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Richie White
Co. Tipperary,
2023

FARM FACTS

Farm Slievenamon Agricultural Services, Co. Tipperary

Work undertaken Silage – grass, wholecrop, maize, slurry – umbilical and tankering, round and square baling, combining, grass reseeds

Staff Richie, John and Martin White plus five others full-time and another 10 part-timers at peak times

CLAAS machines
Foragers
JAGUAR 970 & 950,

Mowers
DISCO 8500
triple-mower

Rakes
2 x LINER four-rotor 3600s,
LINER 2900 twin-rotor

Combine
LEXION 540

Tractors
AXION 850 & 810 CMATIC,
840 CEBIS,
ARION 660 CMATIC
& 650 CEBIS

Keeping the records straight

When you’ve sometimes got two silage outfits out working as well as two teams on slurry spreading and others out baling it can be hard to keep tabs on exactly what’s been done each day. To help keep the records straight Tipperary-based contractors Slievenamon Agricultural Services use CLAAS TELEMATICS to document every hour worked.

Running two CLAAS JAGUAR foragers – a 970 and a 950 – a fleet of five CLAAS tractors, a LEXION 540 combine and a whole raft of green and white grass kit, the White brothers rely heavily on the record-keeping functions of the TELEMATICS system, using it for invoicing, traceability and to analyse the efficiency of various operations.

“I first saw how the TELEMATICS system worked at Agritechnica in 2013 and was immediately convinced that it would be a valuable tool in our business,” explains Richie White.

“We can have up to 16 guys out doing six or seven different jobs at once and so keeping track of how many bales they’ve made, how many gallons of slurry they’ve pumped or simply how many hours they’ve worked can be a challenge.

“I could see that we could really benefit from having CLAAS’ automated recording facility to help us keep tabs on all that essential information for billing our customers. So often little bits would get overlooked or forgotten – TELEMATICS means every minute is accounted for and can be traced.

“TELEMATICS also provided us with the opportunity to drill down into our own costs and look really carefully at where we’re making money and where we’re not – we simply can’t afford to be working for free.”

On the move

“The mapping facility on the CLAAS TELEMATICS smartphone app. is a brilliant aid in logistics planning for various operations,” says Richie.

“For example, during silage making I’m often on the pit and previously I was blind to how we were getting on. Now every 20 minutes or so I log in and check how many fields we’ve covered and how much we’ve got left to do. That way I can plan how I load the clamp.”

“Likewise the lads on slurry work can log in to the system and see live how many acres they’ve got to cover and make a judgement on what rate to go on at.

“It’s brilliant the way the system links into the tractors’ CEBIS screen. Our operators just need to set up the task and the implement they’ve hooked on and then set off into work. Our office team can then see what work they’ve been doing just by what machine is hitched on to the tractor and bill accordingly. They can even see what header the foragers have got on – grass, wholecrop or maize.”

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In the office

“We’re very fortunate to have Claire in the office who deals with our invoicing. She will constantly have TELEMATICS up on screen and will use the record-keeping facility to cross-reference the boys time-sheets to know exactly what to bill our customers.

“It’s an incredibly straightforward set-up to navigate and use. One of its biggest plus-points is how easily we can include other makes of machine on the CLAAS system. We can access and record data from all colours of kit seamlessly.

“In addition, unlike other manufacturers’ systems that will only hold onto the information for 24 hours or so, CLAAS’ TELEMATICS will record all the data on work done, fuel used, etc... and store it for ever.

“That way if a customer needs information for traceability purposes we can provide it and if there were to ever be any form of dispute we’ve got the records of everything we’ve done on file. On a more day-to-day level if timesheets go missing or someone forgets to write something down we’ve still got that work stored – it’s a simple insurance policy.”

