

CLAAS CMATIC – Geared for Growth

To improve productivity and efficiency, one Berkshire contract farming business has switched completely from powershift gearboxes to CLAAS CMATIC CVTs.

Nine years ago Philp Farming took delivery of its first CLAAS tractor – an AXION 940.

Equipped with a stepless transmission, the 385 hp prime mover quickly established itself as a smooth-working, efficient performer both in the field and on the road.

For six years it worked alongside another cultivations tug of a different colour, equipped with a powershift gearbox. When that tractor was due for a change, there was little debate – its replacement would be another CLAAS CMATIC, this time an AXION 830.

“On the road the CVT gearbox is just a pleasure to drive. From a comfort point of view these machines are simply fantastic.”



A man with dark hair, wearing a grey polo shirt, is shown in profile, talking on a black mobile phone. He is looking upwards and to the left. The background is a blurred construction site with a yellow excavator and a sign that says "CLAMP".

Nick Philp

AXION 940 & 830

plus ARION 660 CMATIC

Near Maidenhead, Berkshire,

April 2022

Convinced by CMATIC

“The 940 proved to us that CVT gearboxes are not only the way forward for primary cultivations and drilling tractors, but also for other work too. In fact they make these big lumps a whole lot more versatile.

“Having clocked 5,500 hours, the 940 had proved a solid, reliable machine and critically was ultra efficient both in terms of fuel use and daily outputs. On that basis we were able to take a step down in power, swapping 310 hp for an AXION 830 with just 235 hp under the hood. It proved a good decision, saving us yet more fuel and limiting our impact on the soil, having moved to a much less intensive crop establishment regime, mixing no-till and min-till where we can.”

Firmly convinced by the value in CLAAS' CMATIC gearboxes, when it came to sourcing a light weight all-rounder last year, Mr Philp had little hesitation in selecting an ARION 660 furnished with the time-proven stepless transmission.

“Weighing in at 8 tonnes and being able to boost to over 200 hp the 660 is a genuine pocket-rocket and has surprised us by just how versatile it is. This Spring it's been pulling our 6 m tine drill – that just wouldn't be possible with a tractor of this size with a conventional gearbox.

Driving down running costs

“Its versatility is going to prove very useful in driving down our machinery running costs. We're hoping it will be able to take on a lot of the work of the bigger tractors, reducing the workload for the nine year old 940 and, hopefully, extending its working life accordingly.

“It's brilliant for jobs like fertiliser spreading, but also on the road the CVT gearbox is just a pleasure to drive. From a comfort point of view these machines are simply fantastic – you could quite happily live in any of our tractors!”

The transmission gets top marks from both seasoned operators and less experienced drivers alike – all able to get the most from the CMATIC-equipped tractors.

“Our main guys will access the various settings menus to tweak gearbox settings and really push for that extra acre-per-litre,” says Mr Philp.

“But when I jump on, I just let the tractor run with the factory settings and the computer works it all out for itself. And, in combination with our move towards no-till, that's had a huge impact on our overall diesel use per acre. Draft requirements are reduced and the CVTs mean the tractors are never stretched and screaming their nuts off – it's a whole lot more refined.”

Why CLAAS tractors?

“Our guys actively want to drive CLAAS kit. They see it as a premium product, take pride in using it and look after it accordingly.

“We've had CLAAS combines since the early 1980s and know just how well the gear is put together. More important than that, we're looked after by our local dealer – OLIVERS – incredibly well, whether it's sales, service or parts. It's that last bit that's critical – the storemen are key and they really know their business.

“With all their staff we have strong personal relationships – we're not treated like a number and if something needs sorting we just pick up the phone, talk to someone and we can consider it problem solved.”



Farm Facts

Philp Farming Ltd, near Maidenhead, Berkshire

Farmed area

1,200 ha

Machinery

ARION 660 and
AXION 940 & 830
CLAAS LEXION 770

Cropping

Winter wheat 600 ha	Winter barley 100 ha
Spring beans 120 ha	Spring peas 40 ha
Spring wheat 120 ha	Spring oats 20 ha
OSR 100 ha	Spring barley 16 ha

Staff

Nick and David Philp plus two full-timers and one extra at harvest.



Dealership
OLIVERS

CLAAS

“The 940 proved to us that CVT gearboxes are not only the way forward for primary cultivations and drilling tractors but also for other work too.”

Nick Philp, April 2022

