lorries. Running on standard CLAAS forager TERRA TRAC units, it has hydraulic greedy boards so that the sides can be lowered to keep the overall height the same as the forager for transport.

For maximum traction in difficult conditions and help spread the load to reduce compaction, the Tracked Shuttle has two pivot points, one under the forager itself and the second on the bunker's TERRA TRAC bogey, so that the bunker can then be offset with its tracks running parallel to the forager's tracks. In addition to helping reduce compaction, this pivot arrangement also aids manoeuvrability and turning on the headland. To handle the increased hydraulic requirement to power both the steering, bunker TERRA TRACs and unloading

“ The 990 Tracked Shuttle will enable us to harvest crops in sub-optimal conditions when otherwise it would not be possible to do so. It avoids the need for a tractor and trailer, reduces emissions and keeps handling to a minimum as you are loading directly into lorries. ”

Jamie Rickerby



The JAGUAR 990 Tracked Shuttle has been 4 years in the making

system, the JAGUAR 990 has been fitted with a higher capacity hydraulic system and pump.

While Jamie says that the mechanical element of the conversion has been comparatively straight-forward, the same can't be said when developing the control system.

“The conversion has required a complete new control system to be developed and integrating that into the existing control system in the JAGUAR has been by far the biggest challenge,” he says. “CLAAS have been really helpful in enabling us to achieve that and without their assistance it would have been a nightmare.”

THE TRACKED SHUTTLE COULD EASILY BE USED IN OTHER CROPS

For harvesting willow, the JAGUAR 990 Tracked Shuttle will be fitted with a 2.5m-wide willow harvesting head, and the forager fitted with a standard CLAAS 20-blade chopping cylinder. However, while specifically designed for harvesting willow, Jamie says that fitted with the new V-FLEX drum, the Tracked Shuttle could easily be used in other crops.

“With the 990 Tracked Shuttle we have created a machine that will enable us to harvest crops in sub-optimal conditions when otherwise it would not be possible to do so. It avoids the need for a tractor and trailer, which often do the most damage or get stuck, it reduces labour requirement, reduces emissions and keeps handling to a minimum as you are loading direct into lorries.



The 2-pivot steering system enables the tracks to be offset to reduce compaction, and also aid manoeuvrability.

“It is crucial to trial the 990 Tracked Shuttle across a diverse range of feedstocks. We are particularly interested in working with farms, contractors, and large-scale commercial operations to test this machine on various crop types, including maize, whole crop, silage, and straw. This collaborative approach will enable us to further refine the technology and tailor it to specific requirements, ensuring its optimal performance across the sector.”

William and Andrew Marshall



Invaluable CLAAS connect

The ability to easily record and transfer data using the new CLAAS connect digital ecosystem is already paying dividends for farmer and contractor Andrew Marshall, enabling him to effortlessly record fuel and output data, both for his own farm management costings but also when tendering for contract work.

Twenty five years ago the family farm near Doncaster, which he runs with his wife Janine, mother Hazel and sons Lewis and William, did not exist and was just a green field. Today, farming a total of 100ha, the extensive range of modern farm buildings are home to a bull beef enterprise turning over around 300 cattle a year that are bought at around 400kg and taken through to around 700kg in approximately seven months. Alongside this Andrew also runs a contract flail mowing service specialising in wildlife and habitat

management, cutting everything from amenity areas on a monthly basis through to once a year cuts with vegetation up to the windscreen.

Tight financial management has been a key element in the growth of the business. Andrew explains that for the bull beef enterprise Lewis developed their own Excel based tracking and monitoring system into which every cost involved in raising cattle is recorded. In combination with a weighing system on their SCORPION telehandler to record exactly the amount of feed used, within half an hour of selling bulls at market, he knows exactly to the penny what margin they have achieved.

