

Data recording JAGUAR



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James Faulkner

Investing in their own JAGUAR 970 forage harvester has given Robert Davidson & Sons (RDS) total control when harvesting the maize and rye crops grown for a nearby gas-to-grid AD plant.

Between themselves and a neighbouring farm, RDS supply up to 40,000 tonnes of silage for the AD plant, developed by nearby crisp makers Fairfield Farms to provide renewable energy for their cold stores and crisp factory.

RDS, based at Peldon near Colchester, farms 1,600ha of which maize and rye account for up to 230ha. To have more control over harvesting and timing, the company decided two years ago to take harvesting in-house, initially hiring a self-propelled forager before investing in their own JAGUAR 970 for last season, equipped with a DIRECT DISC and ORBIS 900 maize header.

“By hiring for a season, this gave us the opportunity to just look at what was on the market and to have the three main foragers in on demonstration,” explains Director James Faulkner.

THE JAGUAR STOOD OUT

Of the three foragers that they tried, he says that the JAGUAR stood out on account of its output, low fuel consumption and quality of chop. However, what also set it apart was the performance from the 970's straight-6 MAN engine, even though at 790hp it was the smallest of those demoed. With a displacement of almost 3 litres per cylinder, a particular characteristic of this engine is the 3,400Nm of torque it delivers at 1350rpm that is sustained over a wide speed range, combined with a fuel consumption as low as 0.41 l/tonne in trials.

“The engine on the JAGUAR 970 is very impressive. I originally thought that we would need a forager with a big, high power ‘torquey’ engine, but the straight-6 on the JAGUAR just pulls like a train. You set it at 100% and it will just keep hanging on forever.

“The JAGUAR ticked an awful lot of boxes and it’s a very nice place to be when harvesting. Also you can’t ignore the long history of CLAAS foragers, along with our close proximity to Saxham and MANNIS for service and support.”

ON-FARM TRIALS

Not content with just growing crops, James also conducts a wide range of on-farm trials to get a better understanding of which are his ‘banker’ varieties and those that are best suited to the farm and its heavy soils alongside the Blackwater Estuary, where last year yields of up to 53 tonnes/ha were recorded. “We are lucky that we have high heat units here. By growing rye on the lighter land and the maize on the heavier soils, this ensures the maize has more moisture over the summer. On the heaviest soils we do use early varieties so harvest typically will start the first week of September so that we can then get wheat in afterwards.”

In order to provide a wide range of chop lengths, the JAGUAR has been fitted with a 36-blade V-MAX knife drum. “When chopping at 6mm for AD, although spot throughput rates can be up to 300 tonnes an hour, the average is nearer 200, rising to 400 tonnes when chopping at 14mm.”

To help him gain variety data, among the options selected, the JAGUAR was specified with TELEMATICS, NIR sensing and QUANTIMETER throughput monitoring, in addition to AUTOFILL.

“I am keen to learn as much as I can about growing maize and have been really impressed by the accuracy of the data from the JAGUAR,” states James. “When we have compared the weights recorded with those from the weighbridge, there has only been about 1-2 percent difference. The information I get from TELEMATICS is invaluable, and by having DATA CONNECT I really like the fact that I can see not only our tractors, but also the sprayer over the CLAAS system. For foraging it makes planning so much easier. The yield and quality data will also be invaluable when assessing variety performance. And by being able to accurately record the yield, this has allowed me to charge on the basis of yield and distance, which is more accurate and provides flexibility.”