

CLAAS

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Harvestimes

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VARIO 1050 availability extended



Such has been the huge demand from LEXION 600 users for the new 10.5m wide VARIO 1050 cutterbar, in its first season it was specified on 10% of all CLAAS combines sold for 2008.

Having seen the performance benefits that the VARIO 1050 offers, CLAAS has made this wider cutterbar available on the LEXION 580+.

The most noticeable feature of the new cutterbar is its split reel design. By having a central support, this ensures that strength and rigidity is maintained without the need for a wider diameter reel tube. Therefore not only is the reel lighter, but having a narrower reel tube also ensures optimum visibility over the flow of material through the cutterbar.

However, to provide increased strength and reduce the incidence of crop wrapping, the reel bars are twice the diameter of a standard VARIO cutterbar. In addition, the bars are supported by new patented long life, maintenance-free polymer bearings, which again help to reduce crop wrapping.

In addition to the split reel, the feed auger also incorporates a central support. This avoids the auger sagging in the middle and ensures an even crop flow and the distance between the auger and stripper bars is accurately maintained.

New 'Business Pack'

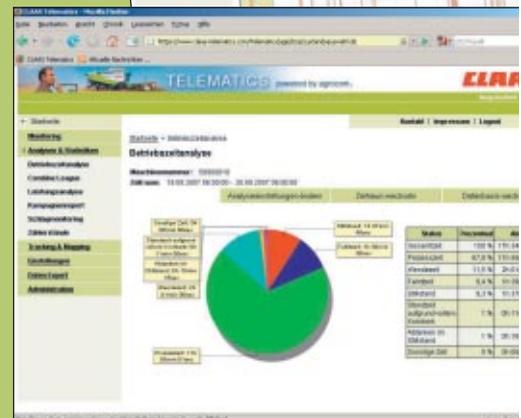
With many combine operators now looking at the use of electronic systems to help increase efficiency and record field data, for 2009 LEXION 600 and LEXION 580+ models will now come as standard with a new 'Business Pack'.

'Business Pack' brings together a complete electronic technology package to help monitor and improve the combine's performance. Included in the Business Pack is CEBS yield mapping, fuel monitoring, crop book data and CLAAS TELEMATICS.

Launched two years ago, the unique CLAAS TELEMATICS performance monitoring system has helped to revolutionise the way that many operators have controlled their harvesting systems.

In addition to the benchmarking, machine location and live yield monitoring functions that TELEMATICS offer, one of the most useful features is the harvest efficiency analysis function. By being able to analyse all aspects of the harvesting process, including how, when and where the combine unloaded, this provides the information needed to refine the system and so increase productivity.

For instance by using this information, in 2007 having studied the information provided from the 2006 harvest, by tightening up his trailer logistics and reducing idling time by 7%, one customer increased the actual harvesting time by 9% to where the combine was working for 80% of its time, making it the most efficient in the UK.



New TUCANO options

Following the extremely successful launch of the new TUCANO range last year, a number of specification upgrades will be available for 2009 machines.

As standard, TUCANO 450 and 430 models will now come with a new Special Cut straw chopper, which will also be an option for TUCANO 440 and 320 models. This new straw chopper features a greater number of blades in order to provide improved chop quality. In addition it features a new open spreader chute and spread width control to ensure an even distribution across the full width of the cutterbar.

One of the main features on the new TUCANO range when it was launched last year was the availability of a new colour version of the CLAAS CEBIS control and monitoring system. For 2009, CEBIS will now come as standard with a new larger 6.4 inch screen, or as an option an even wider 8.4 inch screen is available which incorporates a flash card reader.



Electronic steering

For 2009 CLAAS will have a complete range of automatic steering options available to help further increase precision and productivity.

In addition to the well proven LaserPilot system, for those wanting to take automatic steering a stage further, CLAAS also now offers the GPS PILOT satellite based steering system as a factory fitted option. This has the benefit that with accurate bout matching it ensures that short-work can be kept to a minimum.

Depending on the level of accuracy required GPS PILOT can be used in conjunction with either Egnos and Omnistar HP, for which an additional licence fee has to be paid, or for the greatest level of accuracy with the CLAAS Baseline HD or RTK system.