ENHANCING FARM MANAGEMENT

Having CLAAS connect on his new ARION 660 CMATIC will help to now take management recording a stage further. "In a season lasting from March to October, I will cut in excess of 280ha and in some places the flail mower takes as much driving as a 6.0m power harrow," explains William, who mainly drives the tractor. "Having the combination of CLAAS connect and the cruise control system on the tractor is invaluable, and the tractor already has presets for flail mowing or transport. When mowing, I set the tractor to control forward speed to maintain PTO speed to ensure quality of finish as conditions

“ CLAAS connect is just brilliant and gives you a lot of information at your fingertips providing accurate tractor costs for the beef enterprise. ”

Andrew Marshall



change, the TELEMATICS element will accurately record fuel use and work rate as the vegetation conditions change. The fact that this information is then automatically transferred back to the office makes it so simple, all I have to do is remember to press start and stop!”

Andrew adds that having that information will be invaluable in the future for accurately calculating potential operating cost for the tractor and flail when tendering for contracts. “It has also proved very useful for things like calculating transport costs, for instance when collecting animal feed, depending on the distance seeing whether it will be more economic to collect it by trailer or for it to be delivered by lorry.

“CLAAS connect is just brilliant and gives you a lot of information at your fingertips providing accurate tractor costs for the beef enterprise. There is also an important safety element as William works by himself some of the time, so it’s reassuring if I have not heard from him for a while that I can quickly see if he is still moving and where he is”.

“My late father Roy having just left school went on to work on a local farm, ploughing firstly with horse and plough then with a Grey Fergie. He drove earthmovers at a local colliery and my mother Hazel ran the rural village Post Office,” says Andrew. “As a child I started by raising a few calves, went on to work at a local farm, and then onto driving Heavy Goods Vehicles. With the support of my parents and my wife Janine we managed to buy this parcel of land in 2000 and built up the business from there.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIABLE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT

CLAAS tractors have been at the heart of his business since 2007, when he bought an ex-demonstrator ARION 620 from CLAAS EASTERN which is still on the farm today. “I started the contract work in 2005 and needed more power so approached a number of dealers about having a tractor on demo. I was impressed when I asked Trevor Ibbotson from CLAAS as to how long I could demo it for, he replied ‘call me when you are either fed up with it or want to buy it’.”

In 2011 he bought a new ARION 620 and since then as he has expanded the contract mowing operation, so he has changed tractors every few years, going up the power range, culminating in the arrival last Autumn of the new ARION 660 CMATIC with a maximum power output of 205hp.

“The fact that 18 years on we still have that original ARION 620 on the farm says everything about reliability. The back-up we have from the whole team at CLAAS EASTERN but especially Richard and his team at Markham Moor, which is about an hour away is amazing. This has been a major factor in why we have stayed with the CLAAS brand, even though there are three other dealers within ten minutes of here.

“Once again CLAAS connect is invaluable. We had an error code come up on the tractor, by the time I had phoned CLAAS EASTERN they said that they had already seen it on their monitoring systems and confirmed that it was nothing to worry about. Fantastic.”

Time saving transparency



Scott Paterson



As a small contractor, having CLAAS connect on his new ARION 630 CIS means that Scott Paterson can spend more time in the tractor and less time in the office.

“Having CLAAS connect on the tractor definitely saves me office time. Having all the job information automatically transferred to my computer or phone, makes invoicing far easier and also enables me to be completely transparent as to the time spent and the amount of fuel used on a job,” explains Scott, who set up his contracting business, Paterson Agri Services, 10 years ago aged just 19. “It’s invaluable for when smaller customers ask me at the end of a job how much they owe me, as I can provide them with an immediate accurate cost there and then. What’s also great, is if I have a problem with the tractor, it’s automatically flagged up with GORDONS so they can get me sorted as quickly as possible.”

NO JOB TOO SMALL

Based near Cumnock, Scott says that as a small contractor running just a couple of tractors, he specialises in the jobs that larger contractors typically are not interested in doing. Using an old CLAAS MARKANT 51 conventional baler bought for £1,000, he annually bales around 2,000 conventional bales, but also transports around 5,000 conventional and bought-in round bales, mainly supplying smaller sheep farmers and horse owners around South West Scotland. Having previously run a number of used tractors, Scott made the step up to buying his first new tractor last Autumn, following a CMATIC Experience day at the CLAAS Customer Experience Centre at Saxham arranged by GORDONS.

“I have always dealt with GORDONS as they have been very good to me. When I first started contracting aged 19, they were about the only dealership that took me seriously and Alistair Muir kept in touch, so it’s good that I have been able to repay that trust.

