

Arable cropping in quick time

With some 90,000 hungry mouths to feed each year, the team at JSR Farms in East Yorkshire need to be able to clear their 2,400 ha of arable cropping in quick time. While it might be the pigs that bring home the bacon, the home-grown crops provide the essential raw ingredients in their ration.

Two combines are used to get them safely in the shed – a 2018 LEXION 780 with 12.3m VARIO header and a brand new LEXION 8800 equipped with a 12.3m CONVIO cutterbar. It replaced a ten-year-old 770 this season after a series of demonstrations last harvest.

“We had a selection of brands here on demo last year. We wanted to give them all a fair chance to prove themselves alongside our existing machines,” explains trainee farm manager Will Jones.

“There are certainly cheaper machines out there but with CLAAS combines you know what you’re getting – you know they’ll cut the acreage required whatever the conditions. And, crucially for us being pig producers, the straw quality out the back of the LEXION is streets-ahead of any other high output machine.

“But what really won us over was the effect of the CONVIO belt-fed header. The cutterbar is no longer the limiting factor when things begin to get damp – you can truly drive the combine to its maximum capacity. By presenting everything ear-first you can keep the machine full – that smooth, even crop flow impacts on everything from sample cleanliness and fuel usage to straw quality and overall daily output.”

HOW HAS THE 8800 PERFORMED?

“The larger APS drums and concaves have really refined things. Aside from the increased output, there are no grumblings or vibrations even when things start to get damp,” says operator Tom Sissons.

“In the evenings returns levels on the 780 will tend to rocket and that very quickly becomes your limiting factor – it’s never an issue on the 8800. And that plays out in the sample – it’s noticeably better than the older combine when the trailers tip up side-by-side.

“At the backend the extra set of bomb-doors really helps to keep on top of rotor losses too. The whole package adds up to a better job done.”

CONVIO FLEX

“In laid or brackled spring barley we often find our conventional VARIO header will pull up whole plants as well as soil and stones due to having to run the reel so low.



Will Jones

“The plastic skids on the CONVIO means nothing hangs up and it just seems to float over the ground. Crucially being belt-fed there is no issue with crop feed when things begin to get damp with the result that I can keep going much longer than the 780 with its VARIO cutterbar.”

FIELDSCANNER STEERING

“With the sensor mounted on the roof of the cab looking down to either side of the header the Fieldscanner steering system is really handy.

“It’ll happily follow a curved path round the headland and when striking out you just set it to follow a tramline and cruises on, arrow-straight. With its little built-in wipers, dust is no issue. Critically it means the header’s always full and there are no skinny part-runs at the end of each block.”



GRAIN HANDLING

“The new unloading auger is just brilliant. The pivoting spout means I can accurately direct the flow of grain and being able to shut the speed down to half-rate means that in our shallower root-crop trailers grain isn't bouncing out over the sides.”

CAB AND CONTROLS

“The LEXION cab has been long overdue an overhaul and CLAAS have delivered. It is so much more roomy, visibility is better and it's quieter. The new touchscreen CEBIS terminal is much more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

“Of course it now integrates the CEMOS auto settings system which has proved to be a big improvement. When I started out with the new combine I had it all turned off and was doing 75-80 tonnes an hour. Switching it on and letting it do its constant fine-tuning, that figure leapt to over 90 tonnes an hour - I haven't run without it since.”

“Running the 780 alongside the 8800, the new combine will comfortably clear 10-15 ha more each day. That's all down to a combination of factors – the bigger threshing gear, the CONVIO header and the CEMOS Auto system.”

WHY CLAAS?

“Both here and in my previous roles I have never experienced anything less than impeccable service from CLAAS dealers,” says Will.

“They always seem to have good lads in the vans and should anything go wrong that can't be fixed straightaway you know there's a back-up machine on standby.

Farm Facts

JSR Farms near Driffield, East Yorkshire

Farmed area

2,800 ha

Cropping

Winter wheat 907 ha

Winter barley 360 ha

Spring barley 295 ha

Rye 228 ha

Vining crops 234 ha

Potatoes 199 ha

Livestock

90,000 bacon pigs produced each year plus;

3,000 breeding sows.

Staff

Up to 26 at harvest.

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