

Maximum output with minimum wastage



Chris Heal

Running a grain cleaning and treatment business that sees some 100,000 tonnes pass through the gates each year, the Heal family are kept pretty busy year-round. But it's at harvest that the pressure can really ramp up.

With lorries coming and going, the treatment plant running flat-out and some 300 ha of crops to cut of their own, the team have their work cut out. To ease the pressure somewhat last year the South Gloucestershire business upped its harvesting capacity, swapping out an eight year-old TUCANO 450 for a new TRION 650.

"We'd been looking at upgrading for a while and then I got a call from our salesman to say a 2021 stock machine had become available. It represented a massive saving over a 2022 machine, so an opportunity not to be missed, particularly given the attractive trade-in price for our old machine. It made good business sense."

HOW HAS THE TRION 650 PERFORMED?

"We're getting significantly more daily output due to the bigger drum and sieving area which means we're better able to take advantage of the harvest weather windows. Our driver – Alan – keeps a very close eye on losses and happily reports very little grain left on the ground.

"We've always found that our CLAAS combines have produced an excellent sample and the TRION is no exception to this, saving on wastage and cleaning."

TELEMATICS

“Having TELEMATICS on the new combine has made a huge difference to me in managing harvest logistics,” explains Annalisa.

“Being mainly office-based, I can access the system any time of day from my PC. This is a great help during harvest, being able to locate the combine at any point so that we can plan, knowing when we’re going to need to refuel or have trailers ready for emptying.”

“For a number of years we’ve been doing variable rate drilling and fertiliser applications with the aid of soil mapping. Having yield maps generated through TELEMATICS now completes the circle for us, aiding us to build an overall picture of how the soil and crops are performing.”

STRAW AND CHOP QUALITY

“Being a six-walker machine the TRION 650 has the output we need but is still kind on the straw. That’s really important to us as it’s an essential income stream for our business,” says Annalisa.

“That said, in an effort to try and improve soil health through building organic matter, we’re now chopping more than ever before. To that end the chopper unit on the new combine is a revolution. It makes a really uniform job across the full 25ft cut width, actively blowing the chopped material down into the stubble so that it isn’t affected by cross-winds.”

DRIVER BENEFITS

“The new design of cab and controls have proved easy to master. Alan, our man in the driving seat, has been working with us for over 30 years and has taken to it very quickly. He’s particularly happy with the comfort offered by the new cab on the TRION.

“Having Fieldscanner steering means he’s able to concentrate on what the combine is doing rather than on where it’s going. We’re convinced that’s a big factor in why we’re getting so much out of the TRION. And, at the end of the day you come off the combine feeling relaxed, fresh and looking forward to the next working day.”

WHY CLAAS?

“We have an absolutely brilliant relationship with CLAAS WESTERN at Cirencester. I’ve dealt with them for over 30 years and the back-up is beyond expectations,” says Chris.

“Our sales rep Richard Hutchinson has become a close friend over the decades and the rest of the team are always on hand when needed. If we need parts one of them will generally drop them in on their way home – you can’t ask for better service than that.

“Off the back of that, not only do we run a CLAAS combine but we also have a full fleet of CLAAS tractors. Our drivers find them simple to operate and critically they’re solid, reliable machines.”



Business Facts

CG&D Heal Ltd near Bristol

Farmed area

300 ha

Cropping 2021

Winter wheat 162 ha

Winter barley 35 ha

Oilseed rape 28 ha

Spring beans 27 ha

Remainder in mid-tier stewardship, woodland and conservation

Contract grain storage

30,000 tonnes plus a further 100,000 tonnes/year grain cleaning and treatment

Staff

Chris, Di and Annalisa Heal plus 1 general manager, 1 combine/sprayer/tractor driver and 3 staff working at harvest or in grain treatment plant as required.



Annalisa Heal