“The day spent at Saxham was fantastic and amazing to see the development and parts infrastructure they have there to support their customers.

“ The day spent at Saxham was fantastic and amazing to see the development and parts infrastructure they have there to support their customers. ”

Scott Paterson

My previous experience of a CLAAS ARION was with a ‘58 plate tractor, so the day really opened my eyes to how different the current tractors are and how CLAAS connect can help me.”

As his main tractor, in addition to baling other jobs for the 165hp ARION 630 include mowing, using a DISCO 320 mower, and topping. The tractor is also fitted with an FL120 loader, so is responsible for all handling work, and is ideal when delivering bales to smaller customers that may not have the ability to quickly offload bales, so Scott can be totally self-contained.

ARION: A SUPERIOR TRACTOR

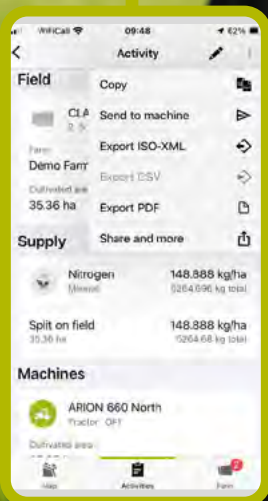
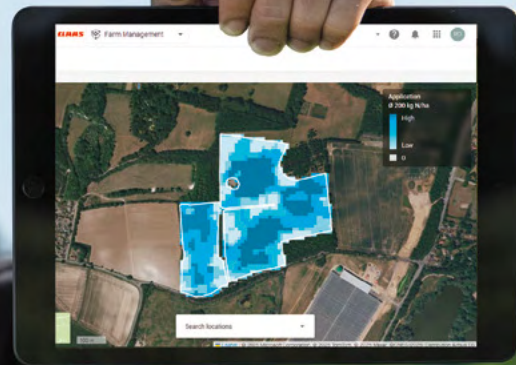
“The day at CLAAS really showed how superior the ARION is compared to what I had previously used,” says Scott. “The cab suspension means it’s really comfortable, but the combination of the front axle and loader suspension makes it really smooth when handling bales in rough fields and the visibility even when the loader is lowered is excellent.

“The ARION was also the only tractor I looked at that had a 4-speed PTO with 1,000 ECO which, in combination with being able to run the mower at 850rpm in lighter crops, helps save fuel.

“The day at Saxham and their explaining how CLAAS connect can help my business and save me time, plus the high level of support I have always had from GORDONS, were definitely the main reasons why I bought the ARION 630, and why something smaller like an ARION 400 could be ideal for when I look to replace my other tractor.”

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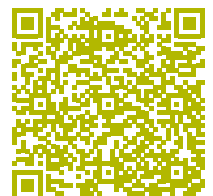
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A stepless CMATIC transmission

“The tractors have proved to be decent, dependable workhorses but it’s our relationship with HAMBLYS that really clinches the deal.”

Dan Slee

Having gone from milking 150 cows 15 years ago to over 400 today, the Slee family’s machinery requirements have grown pretty rapidly too.

While a decade ago a 140hp frontline tractor working alongside a 110hp loader tractor and an aged scraper tractor were more than capable of handling the day-to-day jobs, today there are three frontline workhorses grafting away together with a pair of telehandlers to handle the mixed workload on the 283ha farm.

“We grow a decent amount of cereals to include in the ration as well as regularly freshening up our rotational grass/clover leys, so we’re generally pretty busy with fieldwork in addition to the run-of-the-mill dairy chores,” explains Dan Slee.

“We like to do as much of the work as possible ourselves which means we need reliable kit that’s on top of the job.

We’ve always run a mix of colours on the tractor fleet but for the last decade or so we’ve settled on CLAAS ARION for our main machines.”

WHY CLAAS?

“About 12 years ago we were looking to change our frontline tractor. We had a very proactive salesman at our local CLAAS dealer, HAMBLYS, and he persuaded me to try an ARION.

“It was the right thing to do. I immediately liked its ride comfort and the intuitive control layout. So in 2013 we took the plunge with an ARION 630 and we’ve stuck with them ever since. We’ve had four to date – two 630s, a 650 and most recently a 660 with a stepless CMATIC transmission.

