

Impressive harvesting capacity



Nearly four years ago AWT Farm Services took delivery of one of the first LEXION 8900 to reach UK shores. A pre-production machine, it was the biggest combine CLAAS had ever built and promised to cover some serious acreage.

With almost 2,000 ha to clear alongside a ten-year-old LEXION 760, on paper it had its work cut out.

“Having previously been on the limits with our 780 and the 760 working in tandem, we thought it prudent to continue with a two machine policy,” explains Andrew Tetlow.

“But pretty quickly our concerns proved unfounded – the 8900 was a different beast altogether and would clearly have been comfortable handling the whole acreage single-handed.

“The bigger drums and concaves up front made huge difference and the new MAN engine had so much more grunt, despite using significantly less diesel thanks to the Dynamic Power system only putting the fuel in when its needed.”

“The speed at which the new unloading auger runs is really remarkable – it’ll get whole tankloads away in a few minutes.”

Andrew Tetlow

Having completed three seasons with very little support required from the back-up 760, the 8900 was due for a change. It had also proved incredibly reliable and so it was felt that moving to a single combine was a realistic proposition. However as a further insurance policy to guarantee even the trickiest crops could be cut without a hiccup the new 8900 was ordered with a belt-fed CONVIO header.

Arriving in time for harvest 2022, the new 8900 was another pre-production machine fitted with a larger cab and the latest version of CLAAS CEMOS automatic control system.

HOW HAS IT PERFORMED?

“On paper we shouldn’t really have seen that much difference between the new 8900 and the old one but subtle tweaks have pushed things on again. The new CEMOS software has really got the performance going to the point where the driver can totally rely on the system to get maximum output while maintaining a fantastically clean sample.

“In terms of tonnages, we’re generally averaging around 70t/hour in wheat and can push it to over 100 tonnes. Those sorts of numbers wouldn’t have been possible without the CONVIO header.

“Although 2022 wasn’t really a testing season, it clearly makes the difference in getting the most out of the combine. Given how dry and hard the ground was we were expecting to see quite a bit of wear in the cutterbar skids but that didn’t prove to be the case.

“The extra expense of the CONVIO header is easily offset by the additional output it generates and the reassurance it has given us to cover our entire acreage with just one machine.”

GRAIN HANDLING

Having such impressive harvesting capacity is all well and good but you need to be able to deal with the resulting tonnages of grain, points out Mr Tetlow.

“The speed at which the new unloading auger runs is really remarkable – it’ll get whole tankloads away in a few minutes which means the trailers can get to the shed and back that much quicker.

“The ability to run the auger at half rate makes a big difference in topping off the trailers accurately and the pivoting spout means we can throw grain that much further, keeping the grain carts on the far side of the swath.”



Andrew Tetlow

WHY CLAAS?

“Running a contract farming business on a reasonably large scale we need to be as lean as we possibly can so running the minimum number of machines is a must for us.

“CLAAS produces the highest output combines in the business and with them we know we can depend on them to clear our acreage.

“We’ve got a long history of running the highest capacity CLAAS combines and we know they’re rock-steady reliable. And, with Peter Bassett to look after us, we know we’ve got the back-up should we need it.”



Farm Facts

AWT Farm Services, near Cambridge

Farmed area

1,845 ha

Cropping

Winter wheat 970 ha

Spring oats 450 ha

Winter barley 250 ha

Spring barley 175 ha

Staff

Andrew Tetlow plus two others full-time and another three at harvest/drilling.

LEXION history

2003	480 Evo
2005	600
2008	600TT
2010	750TT
2011	770TT
2013	760TT
2014	780TT
2019	8900TT
2022	8900TT



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