

High quality bales for high quality forage

Even though it had only just been introduced, John MacGillivray had no qualms about buying a ROLLANT 540RC for last season.

The decision to change his old ROLLANT 375 for the new ROLLANT 540RC was not taken lightly, as for him the baler is one of the most important machines he has on the farm and key to his whole farming system.

"I am a one man band and generally the farm is completely self-sufficient," says John, who is the 7th generation of MacGillivray's to farm at Boat of Garten near Aviemore. "I have a herd of mainly Angus x Simmental suckler cows that are generally put to a Limousin bull. Rather than sell the progeny, I want to have control over the quality of meat that is eventually going into the market, so take them right through to finishing, aiming to reach 700kg at about 22 to 24 months to give a 400kg carcass. In addition, I also overwinter Blackface sheep from Loch Tay, which we have been doing for 50 years."

All the feed he needs is produced on the 160ha farm, where he makes 1,500 silage and 800 hay bales and grows 26ha of barley. Some of this is baled green to provide 300 arable bales and the remainder is taken through to harvest and combined, giving about 400 straw bales.

WELL PROVEN BALER

Being a key machine, John aims to replace the baler every 5 years, by which time they will have made about 20,000 bales. CLAAS balers bought through SELLARS have been a feature on the farm for many years, starting with a ROLLANT 250, followed by a 255, 355 and the 375 prior to the new 540, which arrived in late July.

"The ROLLANT is a well proven baler, that's reliable, easy to use and makes a good, well filled bale. They also hold their value well, so the cost of use is low. Before deciding SELLARS arranged for me to have a demonstration, and the new ROLLANT 540 has done everything that Dustin Bishop (Field Sales Manager at SELLARS Forres) said it would."

MINOR CHANGES MAKE MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS

"The new ROLLANT has a great crop flow into the baler and there are a lot of other small changes throughout the baler, which all together add up to major improvements. The autolube system means that about 95% of maintenance is done for you and the centralised greasing makes daily maintenance simple.

"Overall it makes a really well filled bale. The other key feature of all ROLLANT balers is the net wrapping system which is bombproof. It's so reliable; you can just keep going all day and it never causes a problem. The net chute is a huge benefit and

makes loading rolls of net far easier and means you can safely swap rolls in just a couple of minutes."

Farming on the edge of the Cairngorms, the biggest factor is weather. "By having my own machinery and not being reliant on a contractor I can make the most of any good conditions and do as much or as little as the weather allows. My silage season starts around June 20th and takes about a month, by which time the hay is ready to cut, which then leads into the arable baling and harvest.

"All told the baler is being used for about 4 months and is responsible for packaging all my winter feed, so is very cost effective. Having quality forage is important as I generally need to feed from around September 15th through to May 15th, so it's a long winter."