“The tractors have proved to be decent, dependable workhorses but it’s our relationship with HAMBLYS that really clinches the deal. They’ve got an excellent team in the workshop, the parts department and in sales. Nothing is too much effort for them – we have a bit of banter, nobody takes themselves too seriously but at the end of the day I know any issues we might have with the tractors are sorted straight away.”

POWER PLAYER

Now just over three years old, the Slee’s ARION 660 has proved not only reliable but also more than capable of pretty much anything the family throw at it. That said, the 7000-hour 2016 650 is still more than able to hold its own.

“We went for the 660 last time because we needed something capable of putting out over 200hp, particularly when working on our steep ground with a loaded slurry tanker or front and rear mowers,” explains Dan.



Dan Slee



“The 650 used to struggle in those situations but when it came out of warranty it had a bit of extra ‘help’ and will now match the 660 for most tasks. That said, extra horsepower is always welcome and I’d imagine we’ll go for more ponies with the next tractor!”

TRANSMISSION CHOICE

The key difference between the Slee’s two ARION is in the transmission department. While the nine-year-old 650 sports a six-speed, four range HEXASHIFT powershift box, the newer 660 has CLAAS CMATIC stepless CVT.

“For years we’d gone with mechanical and semi-mechanical gearboxes in our tractors, probably more because that’s what we knew rather than for any good reason. But having driven different machines of a range of varying colours equipped with stepless gearboxes, I could see the benefits a CVT could bring and so on the latest tractor we went for the CMATIC.

“I love the lazy driving style. You just flick the tractor into one of three easily tweak-able cruise control speeds and it sorts itself out, getting up to pace without any further input from me.

“On the road I hardly ever touch the throttle or brake pedals, I just leave it to its own devices, pulling back on the stick when I need to slow up.

“In the field, with the PTO running I know the transmission controller will automatically work to vary gearbox ratios to maintain a set speed at the shaft.

“It’s just such a relaxed driving experience. I personally would never go back but for the older operators on the farm who prefer to stick with what they know, the 650’s HEXASHIFT box provides that air of familiarity.”

CAB AND CONTROLS

It’s that familiarity that makes it easy for drivers to switch between the two tractors despite their different drivelines.

“I really like the touchscreen and the functionality it provides to tweak the whole control set-up. Although I tend to run all my hydraulic services through the armrest switches, having the ability to re-assign different spool-valves to the different coloured paddles is really useful, especially when using front-mounted kit like the mowers.

“The comfort the four-point cab suspension provides is unmatched, especially working in combination with the new front axle. The double-wishbone set-up on the older ARION made for a really comfortable ride but its 16 grease nipples did require quite a bit of maintenance. Having just four on the new tractor is just a breeze.”

Ease of maintenance is an important factor for Dan. With a background as a mechanic, he undertakes a lot of the fleet servicing himself.

“It’s clear in the design of the machines that CLAAS still puts thought into how straightforward it is to service its tractors and how easy it is to get hold of parts.

“The guys in the stores at HAMBLYS know exactly what you’re talking about when you ring up and ask for bits. We’re fortunate to be on the weekly delivery round so we don’t have to keep running to the depot if we don’t need to, they’re just dropped on the doorstep.”

THE FUTURE

“We’ll always look at the competition when it comes to changing our frontline tractors but the likelihood is that we’ll have another CLAAS.

“They offer a really good value for money for the horsepower and the dealer back-up is just superb – it would take something really big to make us look anywhere else.”

A real workhorse



Daniel Holliday

A diversification project enabled by the Stow Estate Trust which spans across 2,400ha in West Norfolk, Church Farm Rare Breeds Centre have recently celebrated their 20-year milestone.

“...It’s small but mighty, provides an extremely smooth ride and is extremely user-friendly when it comes to making any operator adjustments.”

Daniel Holliday

Focusing on seasonal educational animal encounters and live feeding sessions, the attraction draws between 600 to 1,000 visitors per day during the peak season.

