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Charlie Steer,  
Cheshire, 2023

## FARM FACTS

Farm	Grosvenor Farms, Alford near Chester
Farmed Area	2,345 ha
Cropping	Wheat, Barley and OSR 1,497 ha Maize 324 ha Grass 324 ha Stewardship schemes
Stock	2,650 Holstein milking cows (av. 12,500-litres/year) plus 1,800 followers
CLAAS JAGUAR history	2004 JAGUAR 870 with PU300 HD and 6-row maize header 2017 JAGUAR 870 with PU300 HD, DD 500 and 8-row Orbis 2022 JAGUAR 880 with PU300 HD, DD 500 and 10-row Orbis

# Every kilo counts

With over 4500 hungry mouths to feed, the team at Grosvenor Farms in Cheshire need to know they’re making the most of every kilogram of forage.

To aid in this their latest JAGUAR 880 is equipped with NIR ingredient monitoring and GPS-linked yield mapping.

Delivered midway through last season, the forager is already helping inform decision making around cow rations, manure applications and fieldwork operations. At the most basic level it is used to precisely identify the optimum interval between mowing and picking up the crop, but it’s also proved a time-saving tool in various field trials.

“On a day-to-day basis we’re predominantly using the NIR system to monitor dry matter. That gives us a really accurate indication of what we’ll end up with in the clamp and whether we need to let the mowers get ahead a bit,” explains Grosvenor’s Charlie Steer.

“In addition to the moisture content we can also get a precise picture of protein, fibre and sugars which is extremely useful in planning ahead for cow rations, and making decisions about which clamps will be fed to youngstock, dry cows and milkers.”



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## Yield mapping

“We’re able to use the data generated through CLAAS’ TELEMATICS system to see how different areas of the farm are yielding. Currently we use soil mapping to help us determine the rates at which we apply our separated slurry solids which provide decent quantities of nitrogen, phosphates and potash. But our hope is that over time as we gather more data we’ll be able to combine that information with yield maps to provide an even more accurate picture.

“One unexpected benefit of the yield mapping facility is in helping to identify compacted areas in our grassland. It really highlights poorer performing patches and so we can go out, dig a hole and make a decision about whether to pull the subsoiler through.

“Likewise, when short-term leys are beginning to run out of steam we can look at the yield data and decide whether we’ve reached the threshold for a reseed or not.”





## Trials

“We like to trial different things here on the estate and regularly question ourselves on why we’re doing things a certain way. Part of that is conducting field trials looking at clover and non-legume swards, liquid and solid fertiliser regimes and applications of separated dirty water and slurry solids.

“The NIR sensing system gives us instant feedback on not only how well different areas have yielded, but also the quality of what’s coming off. Previously we’d be relying on laboratory analysis for that which not only has significant cost implications but also involves a considerable time delay.”

## Why CLAAS?

“The principle behind running our own forager is that we produce the best quality silage, cut at the optimum time,” explains Charlie.

“Because of this, when we go mowing it’s got to be picked up in good time with the result that our team has to put in some long hours. They need to be happy with the machines they’re driving and have the peace of mind that the forager is capable of covering the acres. We’ve tried other makes of chopper but with a JAGUAR we know we’ve got that capability.

“Of equal importance is the back-up we get. The team at our local dealer – MORRIS CORFIELD – is just superb. Even though we have our own fitters to do all the servicing, their guys will come out to help with problem solving and give a hand if there’s something we can’t deal with ourselves.

“Generally they’ve got any parts we need on the shelf and if they haven’t it’s always impressive how quickly they can get them to us from either CLAAS UK’s HQ in Suffolk or the factory in Germany.”





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