

# Fulfilling great expectations

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Kit Papworth, Norfolk, August 2020, LEXION 8700 TT.







When it arrived on farm early last summer, there were big expectations for LF Papworth’s new LEXION 8700. Replacing a pair of CLAAS Hybrids – a 750 and 760, it needed to be capable of comfortably handling the workload previously dealt with by two machines – some 1,300ha (3,212 acres) of combinable crops.

Having completed its second season for the north Norfolk business, it has more than lived up to those expectations.

“Having a minimum of two combines run up to 2018, I must admit I had my reservations about moving to a single machine,” says Kit Papworth.

“But the CLAAS team were confident this latest generation of LEXION was up to the job and I trust their judgment. There were massive

efficiency gains to be had by going down that route, but with 26 contract farming customers to keep happy I had to be sure whatever we went with would comfortably do the job.”

HOW HAS THE 8700 PERFORMED?

“Last year’s harvest pretty quickly proved the new combine was capable of meeting our requirements and more.

“Previously with our 750 and 760 running together we’d be averaging 50 tonnes an hour coming into store. With the 8700 running solo it’s closer to 60 tonnes an hour. I’ll admit I was initially nervous about switching from two machines to one, but the new combine exceeded my expectations.

“All that output is great but you’ve got to have the quality to match it. The sample produced by the 8700 is streets ahead of anything else. Everything going into our bins always goes through the cleaner first which used to be a bottleneck.

“Because what’s coming off the combine is so trash-free, we can run the cleaner at a pace to match it.

“What we really like is that we’ve now got the flexibility to match crop conditions – if harvest is going well we can bias it much more towards cleanliness. If we’re up against it we can just tell the CEMOS auto settings computer to go for flat-out output. Even then the sample comes back virtually spotless.

“It’s so good that this year we’ve even drilled rape with seed straight out of the combine.”

CEMOS AUTO SETTINGS

“We had CEMOS on previous combines but to be brutally honest I was very sceptical of it. I just wasn’t convinced it could do as good a job as our main man Patty who’s just completed his 50th harvest with us.

“This new version however is a different beast altogether. It makes the combine a really smart machine, altering settings constantly throughout the day to find that perfect balance between output, losses and sample quality.





No matter how good the operator, he can't hope to match that consistently through a 12-hour working day.

"The biggest challenge we've had this harvest has been the ultra dry conditions. Going on last season's performance we knew we were best to let the machine sort itself out. Patty now has complete faith in letting the computer do its job. The results speak for themselves."

QUANTIMETER

"The new Quantimeter yield monitoring system is a serious step forward. Last harvest our total tonnage going out of store was within 1% of what the combine had recorded.

"It's transformed the way we view yield maps and has given us the faith to accurately use it as the basis for breaking down what each of our contract farms has produced.

"It also makes harvest logistics easier and we're a better seed producer as a result. Critically it's meant we haven't had to shell out £40,000 on a weighbridge."

WHY CLAAS?

"The back-up we get from our local MANNs dealership is absolutely

second-to-none and that's recently got even better with their new depot.

"Their service has always been to a very high standard and as a business we rely on that and measure others against it as a benchmark. In truth they're the only firm locally we'd have the faith in to back up such a critical machine as a combine.

HAS THE 8700 BEEN RELIABLE?

"Over the last two harvests we haven't had a single issue that's stopped us. In fact, the only time we've seen a fitter is to add upgrades.

"As a pre-production machine last year it had a whole range of mods over the winter to bring it up to speed. It's great to see a company like CLAAS so clearly committed to making continual improvements."

WOULD YOU HAVE ANOTHER?

"Without any shadow of a doubt we would have another 8700 but we like this one so much that we want to keep it as long as possible.

"To be honest I struggle to see how CLAAS can improve on it further."

A GOOD HALF CENTURY

Patty Gwilliam has just completed his 50th harvest at LF Papworth and is very much viewed as a top-flight operator locally.

"We're incredibly lucky to have someone as competent and experienced in the seat as Patty. He and his dad were the only two people trusted to drive our first CLAAS combines back in the 1970s and it's a real pleasure that we've also got his son Roger working here," says Kit Papworth.

"They're a really hard-working, conscientious and talented family. They treat the business like their own – when there's a job to be done, they get on and see it through to the end. I just hope we can persuade Patty to stay on for another half century!"

FARM FACTS

FARM	LF Papworth Ltd, near Norwich, Norfolk
FARMED AREA	1,700ha (4,200 acres)
CROP	Winter wheat 500ha (1235 acres), OSR 400ha (988 acres), spring barley 200ha (494 acres), winter barley 200ha (494 acres), vining peas 70ha (173 acres), potatoes 200ha (494 acres), sugar beet 130ha (321 acres)
STOCK	250 finishing cattle
STAFF	Tim and Kit Papworth plus eight others full-time



Patty Gwilliam.