BASELINE HD uses an in-field tripod mounted base-station unit that comprises a GPS receiver and antenna which then provides the farm with its own licence-free correction signal that can be used for any machine, and has the great benefit that there is no signal shielding, particularly from trees which can be a problem with direct to satellite

systems.

The Baseline RTK system proves the highest level of accuracy down to just 2-3cm. The system uses a fixed RTK signal box that provides the correction signal, that is mounted on a tall structure such as a grain silo or a chimney.



50 years of combining

Trevor Tyrrell presented Ken Clare, who works for James Gilmour & Sons, with a model CLAAS MATADOR combine mounted on an oak plaque at the Cereals Event in recognition of his long service

as combine driver to the company and his association with CLAAS combines.

Ken, who is 72, has worked on the 721ha (1,780 acre) farm near Sutton Coldfield for 50 years, and has no intention of retiring yet. As combine driver, his first experience with a combine was operating a trailed CLAAS SUPER in 1958. Since then he has driven virtually every model produced by CLAAS, and this harvest saw him again taking the controls of the farm's CLAAS LEXION 480 complete with GPS yield mapping and 9.0m cutterbar.

Ken Clare at the controls of a CLAAS SF bagger, which was the first self-propelled combine on the farm.





The new Barony College intake



The new Writtle College intake

CLAAS UK work with BBC

Driving a LEXION 600 TT proved a completely new experience for Andrew Marr, who is more at home making presidents and politicians squirm with his incisive questioning.

Andrew was filmed driving George Gittus' LEXION 600 TT on July 14th as part of the BBC's programme Britain from Above. The landmark documentary was screened over four Sunday evenings in August and looked at all aspects of how Britain looks, works and makes use of the air space above it.

In order to show how farmers make use of satellite technology, Lion TV, who produced the series for the BBC, approached CLAAS UK as to what would best demonstrate this, but would also look visually appealing.

To portray this, the episode looked at the LEXION 600 and how the CLAAS TELEMATICS and GPS yield monitoring and steering systems help improve efficiency in order to increase output, reduce production costs and ultimately control the rising cost of food.

Filed harvesting winter barley on Geo. Gittus & Sons farm near Saxham on 14th July, the day-long shoot involved both a land based film crew, but also a specialist helicopter film unit taking spectacular sweeping shots of the combine at work.



Apprentice scheme extended

Following the success of the CLAAS Agricultural Apprenticeship scheme based at Writtle College in Essex, in order to provide northern dealers with the same high level of apprentice training, CLAAS UK has established a second course based at Barony College near Dumfries, making it the first manufacturer to offer such a course in Scotland.

The demand from CLAAS dealers in northern England and Scotland for such a course is evident in the fact that this new course will double the number of apprentices joining the scheme in 2008. In all, 25 new students will be joining the scheme this year, with 12 based at Writtle and 13 at Barony.

"CLAAS UK will be the first major manufacturer to support Scottish dealers and farmers in such a way and it is a fantastic opportunity for apprentices," states Drew Easton, the Engineering Section Head at Barony College. "This is unique and a first for Scotland."

National Diploma in Land Based Technology

"On both the Writtle and Barony courses, the students will be studying for a National Diploma in Land Based Technology," explains John Palmer, training manager for CLAAS UK. "Apart from higher technical credibility, a major benefit is that upon qualification, the successful candidate will receive a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade, which will enable them to better demonstrate and gain recognition for their progression and ability. In addition this should also allow them to progress quicker through the Land-based Technician Accreditation (LTA) scheme."

Unlike the previous modern apprenticeship course that was four years long, the new Diploma course takes only three years, but those on the CLAAS course will do an extra year during which time they will gain additional certificates, such as those for towing a trailer, refrigerant handling or forklift operators' licence.

Efficiency boost from TELEMATICS

The ability of the CLAAS TELEMATICS system to record and display all aspects of actual and historic field performance data has proved an invaluable tool for Maurice Mason Ltd who use a LEXION 600 and LEXION 580 to annually harvest 1900ha (4,700 acres) around Fincham in Norfolk.

Bought three years ago, Maurice Mason Ltd's LEXION 600 was one of the first in the country to be equipped with TELEMATICS. The benefits of the system in highlighting areas where machine efficiency could be improved was demonstrated to farm manager Geoff Hayes when he sat down with Paul Moss from CLAAS after that first harvest.

