

Non-conditioner triple mower



Operator Harry Fairbank

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Bought during the 2022 silage season, initially to boost mowing capacity, such is the output from a set of non-conditioner CLAAS DISCO 8500 Contour triple mowers that the rig now handles the lion's share of contractor RM Simpson's 800 ha mowing workload.

Based at East Bierley, Bradford, contractor RM Simpson offers a wide range of contracting services, covering West and South Yorkshire. Their diverse customer base, which includes dairy, beef, sheep, arable and equine customers, can see them travel up 50 miles from their base. On top of this, they also contract farm 120 ha for a local estate.

WHY BUY CLAAS NON-CONDITIONER MOWERS?

“We originally started running CLAAS mowers about eight years ago and after a spell of trying other makes we soon came back to the CLAAS machines - we wouldn't have anything else now,” explains operator Harry Fairbank. “As well as their good performance, they are very well made and we get great backup from our dealer, CLAAS EASTERN at Wilberfoss.

“Up until the arrival of the non-conditioner mowers, we relied on a pair of front and rear mounted DISCO 3200 conditioner mowers. However, with all the foraging and baling last year, we were struggling to keep up. That's when we decided to increase capacity with a set of non-conditioner triple mowers - a DISCO MOVE 3200F on the front and a DISCO 8500 Contour on the back.

“As well as looking for greater capacity, we went for non-conditioner mowers for a number of reasons,” says Harry.

“For starters, we didn’t want to buy something that would then need a bigger tractor to run. By going wider with the new mowers, but not having conditioners, it means we can use the tractors we already have and keep the ability to swap the tractors between the mowers.”

HOW HAVE THE NON-CONDITIONER MOWERS PERFORMED?

“As we’ve found, it takes about the same amount of power to run a set of non-conditioner triple mowers as it does just a set of front and rear conditioner machines,” says Harry. “For the triples, 180 to 200hp is a good match - 230hp is on top of the job. And because you are mowing 50% more using the same power, fuel use per acre is also less.

“Throughput of the triple mowers is very good - I can mow up 20kph on good land, which sees about 6.5 ha per hour comfortably mown, compared to 4.5 to 4,8 ha per hour with the front and rear conditioner mowers.

“All of our CLAAS mowers offer good contour following, which is great for coping with rough land. In particular, the new suspended-type DISCO MOVE front mowers follow the ground much better compared to our previous push-types.

“Cut quality is excellent and they tackle laid grass very well. Likewise, they can handle a wide variety of grasses, from big stalky, singe-cut crops, to short, multi-cut silage.

“For delicate crops where you want the leaf intact, the non-conditioner triples have proven useful for this, and I was able to leave a long stubble height of five inches. You could easily see this being useful for mowing crops like lucern.

WHAT ARE THE STAND-OUT FEATURES OF THE NON-CONDITIONER MOWERS?

“Firstly, non-conditioner mowers are just so simple - there’s no conditioner to maintain, there’s less shafts to grease, you’re less likely to damage them from foreign objects and you don’t get stone damage to the hoods. They are also relatively light - they don’t feel like a big lump on the tractor.

“Like all of our CLAAS mowers, they are quick to set-up - orange markers enable you to quickly and accurately get your linkage height right. Bed pressure is hydraulically adjusted - you actually need a little less with the non-conditioner mowers, because they are lighter.

“Quick release blades make them easy to swap, and there’s lots of blade storage on the machines. Bed access to the non-conditioner rear mowers is good, as the guards in front of and behind the beds can be folded up. And the mowers can be stored in the shed folded up, saving floor space.

“In all, these new non-conditioner mowers have been brilliant. We’ll definitely be looking at another pair, possibly larger, when it comes time to trade them in.

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Business Facts

RM Simpson, East Bierley, Bradford

Services

- Grassland applications
- Tillage applications
- Contract farming
- Gritting
- Forestry

Staff

Six full time and up to 10 part time

CLAAS History

- DISCO 8500 CONTOUR (non-conditioner) ‘butterfly’ mower
- DISCO MOVE 3200F (non-conditioner) front mower
- DISCO 3200C CONTOUR (conditioner) rear mower
- DISCO MOVE 3200FC (conditioner) rear mower
- 2 x LINER 2800 twin-rotor rakes
- LINER 4800 four-rotor rake
- 2 x JAGUAR 870 foragers
- DIRECT DISC 520 whole crop header
- ORBIS 750 maize header