Using technology to boost productivity

Investing in their own JAGUAR 970 forager is the first step taken by Bubney Farms to fully maximise homegrown forage for their high yielding herd.

Based near Whitchurch in Shropshire, making high quality silage is of prime importance to Andrew Evans and his team at Bubney. Looking after a milking herd of 2,150 cows, 1,850 can be in milk at any one time, yielding 12,500 litres. In addition, there are a further 1,400 followers that also need their winter feed.

Until now, Andrew has relied on contractors for harvesting the 376ha of grass, mainly 3-4 year leys, and 640ha of maize they grow, with a further 280ha of maize grown under contract. But it was in order to gain more control over the harvesting operation that he took the decision to invest in his own forager, buying an ex-demo JAGUAR 970 through local dealer MORRIS CORFIELD. One of the attractions of the machine was the fact that it is fully equipped with TELEMATICS, yield mapping and QUANTIMETER throughput monitoring.

OUR OWN FORAGING TEAM

“By having our own foraging team, the aim is that we will take up to five cuts of silage over the 376ha of grass on a regular 35 day cycle. With the best will in the world, a contractor would not be able to give you that commitment.

“Before buying we looked at all options and hired a machine in. Ultimately it came down to the support I know we will get from MORRIS CORFIELD, which is important, and the fact that the JAGUAR 970 was available and specified to a high standard. Another major influence was the eventual resale value of the forager and also that Simon, who drives it, has past experience of operating JAGUAR.

“The technology on board the JAGUAR will enable me to gain a far better idea of harvesting and production cost, but also give a far better picture of the crops, how they are performing and areas we need to look at in order to fully maximise production.”

The QUANTIMETER throughput monitoring system records the deflection of the upper rear precompression roller, in combination with the intake speed and width, to measure crop flow. “Overall it’s surprisingly accurate,” says machinery manager Simon Hankey, who operates the forager. “I calibrate it in the morning and afternoon and check it against our weighbridge, but it’s usually within 100kg.”

Another reason for regularly calibrating the QUANTIMETER is that this allows Simon to apply additive at a tonnage rather than an hourly rate. “By having the combination of the QUANTIMETER and TELEMATICS, application is far more accurate and I can be confident that the 1 litre per tonne rate is being accurately applied and always spot on. Having to previously apply additives on an hourly rate was always a bit vague.”

Andrew adds that with contract crops being bought by the tonne, another big advantage of having TELEMATICS and the QUANTIMETER is that this provides an exact record of what has been harvested, and ultimately the total tonnage in the clamps.

“It makes it all so easy having all that data being automatically recorded, stored and immediately available through TELEMATICS, so that we can come back to it later in the year. We have tried in the past but with a paper based system it was just impossible to achieve.

“By using the yield map and all the other data that TELEMATICS records, I can then use this information to sit down with the agronomist and start identifying fields or parts of fields that are not performing. We can then look at how we subsequently manage them in order to maximise yield and boost performance so as to get the most out of what’s there.”

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Simon Hankey

Andrew Evans (left) and operator Simon Hankey look to make the most of the technology fitted to their JAGUAR 970