"When we came to analyse the data at the end of the 2006 harvest, it showed that the combine was only working at about 71% efficiency, mainly due to it spending too much time stationary on headlands when full," explains Geoff. "For optimum efficiency the combine has to keep moving, and TELEMATICS helped highlight aspects of our infield performance that could be improved."

"The main thing it highlighted was the importance of where in the field we unload the combine. All too often at the end of a bream the combine would have to stop to finish emptying, so the simple answer was to start emptying 40 metres earlier. It also showed the importance of not unloading at the furthest point in the field from the gate, and even when opening a large field, to only open part of it so that it empties closer to the gate, giving the trailer more time."



"By paying attention to our infield logistics, for the 2007 harvest we were able to increase combine efficiency to 80% and as a result gained an extra 12 hours combining time, which is a big benefit as every extra acre cut in the field is a bonus, especially this year."

"The information we were suddenly able to access about the harvesting process was a complete eye-opener. We did not think about our infield performance nearly as much as we do now. As a routine every morning I now look at the previous day's performance to see if there are any problems we need to pick up on and the driver, who is very competent, has also evolved his driving and where he empties the combine."

Aside from the combine performance analysis function, Geoff has now gone a stage further and started to examine and register any fault codes that show, to see if he can identify and then deal in advance with any potential mechanical issues that could be a future problem.

"We also use the combine league feature just to see what others are doing in similar crops and what settings they are using, to see if we can improve. We have also carried the lessons we have learnt over to the LEXION 580, as well as looking in more detail at precision farming in general."

"Having TELEMATICS has brought us a lot of positives and I think is essential on a high capacity combine. The initial cost has been more than recouped and the next combine will definitely have TELEMATICS. To move forward you always need to look at what is going on now, and TELEMATICS help us achieve that," concludes Geoff.

100 years and counting

This summer saw the Marshall family celebrating 100 years of living at Peatling Magna in Leicestershire, an event that coincided with the arrival of a new TUCANO 320 combine.

Currently farmed by Peter and Richard Marshall, the land was bought by their grandfather Alfred in 1850, but he did not actually move there until 1908. Originally 52ha (130 acres), over the years additional land has been bought to bring the farm up to its current 160ha (400 acres).

The Marshall's association with CLAAS combines goes back to 1965 when they bought an SF from Kirby after their previous combine was lost in a fire. This was replaced in 1966 by a MATADOR STANDARD that was kept until 1978, before being replaced by the first of four DOMINATOR combines, the last of which, a DOMINATOR 98 bought in 1998 has just been replaced by the new TUCANO 320.

With contract work for neighbouring farmers the TUCANO, which is



David Flippance from Kirby hands over the keys for their new TUCANO to Richard (centre left) and Peter Marshall (centre). With them are sons Geoff and Paul.

equipped with a 5.4m AutoContour cutterbar, 3D sieves, chaff spreader and electronic sieves, will annually cut around 200ha (500 acres).

CLAAS 'Farm Manager of the Year' Award

For the past two year's CLAAS UK has been extremely pleased to sponsor the 'Farm Manager of the Year' category in the *Farmers Weekly Awards*, as it is important that the skill of those involved in all aspects of agriculture is recognised, so as to serve as an inspiration for others.

Managing and running a farming business gets more challenging every year. The skills of a good manager are wide ranging and go far beyond just the practical and financial

running of a farm, and extend to aspects such as efficiently handling the large amount of official paperwork involved, conservation management and recognising and developing other sources of income from alternative non-farming activities.

This is perfectly highlighted in the two winning managers profiled here, George Perrott who was the 2007 winner and Matt Solley who picked up the 2008 title.



George Perrott

George Perrott was named the CLAAS 'Farm Manager of the Year' at last year's *Farmers Weekly Awards*. The judges praised his 'anything is possible attitude', business skills, vision for the future and strong staff management.

George is Farm Manager for Clinton Farms, the in-hand farming division of Clinton Devon Estates, which extends to 8,900ha (22,000 acres) in three blocks. Aside from farming, the widely diverse estate includes 40 tenant farms and enterprises such as 4,000ha of forestry, a sawmill, 810ha of common heathland managed by a conservation trust, 400 houses and extensive commercial properties, including the Bicton Arena.

