



The TUCANO arrived on the farm ready for this season, equipped with wider 800 tyres to help preserve the soil structure.

Investment in combine capacity buys time

In the tricky combine cost versus capacity equation, it's important not to overlook the value of the time that can be saved from increasing output, as one Somerset farmer explains.

While Chris Day wasn't looking to change his four-year old CLAAS TUCANO 420 combine, an offer to replace it with the latest TUCANO 560 APS HYBRID, coming at a very busy time for the business, got him thinking.

It wasn't as if his existing combine couldn't cope with the combinable arable area that includes 134ha of winter wheat as well as spring barley, at Perry Green Farms', Henfields Farm, Cannington in Somerset. But, he explains, under pressure from other enterprises based on the farm he realised it was a deal worth considering.

"I looked at it as simply an opportunity to buy more time. With more capacity we could harvest more quickly, when we were ready and save money on drying by cutting only when the crops were fit," he explains.

The combine replacement offer came just when the family was launching Henfields Farm Country Retreats, after investing in a range of lodges installed on a 12ha site, as well having to cope with a distressing illness in the family.

Henfields Farm is also the base for Anode Feeds, a partnership that supplies specialist blends, feed ingredients and other products to the trade. This involves running a state-of-the-art mill and mix system, which requires daily management.

"When I bought the original straw-walker TUCANO I viewed it as a

long term investment and that's how I also consider the move to the HYBRID 560 model. With the trade-in, the cost to change was relatively affordable when spread across ten years," he says.

His dealer, HAMBLYS at Bishops Lydeard, also played a key role in his decision to change. "I have always received great service – I can't fault them," Chris adds.

This season the combine coped well in the wheat, regularly harvesting 30t/hr in Skyfall and Graham varieties, yielding 11.75t/ha (over the weighbridge). The combine also copes well with the farm's high straw yields and leaves it in good condition for baling. "I would love to chop all the straw to help improve the soils - but it's not very neighbourly. I can't do that when they are buying in stocks from the east of England," he says.

Chris shares the combine driving with Jake Bridgeman, and both operators like the cab and new controls. "The new CEBIS touch-screen is easy to use and set-up. It shows a view of the combine and you simply touch the element you want to adjust – it's simple," says Jake.

Jake has noticed the combine works at much faster forward speeds the previous model, adding the latest VARIO header also plays its part in increasing output. "We had some quite laid barley and it coped extremely well," he adds.

Apart from the wider tyres, the only option the farm specified was the LED lighting package, which Jake says has made an enormous difference.

In its first season working for Perry Green Farms the combine has performed well and, importantly delivered on its promise to cut the time spent harvesting. "It was a good move – particularly as the holiday lodges have been virtually fully booked since we opened," adds Chris.