



# Consistent chop quality

## 2020 JAGUAR 970

While running one silage-gang can be a stressful enough at times, operating four forage-harvesters can be a fairly full-on. But with big acreages to clear and some very tight weather-windows, for Dumfriesshire contractor Drew Watson & Co. it's the only way of getting the job done.

"We've got a pretty hefty workload especially when we get into September when the combines and balers are running, there's maize to chop and some pretty heavy rows of grass to pick-up," says John Watson.

"The only way to get it done is to throw men and machines at the job. Inevitably there's a bit of pressure on but there's no point in getting stressed. Having reliable machines with more than enough capacity gives me peace of mind and ensures we can keep up no matter what the season throws at us."

This year the firm's front-line forager – a 2017 JAGUAR 970 - was swapped for a new generation JAGUAR, again a 970. With a new engine, crop intake set-up, variable speed header drive and CEBIS touchscreen controls it behaves like a very different beast.

"We were initially very sceptical about the move from a V8 motor to a straight-six but we've been proved totally wrong. The first thing you notice is how much smoother and quieter running it is.

"More importantly it's much more torquey – it hangs on in there better than the old 970 and doesn't get dragged down as easily when you hit a heavy patch."

**BUT THIS SMOOTHNESS ISN'T JUST DOWN TO THE ENGINE, CHANGES TO HOW CROP IS FED INTO THE MACHINE HAVE MADE A BIG CONTRIBUTION ON THIS FRONT TOO.**

“The move to hydraulic feed-roller tensioning has made a big difference in how material is presented to the drum. Because the mat of crop coming in is so much more compressed, you don’t get lumps making the machine surge,” explains operator Ryan Skillen.

“But really significant thing is how much more consistent our chop quality is as a result. We’ve got some customers who want long fibre up to 18mm and others running AD plants that want it minced down to 4mm. We can achieve all that with a standard 28-knive V-Max drum, safe in the knowledge the machine will alter everything itself to maintain an even chop.”

**HYDRAULIC FEED ROLLER TENSIONING HAS ALSO PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT PART IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ‘STOP-ROCK’ STONE DETECTION SYSTEM.**

“Because the feed rollers are under constant pressure and are producing a flatter mat of crop, they don’t tend to bounce as they did with springs. That’s meant we don’t tend to get as many false alerts and as a result I can run the system with higher sensitivity, picking up more of the genuine foreign objects.”

The other big contributor to chop quality and material flow through the machine is its variable speed header drive. By automatically matching it to the forward pace of the forager, the feed is smoother and the rate at which crop enters the drum more consistent. That’s helped by the new grass pick-up.

“This latest generation of pick-ups is such a step forward. The heavier duty clutch packs means it’s not as inclined to give up as readily in our big, heavy, wet rows of chewy late-season grass. That, combined with the bigger diameter auger means wrapping is no longer an issue so crop just runs up and into the feed rollers without stalling anywhere along the way.

“The ultimate result is that we’re doing the job better and we’re chopping more tonnes per hour which is critical with our tight weather-windows. We can now comfortably clear 200 tonnes an hour.”

**THESE FACTORS ARE ALSO FELT TO HAVE REDUCED WEAR AND TEAR ON BOTH THE SHEARBAR AND BLADES, ACCORDING TO THE WATSON TEAM.**

“I’m changing blades less often but when do I have to do it, access is now so much easier. I just swing the door open and I can get straight onto the drum. With no knock-back settings I just bolt the new knives on and get going again,” says Ryan.

In addition to ease of maintenance there are a number of other new features on this latest generation JAGUAR designed to make the operator’s life easier.

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**Ryan Skillen**



“The redesigned cab and controls make the new Jag so much more pleasant place to spend a day – doing 800-900 hours a year that makes a big difference.

“Not only is the cab quieter, the new CEBIS touchscreen is so much easier to set up. With the various menu pages so much quicker to access, it means I’m able to change more settings on the go, keeping the machine running at its best all the time.

“With Cam Pilot automatic row following keeping the machine on track, Dynamic Steering reducing the amount of steering wheel turns my life has become so much easier.

On top of that, with Auto Fill spout control loading trailers I can concentrate on what’s going on and keeping the machine running at maximum output. When I get out off the chopper after 14 long hours in the seat I’m definitely not as tired.”

# Why CLAAS?

**IT IS THE COMBINATION OF ALL THESE FEATURES THAT ADD UP TO MAKING THE JAGUAR 970 A FRONTLINE MACHINE THAT IS CAPABLE OF COVERING SOME SERIOUS ACREAGES.**

“Ultimately with the tricky weather patterns and heavy grass in our corner of south west Scotland we’ve got to have the capacity to cover the ground when we need to,” says John Watson.

“With all the new features on this latest CLAAS forager it’s become a whole lot more achievable. When you know you can process 200 tonnes of grass in an hour you’ve got peace of mind that you can do the job properly and in good time for your customers.”



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