

Time saving accuracy

CLAAS connect has provided an important final piece in the jigsaw as Worcestershire farmer Tom Hughes works towards his objectives of improving financial margins through input savings and yield improvement, while at the same time enhancing soil health and wildlife on the farm, plus minimising soil erosion.



"So far, despite a very wet winter, this has worked extremely well."
Tom Hughes



The ease with which data such as AB lines, variable maps, application data, etc can be transferred between his computer and tractor via the cloud, not only saves him a lot of time, but also makes it so easy to set-up, transfer and then implement that plan at the press of a button.

"I have been variable rate drilling for the past 5 years using the S7 terminal and while it was possible to transfer data, it could be time consuming and often resulted in a lot of swearing. Realistically it was simpler to just create a new AB line every time I went into the field," explains Tom.

"Because it is cloud based, CLAAS connect makes it so much easier to upload and transfer variable application maps and other data. When we are planning on going drilling or spraying, I can set everything up in the office and transfer the maps and AB lines over to the tractor the evening before, so that it is all ready to go at just the press of a button in the morning.

DEPENDABLE REPEATABILITY

"Not only is CLAAS connect saving me a lot of time but it enables me to work more efficiently, which is important as I also want to spend time with my family. It ensures greater accuracy as all the field information is immediately there so saves a lot of time scrolling down to find the right field. Also the field boundaries and AB lines are consistently the same, which is important as we move more towards CTF, plus its far easier to fine tune any actions.

The key to me is that I now have repeatability and it ensures that I have clean data from which to work."

Having initially changed to CLAAS connect with his 3-year-old AXION 870, this has now been joined by a second new AXION 870 this spring. At the same time, in order to progress to variable rate liquid fertiliser application, he has also invested in a 36m Horsch Leeb LT trailed sprayer with individual nozzle control, also supplied by CLAAS WESTERN at Evesham.

"While one of my priorities is to increase margins through the use of variable applications and yield improvement, in hand with that another major driving factor is to improve soil health and reduce blackgrass."

Soils range from very heavy Evesham silty clay through to sandy clay loam and silty alluvial soils by the River Avon which borders the 440ha farm. In addition to cereals, mainly growing Group 3 soft wheats used for feed for a broiler unit on the farm, land is also rented out for vegetables, plus Tom grows maize and forage rye for a local AD plant.

With around 3,500 tonnes of chicken muck to spread every year from the broiler unit, this is all tested and spread using a Richard Western spreader with weigh cells to ensure application rates are accurately maintained. This is also then reflected in the liquid fertiliser rates.

"Having the Avon on our boundary and with every field ditch leading into it, I am mindful that having a chicken unit on the farm we are very much under the spotlight, so it is important to avoid pollution. Each field has a margin between the crop and the ditch, but this year to avoid soil erosion down into the ditch I have also experimented with not putting in any tramlines, and to just rely on CLAAS connect and the accuracy of the tractor's steering system to accurately follow the 36m AB lines. So far, despite a very wet winter, this has worked extremely well with no signs of any soil wash.

"In addition, I like the fact that all the operator's manuals and service information for both the tractors, but also my TORION and SCORPION which are also on CLAAS connect, are easily available. Also the extra element of service support that CLAAS WESTERN can now provide, by being able to see the tractors and advise me when a service is due, is very helpful. In addition, it's also reassuring if my operator is out doing a job, that from a lone worker safety aspect I can just check on a map where he is and that everything is OK."