INTRODUCING THE CLAAS ARION 420

Now home to over 12 different rare breeds of sheep including the Whitefaced Woodland (one of the rarest breed of sheep in the UK), pigs, poultry, horses, goats, alpaca and domestic pets, to name just a few, the rare breeds petting farm in Stow Bardolph have just welcomed their newest member of the family; their CLAAS ARION 420 complete with FL80 front loader from local CLAAS dealer B W MACK.

Having been desperate to replace their previous tractor, the ARION 420 has been welcomed with open arms by the whole team, which includes a combination of nine full- and part-time employees, plus volunteers from local agricultural, animal care and land-focused colleges. “We realised from the point of delivery of our previous tractor that it wasn’t fit for purpose,” explained Daniel Holliday, Farm Manager at Church Farm.



Bonny Boys
Our very handsome alpacas have come inside for a break from the weather ~ We are sure they appreciate the thought! Their names are -----
BERTIE, PEACE, HENRY, CLYDE + EARL.
Just watch out if their ears go back as they may spit at you! Do say hello though.



“The competitive machine had hydraulic, suspension and stability issues, and overall, just didn’t provide the ‘oomph’ we needed it to with the varying tasks it was put to work on around the farm.”

Their 100HP CLAAS ARION 420 now enables them to load with ease, operate balers and other implements for moving bedding around the barns on site, and will later be used for more PTO work such as hedge cutting, topping and chain harrowing during grazing periods.

ENHANCED OPERATOR COMFORT

After switching from a fixed front axle to their PROACTIV front axle machine, complete with independent wheel suspension, the overall operator comfort on the varying terrains across the farm has significantly improved.

With a maximum width of 2.5 metres and an automatic four-wheel-drive function which can reduce the turning circle by up to 8%, their new CLAAS tractor meets the demands of the tight pedestrian walkways it must navigate across the public accessed site.

“The new machine is a massive improvement in operator comfort and manoeuvrability which is key when working on our site. We have many tight corners and pedestrian width walkways joining each section of the farm. The ARION is small but mighty, provides an extremely smooth ride and is extremely user-friendly when it comes to making any operator adjustments.”

Improving operator efficiency further, the organization opted for REVERSHIFT and FLEXPLOT within their machine spec, enabling all drive, loading and hydraulic functionality to be managed using the hand control lever within the spacious cab.

Although only receiving delivery in November 2024, the firm have been running a CLAAS ARION 510 on the farm previously, which influenced the decision to add another seed-green tractor to the fleet. “The ARION 510 is a real workhorse, which we use primarily for baling work, but due to its size, we’re unable to utilise it on the petting farm which is where the ARION 420 fits in perfectly.”

“Before switching to CLAAS, the discussion of changing tractor brands was a hot topic within the breakroom. Not everyone was initially convinced by the CLAAS tractor as they had their preferred brand of tractor that they were so used to operating. That all seemed to change upon demonstrating the CLAAS though,” explained Farm Manager, Daniel.

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND VALUE FOR MONEY

“Like for like on a cost perspective, the CLAAS product gives much better value for money and higher spec based on that of competitive tractors that we’ve previously run on the farm.” Daniel continued, “You’re getting more for your money, so when the cheque book is in your hands, the trepidation and worry soon fizzles away when the reality hits that the machine can do a better job for the same cost as lower spec competitors’ tractors.”

This Farming Life

First aired in 2016 and with consistent viewing figures of up to 3 million, BBC 2's series 'This Farming Life', which follows the ups and down of farming families throughout Scotland and Northern Ireland, has proved to be perennially popular with an 8th series just commissioned.

Over 12 episodes, each series follows the lives of five farming families through the seasons, with John and Antoinette Imrie being one of those featured in the 7th series screened during 2024.

"We originally applied to be in the 6th series, but were not chosen," says Antoinette, "but then the producers contacted us again about being in the 7th series. Overall it's been a very positive experience; there's hardly been any negativity. It's been great fun to do and the crew are superb. Filming is over nine months and being a livestock farm they have to take us as they find us. We can't guarantee any dramas, and while we would plan filming of seasonal work with them, if something cropped up that might be interesting we would try and let them know, but we have a job to do and will carry on and not wait for them."

"People have been very positive about the series, but the important thing for me is that there is a lot on loneliness in farming. I am active on social media and felt that it was important not only to highlight the issues, but also sometimes people just need a familiar face to reach out to and by appearing on the show, I have had lots of messages from lonely people via Facebook."

