

“Cost savings have to come from being more efficient.”



Matt Pickering likes The S10 because it is simple and easy to set-up and operate, plus its easy to transfer data between terminals.

Using the latest S10 terminal, F Pickering & Sons have been the first in the UK to use section control with their 8-row Vaderstad Tempo maize drill, resulting in considerable seed and cost savings.

When the latest version was introduced in 2017, the CLAAS S10 terminal was one of the first terminals to bring together the standard ISO UT (Universal Terminal) and ISO AUX (ability to allocate actions to F functions), with functions such as TC Basic (task management), TC Geo (mapping and variable applications) and TC SC (section control), which until then had required a separate terminal.

The TC SC option provides section control on up to 32 sections on a single boom, eg a sprayer, or for 50 sections on implements with multiple booms, with control of up to five different booms possible.

Based near Gainsborough in Lincolnshire, F Pickering & Sons annually drill around 720ha of maize, mainly for AD plants. When it came to changing their maize drill two years ago, a key reason for buying the Vaderstad Tempo was its ability to individually shut off each of its eight seed hoppers using TC SC.

“On a half mile long field with a half drill overlap at the headland, without being able to shut off rows you can quickly lose a bag of seed,” states Matt Pickering. “On a small acreage this is not too noticeable, but on larger areas it soon mounts up. AD plant operators look very closely at their costs, so the ability to save seed and cost by using section control was attractive.”

As ever with these things, during the 2017 drilling season transferring control from the drill’s iPad based control system to the S10 was not straightforward. Helped by the team from CLAAS EASTERN, however, and plenty of patience, they eventually cracked it.

“For 2017 we ran both the old and the new drill. At times it was very frustrating but you could see the potential and by the end of the season, customers were just asking for the new TEMPO drill.

MASSIVE SAVINGS

“For 2018 we only ran the Tempo and the section shut-off through the S10 terminal worked a treat. It was really, really good. The ‘ins and outs’ took a bit of fine-tuning but it has been brilliant.

“As a result we have seen a massive saving in seed costs for clients – at least 10%, which over a large acreage is quite significant. It also ensures greater accuracy and efficiency and our customers have been really pleased with the results. Having seen the results we have achieved with the TEMPO, our 8.0m Vaderstad drill is now up for replacement so we will be looking at using variable seed rate and section control with its replacement.”

The TEMPO is run behind an AXION 830 which is one of three 830s run by the Pickerings. They also have two XERION (a 3800 and a 4000) plus a new AXION 950 and an ARION 650 and 640. All the tractors are fitted with RTK steering, using a range of terminals from two S3s on older tractors to an S7 and five S10s on the newer tractors.

USER FRIENDLY

“The newer S10 terminals are very user friendly. We have everyone using them from 21-year-olds to my father, who originally said there was no need for steering, until he drove my tractor one day and by the next day had bought a steering system for his tractor!

“We cover a large area, ranging from Lincoln up to the Humber, but get a good strong consistent signal from the CLAAS RTK mast network. I like it that with the S10 it’s easy to save all your A-B lines and field boundaries and because we all run the same system, using a memory stick to transfer data between screens we can all run off the same A-B lines. We also have cameras linked into the screen.

“We are also starting to use variable rate P & K running the mapping through the S10 terminals. The latest terminals also all have AUTO-TURN, which is great when cultivating or drilling. Being able to set it to miss every other breed means you are not turning so tightly on the headland. Again it all comes back to accuracy and efficiency.

TELEMATICS

“We also have TELEMATICS on our two LEXION 770 combines and the newer tractors. Apart from being able to see where machines are in real time and check that they are all right, it’s handy to be able to see things like fuel and AdBlue levels. The automatic field recognition and documentation transfer facility makes record keeping so easy. The ability to automatically import information into Gatekeeper is excellent.

“As contractors we have to embrace technology and we have to keep ahead - we want to be the first in, not the last. Machinery has to be run efficiently to be cost effective. Everything is considered, but our operating costs are fairly set so any cost savings have to come from being more efficient.”



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