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With a business that mixes contract farming, stubble-to-stubble contracting and in-house arable operations, D&B Farming has a seemingly ever-increasing workload.

“Each year I kid myself that we’ll sit still for a minute and consolidate what we do, but we constantly get asked to take on more ground,” says James Burton who farms in partnership with brother Simon.

“The arable acreage we cut has grown from 200 hectares six years ago to well over 2200 hectares today and so inevitably we’ve had to up our combine capacity accordingly.

“The first CLAAS combine we bought was a two-year-old LEXION 780 in 2015 which is still with us today. The minute we got it in the field it blew us away both in terms of capacity and reliability.” So when more ground landed in their laps two years ago and extra harvesting capacity was required, another LEXION was the obvious choice, this time a smaller straw walker 650.

But last season the brothers were asked to take on yet more ground and it became obvious more capacity would be required.

“We wanted to go for another hybrid rotary purely for capacity and were initially looking at another second-hand 780. But when we sat down and did the maths it became obvious that it made sense to have a slightly smaller brand new machine.

“At that point CLAAS revealed that they’d be running a number of pre-production LEXION in the UK and asked if we’d be interested. We leapt at the chance and put our name down for a narrow-bodied 7500.”

HOW HAS IT PERFORMED?

“The 7500 has really taken us by surprise. It’ll happily average 50-55t/hour in wheat – more than the demo 760 we had.

“In fact it’s not far off the 780 which will generally chomp along at 65-70t/hour. The only time it really drops behind it when we’re chopping straw.

SPEED AND FUEL

“At first the 7500 came with a 30ft VARIO 930 header. It had a bit of teething trouble so CLAAS EASTERN lent us their 35ft 1080 which we were initially concerned would be too much for it.

“Far from it, the extra 5ft of cutterbar means we’re now travelling at a more sensible forward speed – generally around 5-7kph in wheat. It’s not going back!”

“When it comes to fuel usage the 7500 is quite phenomenal. Dropping green-strawed spring barley in the swath it burnt diesel at two-thirds of the rate of the 780 on a like-for-like, acre-for-acre basis.”

QUANTIMETER

“The new weigh-cell QUANTIMETER is phenomenally accurate. We tested it repeatedly against the weighbridge at the beginning of harvest and the furthest it was out was 80kg across a 20ha field.

“It’s meant we no longer have to run every trailer over the weighbridge which represents a massive time saving for us. We can be confident we’re accurately recording what’s coming off every field.”

CEMOS AUTOMATIC

“I’ve cut over 800ha with the 7500 this harvest and haven’t once altered a setting on the machine. I just punch in the crop type when we change fields and let CEMOS AUTOMATIC set the combine up as it sees best.

“Before I had this new machine I wouldn’t have bothered with it because I felt I could do a pretty good job of setting the combine up right. Early on I would try and tweak things myself, but every time I did I saw performance drop off. I’ve been blown away by how good CEMOS is. You just start it up and drive.

“When my relief driver took over it was a struggle to get him out of the seat. He was blown away by how easy it was to drive and sent me a text saying he wasn’t going to let me have the combine back!”

GRAIN QUALITY CAMERA

“The sample the 7500 produces is unbelievably good. Pretty much all the way through harvest I’ve had CEMOS set to maximum throughput because there’s literally not a spec of muck in the tank.

“At one point in really dry wheat the grain quality camera started to spot a few cracked grains and suggested moving to smoother threshing. I wasn’t sure about it, but went with it and sure enough the broken grains disappeared. After my initial scepticism, I’m 100% certain now that it can do a better job of setting the machine up than I can.”





The LEXION featured in this image is a Pre-Series 7500 badged as a 750.



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