The estate employs over 100 people, including eight on the farm, which means that there is always something going on. Also the 'family' attitude of the Estate is evident in the fact that apart from filling three tables at the Awards evening, it was recently listed 21st in the Sunday Times 'Top 100 Companies to Work for in the UK', plus it has achieved Investors in People status and a couple of years ago was awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise.

Organic conversion

Based at Colaton Raleigh near Sidmouth, the farms cover 1,000ha and are currently in the final year of organic conversion. Two 250 cow dairy herds averaging 8000 litres form the core of the farm, but as part of the conversion, George has overseen a complete re-organisation of the farms into six 80ha blocks where arable has been reduced to about 400ha and red clover, grazed by 1300 north country mules, has been introduced. The aim is that the farm will run a five-year rotation of grass, followed by red

clover which will then lead into wheat, oats and finally triticale for whole crop silage in place of maize in the ration.

George, who stresses that he is no pony-tailed, sandal-wearing, organic eating green enthusiast, explains that the move to organic has been made primarily for financial reasons, but obviously there will be an ecological advantage as a result.

"Whilst the family and Estate were fully behind the plan to go organic, it was important that it would not have a negative effect on the Estate as a whole," explains George. "The decision to change was made on the basis that it was financially viable, would not need a large capital investment and could be done with existing machinery. Two years ago the extra 10 pence/litre for organic milk would have considerably boosted income and the price has since risen further. Added to that we have savings from not doing routine worming or buying fertiliser."

"The drawback is that organic grassland is more labour and machinery intensive, so diesel usage is up, plus the local village is rather fed-up with us spreading slurry all the time, so we do need to look at injection equipment!"

"I have certainly come to appreciate the value of slurry more. The conversion process has opened my eyes and made me question things more. I do think that conventional farmers have got a lot to learn, especially about the routine use of wormers."

Environmental benefit

"At this stage the environmental benefits are harder to quantify, but there has to be a knock-on advantage. The Otter Valley, which is home to Yellow Billed Egrets, was one of the first NVZ's plus we have reintroduced hares, which are thriving, and we are sure to see an increased influx of wildlife from the Pebblebed Heaths, where there are Common Nightjars and Dartford Warblers."

"The soil is predominantly sand and very prone to washing, with a lot of steep ground and hedges. Average field size is 5ha and the biggest is 8ha, plus one field has 14 trees. We don't grow high cereal yields, but the red clover does seem to thrive and with an increase in organic matter, we should be able to achieve 5t/ha, but without the inputs that will be worth the equivalent of a 10t conventional crop."

Being right in the middle of a major tourist region does bring its problems, especially when trying to move large machinery on narrow roads, and most fields adjoin green lanes that are enjoyed by walkers, but George has turned this to his advantage by producing large laminated boards explaining about the crop and its use, for which he has received a lot of positive feedback.

"We consistently look at ways of getting the most out of every opportunity and the conversion to organic will be both financially and environmentally beneficial – but I do miss not being able to use Roundup any longer!"

Aside from being extremely good farmers, they are also very good businessmen. They exhibit considerable foresight and have the ability to look at the wider business package, recognize opportunity and use this to drive the business forward. Congratulations to them both.

FARMERS WEEKLY AWARDS 08

Matt Solley

This year's winner of the CLAAS 'Farm Manager of the Year' Award has that uncanny ability to keep various balls in the air, but to still be looking as to how he can add more.

Starting as assistant manager, since taking over as manager for Gemmill Brothers in 2005, Matt Solley has taken the business from being a tenant farmer on 647ha (1600 acres) near Sawbridgeworth in Hertfordshire, to being part of Gilston Crop Management, a three partner limited liability contract farming partnership covering 2,250ha (5,500 acres).

This impressive growth has been achieved on the back of a drive to improve efficiency by reducing power and machinery cost, and achieve a profit within carefully managed budgetary constraints.

"I see myself as being the manager of three separate farms," he says. "There is nothing officially in place so it is up to me to keep the balance between the three partners."

The development of Gilston Crop Management started when Gemmill Brothers entered into a joint venture with their neighbour Stuart Tinney, who was roughly the same acreage, using similar machinery. The following year, Matt was then approached by Chaldean Estate, owned by businessman Gordon Morrison who, impressed by what had been achieved, was keen to join the partnership in order to reduce his overheads, bringing the total area to the current 2,250ha.

