

A new 'comfy pair of slippers'

The CLAAS SCORPION telehandler range has come on a long way in the past 12 years as TE & MM Kidd have found, having just replaced their SCORPION 6030 with one of the first of the new Stage V SCORPION 741VP with a VARIPOWER 2 transmission.

"The old SCORPION 6030 was like a comfy pair of slippers," comments Neil Kidd. "You felt at home in it. It was reliable, easy to use and you just knew where everything was. We kept on putting off replacing it because we could never find anything that we felt could better it. But at 12 years old the time had finally come."

CLAAS telescopic handlers have been in use on the Kidd's' 150ha dairy farm near Lancaster for many years. The first to be supplied by RICKERBY was a CLAAS TELEPORTER built at Saxham, which was run for 7 years before being replaced by the SCORPION 6030. Alongside these, RICKERBY has also supplied the farm with tractors since 2007, with the farm currently running a '14 and '19 plate ARION 650, plus a JAGUAR 860 and a lot of other miscellaneous machinery.

EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS

"RICKERBY look after us very well and we have got on very well with CLAAS, so we have never seen the need to go elsewhere," says Neil who farms with his father Fred and brother David. "We had a demo of the 'Mark 1' Leibherr built SCORPION, which was good but at that stage didn't do enough to persuade us to change. So when we approached Robert (Bell) about finally replacing the 6030, because of the relationship we have with him, we took it on trust when he explained about all the new features and being a new model we knew that both RICKERBY and CLAAS would support us.

In the event, any nerves have quickly evaporated as the SCORPION 741, which is powered by a 136hp Deutz engine and has a 4.1 tonne lift capacity and the ability to reach to 6.93m, has exceeded their expectations and quickly proved itself a worthy replacement.

"Going up in size has given us considerably more capacity and reach," says Neil. "You always want that little bit more, but it's surprising how much difference that extra metre makes."

Drive is through the new VARIPOWER 2 twin motor transmission, which is similar to the one used in the JAGUAR. This comprises two hydrostat motors inside a compact housing and has three driving ranges, but does away with the need for transfer gears, which ensures a high degree of reliability. The housing oil is

also continuously extracted from the drive housing by a powerful venturi tube, which considerably reduces churning losses for greater efficiency and a reduction in noise.

"It's certainly a lot quieter than the old gearbox. It's a great improvement," confirms Neil. "It's far more reactive and relaxing to drive. With the old 6030 you would plant your foot down and then wait for it to react. With the 741 the reaction is instant and it takes off. There is also considerably more lugging, pushing and climbing power. Again with the old 6030 if you stopped when climbing the clamp it could take a while to get going again, but the 741 is just instant and the extra size and weight makes no difference. It's also a lot quieter on the road and you can definitely feel the difference when you start climbing a hill as it just keeps pulling without any die-back."

The SCORPION 741 comes with a 160 litre, 270 bar hydraulic system, which again has made a noticeable difference. "Operating the SCORPION is effortless. Because it has so much hydraulic power you never need to rev the engine when raising the boom or using the sheargrab. To make use of the extra capacity we bought a larger sheargrab and filling the diet feeder is certainly quicker.

RIGID AND MORE STABLE

"Even though it is bigger, it's a lot more stable, the boom more rigid and the visibility not only to the front but also to the rear is great, which is important when working in the yard. But it's the small things that make the difference. The cab layout is a lot simpler and clearer. I like the fact that the fan now reverses automatically and being able to just press a button to de-pressurise the hydraulics is far better. I was initially unsure about the auto handbrake, but now it just doesn't register and is a great safety improvement. And I also was not sure about having the safety grill inside the cab, but of course that now means you can easily clean the upper part of the windscreen which was very difficult before. And the heated seat is a real bonus!" concludes Neil on what will hopefully become his new 'comfy pair of slippers'.



Neil Kidd (left) with brother David



“The cab layout is a lot simpler and clearer, and the heated seat is a real bonus!”

Neil Kidd