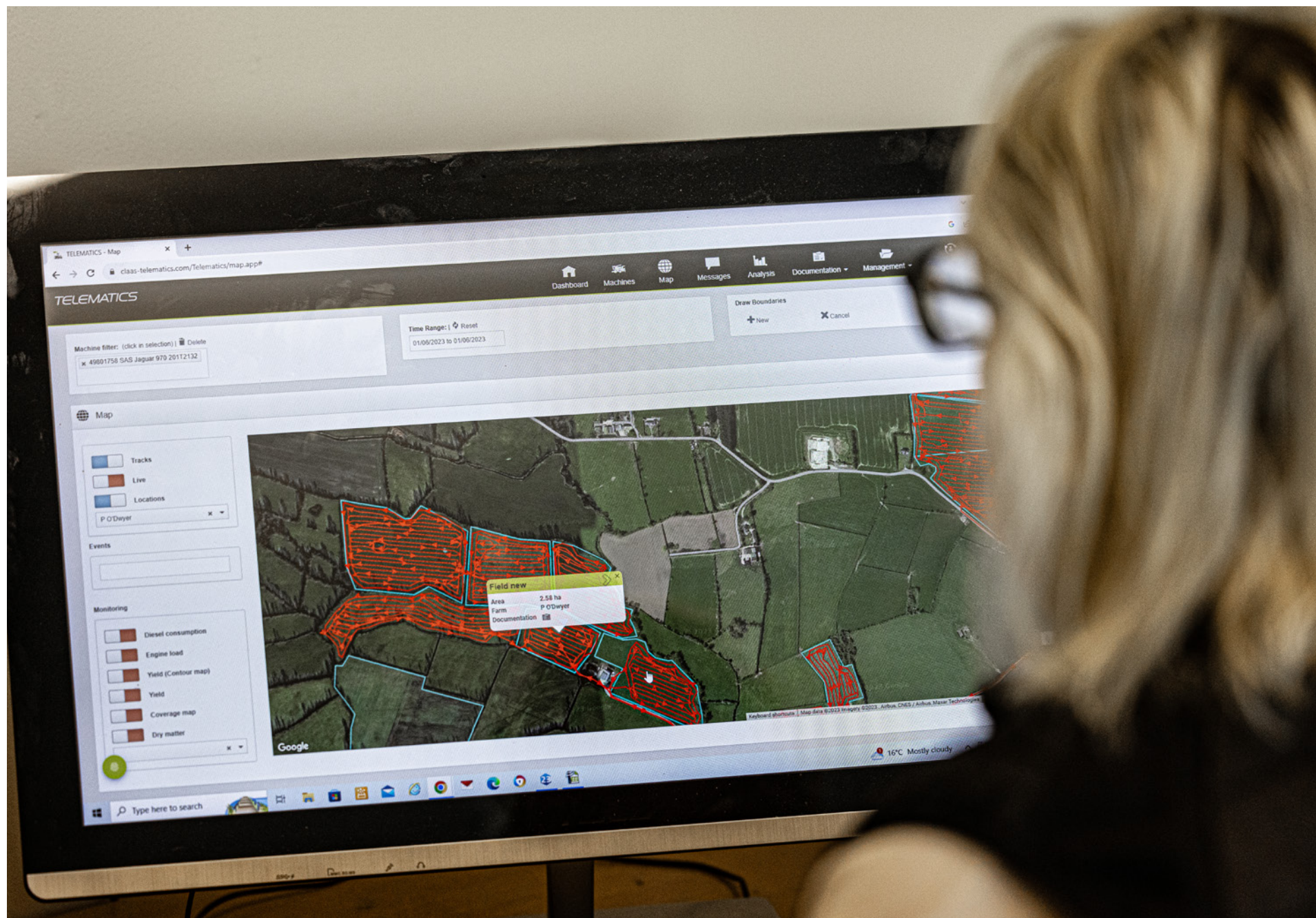
QUANTIMETER

This season saw QUANTIMETER yield recording added to Slievenamon’s JAGUAR 970 – an addition that will allow the brothers to drill down deeper into their exact running costs as well as providing customers with a precise picture of exactly what they’ve got in their clamps.

“We’ve been really impressed by how accurate the QUANTIMETER system is. We have one trailer with weigh-cells which we use as a barometer to calibrate and there’s hardly ever any discrepancy between what the forager says and what it’s weighing in at.

“Our customers often ask about tonnages as a means of winter fodder budgeting – now we can give them an exact answer.

“For us it means we can now be so much more targeted with our end-of-year analysis of our silage operations. We’ll compare running costs and total tonnages between first-, second- and third cut grass as well as wholecrop and maize and we now know exactly what we’re spending on every tonne that’s gone through the machine.”



The future?

“As well as providing our customers with ever-more accurate information about what’s in their silage pits and what we’ve spread on their fields, I’d like to think TELEMATICS could help us move towards a fairer charging system for both us as contractors and for farmers.

“Obviously with yield recording we can provide a precise count of tonnes harvested and potentially bill on that basis but we need to do some detailed investigation into what would work best.

“It might be that simply charging every machine out on an hourly basis is the most straightforward option. Either way, TELEMATICS will be central to this in mapping and recording all the crucial data.

“Although we run a relatively big operation, the work we do is actually pretty straightforward. The difficult task is getting the admin done, getting it down on file and getting the invoices out.

“CLAAS’ TELEMATICS system has streamlined that end of the job for us and we would be lost without it now.”



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