

Running smoothly

Having run VARIO cutterbars on LEXION combines for the last two decades the team at Essex arable outfit GA Stevenson know the potential these headers have to offer. No surprise then that the business was selected to evaluate a pre-series VARIO 1380 this season.



Paul Woodhouse

"Being able to raise and lower the table auger according to the density of the crop has proved a brilliant feature this season," says LEXION 8900 operator Paul Woodhouse. "By only raising the centre it better handles the mat of crop as it thickens as it is drawn to the middle of the table. Previously I'd be adjusting the stripper bars on

the old header to try and adapt to changing crop conditions but now I'm able to tweak it constantly on the move.

"The impact of that is that it irons out lumps and bumps to keep the whole machine running more smoothly. As the dew comes down in the evening and crop starts to wrap on the auger I just lower it gently to bring the stripper bars into play and to stop lumps forming at the intake.

"I've been surprised by the impact that this one feature has had – we're definitely getting more output as a result of being better able to manage the flow of material into the threshing gear."

KNIFE DRIVE

"Doing away with shear-bolts and using a clutch for overload protection on the knife drive means it's less inclined to kick out too early but critically it will trip out when it needs to. The drive itself seems smooth and less noisy than before."

SIDE-KNIVES

"Being so much lighter and without hoses or electrics to connect up, the new side-knives are so much easier and quicker to take on and off.

"The beauty of them is that you don't need to take them off as often because you can draw both the reel and VARIO table right back with them still attached. That's great for transport and in shorter crops.

"Being shorter themselves they have less of a tendency to make contact with the ground and the mechanical drive means they've less of a tendency to stall. All round they're a huge improvement."

REEL DRIVE AND HEIGHT CONTROL

"The new hydraulic reel drive seems better able to maintain an even speed whether the combine is altering its forward pace or when the reel comes under load when you're hooking crop up off the deck.

"It was only when we got into some really flat laid oats this season that we saw the auto reel height control working.

"By monitoring back-pressure in the hydraulic reel-drive – or tractive effort – it can raise the reel if it feels it's getting overloaded. While that's good in normal situations, being able to adjust the sensitivity of the system means that if you really need to bury the tines into a laid crop to scoop it off the deck, you can."



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