Central to Matt's management is the need to drive down cost through the efficient use of machinery and maximising output. At the same time he has not been afraid to buy good quality second-hand machinery and to only upgrade to new once the acreage and business justified it.

This has certainly been the case when it comes to Matt's combine policy.

Following the initial joint venture with Stuart Tinney, Matt retained the LEXION 480 Evolution that Gemmill Bros had purchased at a farm sale in Lincolnshire the previous September.

"That first harvest the LEXION 480 harvested 1,300ha (3,300 acres) with no assistance in what was granted an easy harvest, but showed what could be achieved, and it certainly got people talking," says Matt. "With Chaldean joining the partnership they added their LEXION 560, and we did the full 2,250ha with just the two combines last year, before replacing them for this harvest with two new LEXION 580+s bought from Manns at Braintree. I would never want a combine without the VARIO cutterbar and the new POWER SPREADER is superb, it really suits our system and when we are contract cultivating we can always see the difference between where a CLAAS has been working and where another make has been."



2008 "Farm Manager of the Year" Matt Solley with Jane King, Editor of *Farmers Weekly* (left), Clive Last of CLAAS UK and BBC presenter Claire Balding. (Photo: Mark Mackenzie/FW)

Quality premium

"One of the main reasons for buying the two new combines is that we mainly grow milling wheat, so are always chasing the premium. It is important to have the capacity to maintain timeliness of harvesting and keep each of the three partners happy and this has certainly helped this year where even in the difficult conditions, the crops held their quality well into September."

"The business revolves around the combine and harvest, and for that I have got to have the best machinery that I can afford. Ultimately I would like to further grow the business to where we would be operating two LEXION 600s with 10.5m VARIO cutterbars, as these would enable us to cover more acres but with the same level of cost."

"I did look at all brands of combine, but in reality did not want anything other than CLAAS. I cannot stress enough how important their reliability and superb build quality is. Both combines are covered by MAXICARE and the support we have had from service agent Peter Bassett via Manns and CLAAS is excellent. They have never let us down or made any excuses if there is a problem, which I respect."

Award judging: Ian Ashbridge (*Farmers Weekly*), David Bolton, Matt Solley and Lynn Chilvers (CLAAS UK). (Farmers Weekly)



Capacity increase

Like many farmers this year, harvest was not easy for Kevin Easey with nothing coming in below 16%. Having taken on an additional 400ha (1000 acres) to give a total of 1228ha (3034Ac), the change to a new LEXION 580+ TT with a 9.0m cutterbar has given him considerably more combine capacity, but with everything needing to go through the drier it did put the handling system under pressure.

"For me it's quality that counts, not quantity," he says. "Having looked after the crop for the past year, I want the best quality in store. Due to the design of our handling system, everything has to go through the drier, but I am dead against tipping outdoors on concrete pads, so it is the tonnes per hour you can handle at the store that dictates the speed of harvest."

"In the past with our old LEXION 480 this was not a problem, but the output from the new LEXION 580+ is so much higher that the system really did struggle and we definitely did not use the combine to it's full capacity. We are therefore going to add a further 2,500 tonne capacity store so that we can tip ahead of the drier."

The farm is split into four blocks, the furthest of which is 6 miles from the base at Hitcham near Stowmarket, and half the acreage is down to winter wheat, with the remainder down to oilseed rape and winter and spring malting barley.

"The LEXION 480 was a good combine, but the new LEXION 580+ TT is, without a shadow of a doubt, brilliant; it's by far the best combine we have ever had. The sample is fantastic and so good that we didn't need to put anything through our dressing and cleaning system. Without pushing it we could average around 60t/h and it certainly has the capacity to handle a larger acreage."

"The other great benefit has been the TERRA TRAC system. This is very heavy land and if we still had a wheeled combine we really would have been in trouble. Aside from the compaction benefits, it's not until you drive the combine that you appreciate how stable the tracks make it; the cutterbar hardly moves and the stubble is far more even."

The straw chopper and POWER SPREADER also come in for considerable praise from Kevin. Everything is ploughed, and with P&K currently so expensive all the straw was chopped, so the ability to achieve a fine chop and be able to adjust the throw from the cab has helped ensure an even spread.

"Also the team at Manns Saxham are brilliant and I can't emphasise enough how helpful they are."