THE NEED TO DIVERSIFY

Farming 180ha just North of Glasgow, the Imrie's run a herd of 75 suckler cattle and 440 breeding ewes, but used the programme to illustrate how they have had to diversify in order to supplement the farm income. Incentivised by their elder daughter's wedding in 2021, the Imrie's and their six children have built up a wedding business, based around a wooden framed 125m² Geodome and adjacent sail that can accommodate up to 300 people on a hillside site overlooking Glasgow, which is also the venue for an annual music festival for local young musicians; Byrefest.

Tractor power on the farm comes in the form of a 125hp ARION 510, bought from GORDONS. "In the past we have always run tractors of around 90 to 100hp and they suit this type of farm well, but the biggest problem has been that farm machinery is getting larger and heavier," says John. "Also the weather windows are getting smaller. The days of mowing



silage with a 1.5m mower are gone. We now use a 2.7m mower just to get everything down as quickly as possible and you can't get a small fertiliser spreader any longer.

A STABLE TRACTOR FOR THE HILLSIDES

"We changed to CLAAS in 2021, because as our machinery got larger, we needed a tractor to match which would also be stable when working on hillsides. All our neighbours around here seem to now run CLAAS tractors, mainly because of Finlay who looks after this area, but also the overall service and back-up from GORDONS is excellent. We helped organise a tractor run last Christmas, and ended up having nearly 100 tractors taking part, but it was very noticeable how many of them were CLAAS!"

"The ARION 510 is obviously strongly built for a reason and is a very good, all round tractor that's very reliable, will do anything but is extremely stable even on our steep ground. It's also exceptionally comfortable – the cab is a very nice spacious place to be over a long day; it's more like being in a car."



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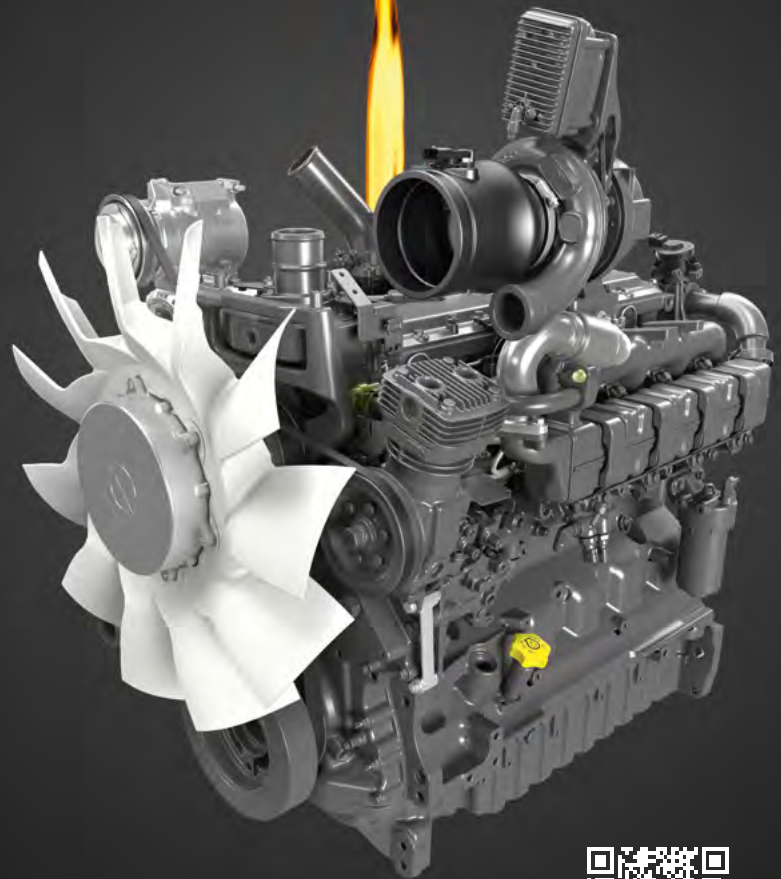
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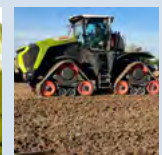
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