

A combine that exceeds all expectations



James Ballantyne

Having used a wide-bodied LEXION 770 to clear some 1,100 ha for three seasons, the team at Shropshire-based Crop Spraying Services was a little apprehensive at the prospect of moving back to a narrow-body machine for harvest 2022.

"I'd heard good things about the latest generation LEXION, but initially took a bit of convincing that a new 7700 would be a match for the 770, particularly given the 20% increase in capacity we'd seen when we had moved from a narrow-body 760 to the wide 770 in 2019," says operator James Ballantyne.

"We had a demonstration of a 7500 with a CONVIO draper-type header and saw the difference that made to crop flow, sample and ultimately output. With the bigger drum and concaves, new header and 40kph transport speed we were eventually convinced the biggest narrow-body would cover our ground."

WHY A 7700?

"We're keen to try to go back to a narrow-bodied machine because it makes transport logistics so much easier.

That reduction in physical size means we can take short-cuts between fields where previously we'd have to go the long way round.

"In combination with the step up to a 40kph road speed, that's seen us saving up 20 minutes with each move – that's often equivalent to the time taken to get the headlands off. That's been a big part of the new combine's ability to match the output of the old 770."

HOW HAS THE LEXION 7700 PERFORMED?

"The new combine has exceeded our expectations. It'll comfortably match the output of the old 770 and at times will exceed it.

"That's all down to a combination of factors. CEMOS Automatic means it's running at peak performance all of the time. The bigger threshing gear simply has more inertia so that it's not as affected by heavy straw crops."



“With ground spread across a 30 mile radius the 40kph travel speed means the headlands are off and we’ve got a full tank before the old combine would have even reached the field.

“But it’s the impact of the CONVIO header that has surprised us most.”

WHY A CONVIO HEADER?

“With the initial demonstration we were immediately able to see the benefits of a draper-type header. I hadn’t quite appreciated until then the effect it could have on capacity and the quality of the job the combine is capable of.

“By feeding the crop into the front of the combine more evenly the CONVIO is helping to provide a much improved sample – it’s phenomenally clean.

“The header also allows us to get cutting up to two hours earlier in the morning and run later into the night – you don’t get damp straw clogging the auger. It just keep feeding smoothly into the combine whatever the conditions.”

CAB AND CONTROLS

“We were lucky enough to get a pre-production 7700 fitted with the new cab. It’s a vast improvement – there’s so much more space and views out to each end of the header are totally unobstructed.

“The driving position is also much more relaxed. With the cutterbar right out in front you’re not craning your neck to look down on it.”

“The new CEBIS touchscreen is a big step on. The menus are easy to access via the armrest rocker switches and you’re able to see everything the combine is doing on one working page.”

CEMOS AND STEERING

“The new CEMOS Automatic set-up has made a big difference in how tired I feel at the end of a long day. Because it’s handling everything to keep output up and produce a decent sample with the aid of the grain quality camera, I’m able to simply focus on losses, returns and what’s in my lunchbox!

“That’s all helped by the new RTX steering system which means you just turn roughly into line, hit the button and it gets itself on track without any fuss. It’s also less inclined to drop out when it loses satellites. It’s a big improvement.”

UNLOADING

“Such high output is great but you’ve got to be able to match that with handling the grain. Having a 12,500-litre tank despite being a narrow-body machine means the new combine matches the 770 for holding capacity but where it’s ahead is on unloading.

“I can discharge a full tank load in under 90 seconds – it’s exceptionally quick. But it’s not all speed and no finesse. Being able to shut down to half rate means I’m able to top off loads properly. In combination with

the pivoting spout it means I can properly fill the corners of the trailers or chaser bin which just helps make the whole operation more efficient. The ability to direct the flow of grain also means we can keep the trailers off the swath of straw.

“The final detail is the grain shut-off flap in the end of the spout. It eliminates any dribbles which, with oilseed rape at the price it’s at right now, is very important.”

WHY CLAAS?

“We stick with CLAAS combines for a number of reasons. Over the last nine years we’ve had four machines and not one of them has ever had a major breakdown – in terms of reliability I don’t think you can beat that.

“Any minor niggles are rapidly sorted with MORRIS CORFIELD’s experienced team of fitters either over the phone or in the field.

“And critically the second-hand values are strong which means the lease deals CLAAS is able to put together are always very competitive because they know the machine will have held its value when our term is up.”



Business Facts

Crop Spraying Services near Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Work undertaken

Spraying c. 10,000 ha/year
 Combining c. 1,100 ha/year

LEXION history

2022	LEXION 7700 with 10.6m CONVIO Flex header
2019	LEXION 770 with 10.6m VARIO header
2016	LEXION 760 with 10.6m VARIO header
2013	LEXION 760 with 10.6m VARIO header

“By feeding the crop into the front of the combine more evenly the CONVIO is helping to provide a much improved sample – it’s phenomenally clean.”

James Ballantyne