Matched harvest system

Having run a LEXION 460 for the past six years, when it came to replacing it, whilst David Trollope was tempted by a LEXION 570, he felt that it was probably just a bit too big, so opted for a 351hp LEXION 550 with a 7.5m VARIO cutterbar.

"I did look at one other make, but didn't like it, plus the old LEXION 460 was a very good machine and we have always had good service from Manns," explains David. "I had the LEXION 570 on demonstration and liked it, but felt the output was just too much for our handling system, so Manns suggested that the LEXION 550 would probably be best. I told them it was on their neck that it would cope, but it did!"

All the 600ha (1400 acres) of arable grown by Dawe Estates at Carbrooke near Watton in Norfolk goes through a drying and cleaning plant with a capacity of 25t/hr at 5%, prior to being stored on-floor at up to 5.0m deep, so David's choice of combine was dictated by the capacity of the plant in order to avoid overloading the system.

"This has been an exceptional year. I would normally expect wheat to yield between 9 and 10 tonnes, but this year it has been between 11 and 12 tonnes, but the LEXION coped very well."

"The 7.5m VARIO cutterbar is brilliant and well matched to the combine. It's excellent for oilseed rape and beans, but it's amazing how much we needed to keep altering it in cereals due to the conditions, especially in barley where it helped save a lot of heads."

"For peace of mind the combine is covered by MAXI CARE and I can't fault the back-up from Manns at Thursford, there is always someone available. They have some exceptional technicians who really understand combines and are always willing to give advice on how to get the most out of the combine. When it comes to replacing the combine, whilst I keep an open mind, my preference would certainly be for CLAAS due to the product and the service I receive."



Output boosting technology

Despite the difficult conditions, the combination of CRUISE PILOT and GPS steering has ensured that JA & O Griffiths' LEXION 600TT, which replaced two rotary combines, has more than met expectations.



The Company owns or rents a total of 1,300ha (3,300 acres), split over 18 blocks varying in size from 12 to 240ha (30 to 600 acres), which are block cropped with winter and spring oilseed rape, barley and wheat.

"I think technology on a big combine is a 'must', bearing in mind costs such as fuel and labour, and ensures optimum efficiency" says farm manager Alex Pyke. "The CRUISE PILOT function is fantastic. Initially it's frightening to just let it take control, but there is no way that I could achieve the same level of output that it could, as it would push the combine far more than I would dare. Used in conjunction with GPS steering it meant that I could just concentrate on the settings and the feed into the LEXION."

"The other big attraction of the LEXION 600 was the TERRA TRAC system. Not only do tracks help keep compaction near the surface, but with a lot of narrow lanes, this brings the width down to 3.5m. On some of the peat ground, the tracks also meant we could harvest fields where it would be difficult to walk, and we cut 18ha (45 acres) where the water table was just 30cm down."

"Even though we had better offers from other manufacturers, the reliability and back-up from CLAAS and Morris Corfield was an important element. We met with CLAAS and they went through all of our needs and the support package they offered. Also having previously run a LEXION 480 that in seven years only let us down twice, we knew the product was good."

Faced with a lack of drying capacity, Alex opted to bide his time and not cut anything over 20% or if there was more than a 300 tonne back-log. Even then he still managed to complete harvest in 400 engine hours and reckons he could have done more. Running at losses of less than 0.25% output was consistently between 75 and 90 tonnes an hour, and at times the 20 tonne chaser bin was struggling to keep up.

"The 10.5m VARIO cutterbar compliments the combine and is very efficient, plus I think it will last better than a smaller cutterbar as the central support means there is no flexing on the reel and auger."



TUCANO appeals in Scotland

Offering smaller farmers the combination of high potential output and well proven mechanical simplicity allied to some electronic central control of its main functions, the new TUCANO combine range was one of the great successes of last year, with sales far exceeding expectation, especially in Scotland.

One of those to whom the TUCANO instantly appealed was John Keddie who for the past 14 years has run a MEGA 204 to harvest his 540ha (1,350 acres) of cereals near Alloa.

"The MEGA 204 has been the ideal combine for me and I have long said that it is one of the best individual machines that I have ever owned," he says. "Until now there has not really been a natural replacement for it, and the LEXION is really just too advanced for my needs. As soon as I saw the TUCANO I knew that with its bigger tank and the engine at the back, along with the new cab, that it would be the ideal replacement. It is a definite improvement."

