

# Cost saving steering system

By using RTK to ensure that his tramlines are exactly 28m apart, Andrew Gentle tells us that ongoing input savings have been reduced by around 5%.

G Gentle & Sons are comparative newcomers to RTK steering having opted for S7 terminals when they changed make of tractor to CLAAS three years ago. Using a dual-Sim RTK Net signal, this has not only reduced costs and improved efficiency, but by sharing one of the terminals with their LEXION 750TT combine, it also provides flexibility.

For drilling the 650ha of crops the Gentle's farm around West Wittering in Sussex, a 185hp ARION 650 CEBIS is paired with a 4.0m Vaderstad Rapid. Ahead of this, non-inversion cultivations are used on the heavy brick-earth soils, mainly utilising either a Weaving Subdisc cultivator or a disc cultivator behind a 205hp AXION 800 CEBIS, both on long term hire from OLIVERS Petworth.

"This year we have moved up to 28m tramlines, which works well. By having the tramlines exactly spaced, this has a knock-on benefit for spraying or fertiliser spreading as it avoids any overlap. We now use the sprayer to establish a benchmark field size and work to this. Overall we have seen a 5% reduction in inputs, in addition to time and fuel savings, which has been an eye-opener and certainly not to be sniffed at," says Andrew Gentle.

## A CHANGE TO CLAAS TRACTORS

"Although we have run CLAAS combines and telehandlers for a number of years, we had always run a different make of tractor until deciding to change three years ago. We have a wide choice of dealers around here, so looked at all the main makes, but we were very impressed with the CLAAS product and the price was right.

"Also the service that we receive from OLIVERS at Petworth is fantastic. The service from there has always been good, but their taking over the Petworth branch has been a real benefit to us. You can also see the confidence there is in the dealership itself. That has definitely had a knock-on effect as they seem to be flying and that in turn has given us the confidence to stay with them."

Over the three years that they have had the ARION and AXION, Andrew says that they have been really impressed with the reliability and performance from the two tractors. Now that the



hire period is ending, the plan is to buy the ARION 650. They are also going to buy an ex-demo 264hp AXION 850 CEBIS to replace the smaller 800. "Going forward, buying will help us future-proof the business and by keeping the tractors longer will give us flexibility.

"One of our previous tractors had a retro-fit steering-wheel system which was OK but didn't give the accuracy I was looking for," says Andrew. "The S7 is ideal for our needs as we don't need ISOBUS or variable rate capability at the moment. The RTK Net system is a definite improvement and just works seamlessly. We have no issues with signal over the 8 miles that we operate."

## ALL CLAAS FLEET

As the ARION is their main drilling tractor, during harvest the S7 terminal is moved to their 2019 LEXION 750. "Having an all CLAAS fleet also has the benefit that with both the tractors and LEXION all using the CMOTION control means its familiar. I was initially concerned how well it would work swapping the S7 between the ARION and LEXION, but in fact it's been brilliant and an easy 10 minute job.

"The benefits are most noticeable when combining, as compared to LASER PILOT we get across the field quicker because we always have full header width. But overall, everything looks far neater. It definitely appeals to my OCD side and you can always now notice fields where they haven't used a steering system. With everything looking neater and professional, this definitely has a value as we look to take on more land."

