

Wheels over tracks



Jonny Williams and Aaron Kew

Rockscape Contract Services have seen fuel costs reduce by 30% and by £10 per engine hour since moving to a 509hp XERION 5000.

Having in the past relied on high powered four-track and half-track tractors, with the change in crop establishment policy, Farm Business Manager Aaron Kew and his team at Rockscape took the opportunity to reassess their machinery and tractor needs. They looked at all the high powered wheeled and tracked options before taking delivery of a 509hp XERION 5000 last Spring.

"Of all the tractors we looked at, it ultimately came down to the greater versatility of the XERION. With its four equal sized wheels with variable tyre inflation, when weighted up correctly it has the ability to put a lot of power to the ground," explains Aaron. "We have had it fitted with AxioBib 900 tyres which on the flat gives the XERION the

pulling power of a higher powered tracked tractor. I also like the fact we can weight it up for serious traction when heavy cultivating, but in half an hour can strip all the weight off for top work.

FUEL EFFICIENCY

"However the biggest selling point for me is the XERION's fuel efficiency. On top end work, such as when pulling a 6.0m Grange tool bar in combination with a Vaderstad Rexius or Sumo Quattro, we are seeing savings of between 10% to 15% compared to an equivalent 4-track tractor. On lighter top work, we are getting savings of 25% to 30% and it's using less fuel than a 480hp half-track. Overall, the XERION is working out at £10 per engine hour cheaper than a 4-track tractor, which over the 1000 hours it will do a year is quite a saving."

"The fuel efficiency of the XERION is amazing," adds operator Jonny Williams, who has considerable experience of operating high horsepower tractors. "Even on heavy cultivating the XERION is rarely much above 90 litres an hour, whereas the 4-track would have been well into the 100's."

Based at Crowle in North Lincolnshire, in addition to contract work, Rockscape farm and contract farm 2,200ha over a wide range of soils, including low lying warp land. With the water table never far below the soil surface the ability to tread lightly over the soils and avoid compaction is important if the soil structure is to be maintained and improved.

EVEN WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

"Because the weight of the XERION is so evenly spread between the four wheels, even when running the tyres at 0.6 bar for cultivating, the overall weight is better supported, there is far less tyre deflection than there would be on a

conventional tractor where more of the weight is being carried on the rear axle," states Jonny.

"As we move away from ploughing to low disturbance sub-soil and minimal cultivations, and we ultimately start moving towards a 12m CTF system, even when fully weighted up its important that we keep compaction to a minimum and, because the XERION treads so lightly it will avoid the issue of having to remove wheelings," comments Aaron.

IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

"The Grange toolbar soaks up a lot of power, but the performance from the XERION is impressive. The TELEMATICS system is brilliant and more than pays for itself with all the data it provides and the information that I can pull off it for invoicing."

In addition to the overall cab space and visibility, XERION operator Jonny has been particularly impressed with the new CEBIS



Touchscreen terminal and how easy it is to use. "I absolutely love the CEBIS screen. At first it was a bit daunting, but once you find your way around it's so easy to use. For accessing and storing settings, to just touch the feature you want and get straight into the settings without scrolling through numerous windows makes it very user friendly. It has to be one of the best on the market now.

"Overall, the XERION is a very impressive machine and you can't compare it to a 4-track or half-track. It's a unique machine that is fantastic at what it does."



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