With 230ha (580 acres) of wheat grown for distilling, 140ha (350 acres) of spring barley for malting and 40ha (100 acres) of oats grown for Quaker Oats, plus winter barley and beans, reliability, high output and a good sample are important factors in John's choice of combine.

John's new TUCANO 430, which was bought through Sellars, has been specified with an AUTO-CONTOUR cutterbar and in order to achieve the best sample possible, he also opted for electronic sieves.

"Rather than having to get out and get dirty altering them, by having electronic sieves, the ability to quickly and easily alter them on the move from the cab has made a big difference to the sample. It is also noticeable how few losses there are. The separation is extremely good and we have hardly seen any greening up after combining."

"Also the AUTO-CONTOUR cutter bar with its automatic height control has taken a lot of the stress out of driving and ensures an even stubble height. Despite the difficult conditions, it has also meant that we have not broken a single finger or section which is fantastic, which again has helped reduce stoppage time."

One other option that John is very pleased he chose was to fit the combine with extra wide tyres.

"Even though it has been very wet, the combination of wide tyres on a lighter combine has meant that we never got stuck once and could get across the ground very easily. Despite the conditions, the TUCANO has been able to cover up to 25ha a day which is a 50% improvement on the MEGA and even though I did wonder if it would manage, it has comfortably coped. It has definitely taken over as my best machine!"



High output balers save season

Looking back at this year's baling season, contractor Tim James says he would never have baled what he did, had it not been for his two new QUADRANT 3200 balers.

In a normal season, Tim James would reckon to bale about 20,000 bales using two balers, but due to the weather and an increased number of customers chopping straw, this year the total dropped back to 18,000.

"I was not sure about changing the balers last year, but I am so glad I bought the QUADRANTS, as with my old balers I would never have done what we did when conditions allowed. Had I not changed, I reckon I would have been a further 2,000 bales down. Those QUADRANTS have certainly helped my business this year," states Tim. "And I know that I certainly picked up extra work because other contractors couldn't cope."

"Their capacity is awesome, and however hard you push them they just keep on taking it in. One of the QUADRANT's was running behind a 250hp tractor and averaged 100 bales an hour. Even behind the biggest combines we needed to give them a half day head-start otherwise we would catch them up, which I have never

done before. I also tried putting a sledge behind one of the balers, but it was so fast the sledge could not keep up."

In order to keep both his dairy and arable customers happy, Tim split the balers, leaving one at his base at Llandrinio near Welshpool for silage work, whilst the other stayed in the arable area around Shrewsbury.

"Due to the conditions we often could not get baling straw until after lunch. So we would start on silage around home in the morning, and due to the QUADRANT's high output this meant we could normally finish most jobs by lunchtime, then get the baler at Shrewsbury going in the afternoon and work through until about 7.00pm. The windows were short, but once we got going the QUADRANTS would clear a lot of acres."

Tim changed to the two QUADRANT 3200s last year due to concerns about parts and dealer support for his previous make of baler.

"I had a demonstration of a QUADRANT and one other baler, but chose the QUADRANT because Morris Corfield are well known for the back-up they provide. The CLAAS knotter system is far simpler and they have good blowers, plus the adjustable pre-chamber on the new QUADRANT is ideal as it can be matched to crop conditions."



Tim James



The English Rose Tournament

It's said that sport is a great unifier, and this was certainly the case this Autumn when 22 men's and 4 women's teams from CLAAS companies in the UK, Germany, Russia, Hungary, France and Italy all competed in the 7th CLAAS International Football Tournament, hosted for the first time by CLAAS UK in Bury St Edmunds.

The weekend of activities gave the teams of CLAAS Group employees, many of whom had not met before, the opportunity to compete and socialise, and so establish closer international bonds.

Arriving on the Friday afternoon, the 300 participants were based at Centre Parcs, Elveden Forest, so had plenty of time to relax and enjoy everything that the centre has to offer. In addition, on Saturday evening a Celebration dinner was held at CLAAS UK's headquarters at Saxham.

Upholding British honours in the men's competition were two teams from CLAAS UK, however they were not to progress beyond the pool stages of the Tournament, which eventually saw the CSE II team from Germany defeat

CLAAS Hungary 3 – 0 in the final.

