



M H Poskitt Ltd have seen both considerable agronomic and cost benefits since changing to a liquid fertiliser based system two years ago, with application rates determined using a CLAAS CROP SENSOR.

The company has been using roof mounted crop sensing technology for quite a few years, but made the change to the front-mounted CROP SENSOR following the decision to completely change over to liquid fertiliser.

“Due to the wide range of crops that we grow and area we cover, logistically liquid fertiliser is far easier. It involves far less handling, allows us to apply fertiliser in more difficult conditions than would be possible with granular fertiliser, and application is far more accurate, especially at the crop edges compared to a headland disc,” states Arable Manager Richard Watson.

“We decided to change from the roof-mounted system to a front-mounted sensor because personally I feel that having the sensor further in front, it gives the system more time to react. Also being vertically over the crop and closer to it, it is more accurate and it will read over a broader spectrum.”

“I chose the CLAAS CROP SENSOR on account of the excellent service and support we get from SEWARD, who are fantastic and the back-up from Agrovista, both of whom we know and work with. You have two of the biggest players in agriculture backing it up.”

The CROP SENSOR is used in combination with an Amazon UX4200 sprayer with 24m booms that is operated by Roger Venton, who is responsible for applying liquid fertiliser to the wide range of crops grown.

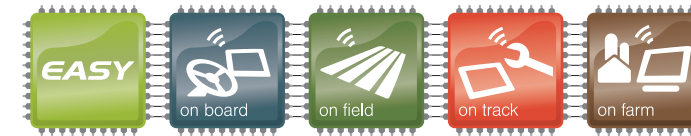
“The biggest benefit of the CROP SENSOR compared to the roof mounted system is that it gives you realtime data, will work in a far wider range of crops and is not limited by speed,” explains Roger. “Basically so long as a crop has biomass and is green, the CROP SENSOR will read it. In addition to cereals, I have tried it in grass and even used it in carrots.”

“However, one of the biggest benefits is that it does not have to be recalibrated. With the old system, by the time in each field you had set it up for the headland and the inner field, you could easily lose 20 minutes which over a large number of fields is an awful lot of lost time. By comparison with the CROP SENSOR you mount it on the tractor, turn it on and it works. Simple. It’s there all the time, ready to go. Anytime – any crop.”

In operation, basically anytime he is in a field, Roger will turn on the CROP SENSOR even if only to see how much residual nitrogen there is left after a crop. Generally cereals will get two splits of nitrogen. For instance in wheat, initially a general flat rate 180kg is applied. Then working to a total target rate of 220kg for feed wheat or up to 300kg for milling varieties such as Skyfall, the CROP SENSOR will be used for the second split with the remaining 40 or 120kg set as the top limit.

“It’s this second split where we are getting the savings, which in oilseed rape have been up to 40% at maximum dose,” says Richard. “Even compared to the old sensor, with the CROP SENSOR we are achieving far more even crops. Each year is different, but overall we are achieving savings while getting a far more accurate picture of our crops needs.”

‘You turn it on, it works. Simple.’



Arable Manager Richard Watson and operator Roger Venton have been impressed by the CROP SENSOR's ease of operation, and even when not applying fertiliser will use it to get a general overview of crop nutritional status.