

Ideal mixed farm tractor



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Don Ingles

“The ARION has been a great little tractor - I love it. It does everything from haulage work to doing all the cultivations and drilling, using a one-pass drill. And having the front linkage has been worth every penny – why I didn’t have that before on tractors I don’t know as it gives the tractor that bit more versatility. For drilling, I have a front press on there, which in combination with the one-pass drill on the back helps retain moisture.

“My policy is to change both the tractor and the handler at five years old, by which time they will have done around 5-6,000 hours. This means they are still an attractive deal, so I can keep on top of the cost to change while keeping pace with technology, and because it’s mainly been covered by warranty, there are no nasty surprises so I have a fairly accurate operating cost to budget with.”

Until three years ago, Don ran a dairy herd on the 180ha farm near Broadway in Worcestershire, which he had built up to 320 cows. He then made the difficult decision to get out of dairying and sold the herd. “I miss them a lot, but it’s far less stress and my working day

is far shorter now,” he says.

The relationship Don Ingles has with his local dealer is pivotal to his machinery choices.

“By and large most tractors and machinery are pretty reliable and over the last 10 to 15 years dealerships have become far more professional, so it really comes down to personalities. Farming is a people business so the relationship I have with the people I do business with is very important to me.”

Don’s relationship with CLAAS goes back many years to when the farm first had a JAGUAR 61 forager, which was followed by a number of JAGUAR 75’s. But it is only in the last five years that he has firstly bought an ARION 440 from Ed Parker at CLAAS Western at Evesham, which has subsequently been followed by a SCORPION 7030.

“I know that if I ever have a problem, that Ed and the service team at Evesham will do their utmost to get me going – and they have never let me down yet,” states Don.

ROTATIONAL MIXED FARM SYSTEM

Even with no cows, Don has retained his mixed farming system based around a rotation of 2-year leys, going into maize and then winter wheat. “I still farm exactly the same way as I did before, but instead I now supply silage to other local dairy farms, the maize goes to a local AD plant and I get digestate in return. I also buy in straw for baling, about half of which is sold locally and the rest mainly goes into Wales.

“The system works and I have a market for everything. Because of the rotation and the inherent fertility from the years of muck being applied, I need no P and K, I can grow a 10 tonne crop of wheat with only about 180 units of N and I can get up to 5 cuts of grass from the leys. The only problem is maize, which yields about 15 to 20 tonnes depending on soils, but it fits the rotation well, does the soil good and by having the digestate back from the AD plant that replaces the cow muck, so will certainly help keep my fertiliser usage as low as possible.”