The CLAAS UK Ladies team performed far better, and after a 5-0 win against CLAAS France and a 4 – 0 win over CLAAS Italy, they met CLAAS Germany in the final. But in the best traditions of English football, having drawn 2 – 2 in the match they eventually lost out in the resulting penalty shoot-out.



Spot the difference

Below are two drawings of a CLAAS ARION tractor ploughing. There are, however, 10 differences between the two drawings - see if you can find them!

Spring Competition

Keep an eye open for your Spring issue of HarvesTimes which is due to be out at the end of April, because in there you will find details of our great new competition for CLAAS KIDS members, and the winners will be announced in the summer KidsTimes magazine.

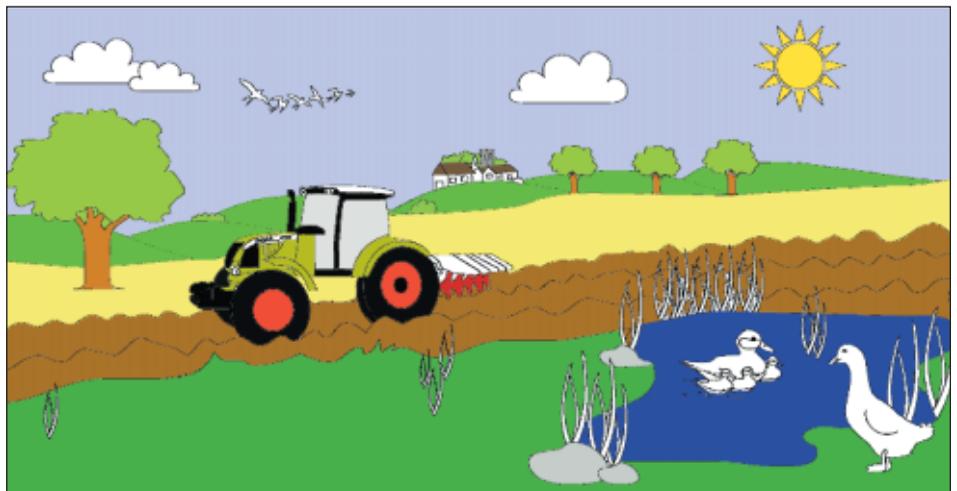
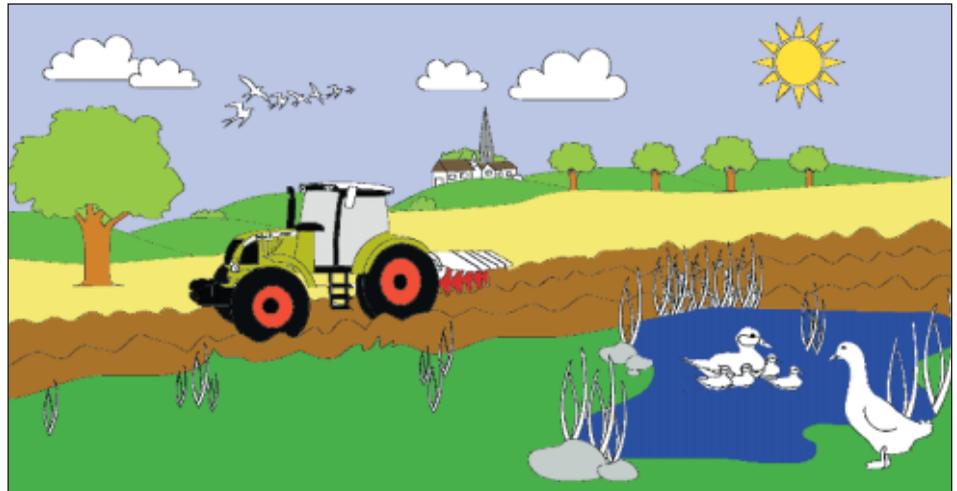
Tell us about yourselves

Here at CLAAS UK we always love to hear from CLAAS KIDS members.

Please do write to tell us what you have been up to, what your farm is like or what your favourite CLAAS machine is - or if you have any good photographs do send those in as well. The best letters and photographs will be used in KidsTimes.

Please send your letters to:

CLAAS Kids Club
CLAAS UK Ltd
Saxham
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP28 6QZ





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