



Photos: Schuller, Grasser



△ 1. With the pressure control system, the tyres can be inflated to the optimal pressure depending on conditions. Changing the pressure is really fast. 2 The armrest with integral joystick. The terminal has a 12-inch screen. 3 There's plenty of space in the cab and the noise level is low, too.

Arion 660: Superb comfort, easy operation

top agrar
TEST

With build quality and operator comfort ticking nearly all the boxes, the Arion clearly bears the signature of the German manufacturer Claas. More than that, with the CEMOS operator assist system, the tractor also plays out an extra trump card.

While the styling of the fourth-generation Arion tractors was left nearly unchanged, Claas significantly enhanced the operator comfort compared to the previous generation.

Last summer, top agrar Austria subjected a Claas Arion 660 equipped with the standard-fit CMATIC stepless transmission to an extensive test. Built in Le Mans, the Arion range lines up seven models, three of which are powered by 4-cyl. engines (510 to 550) and four by 6-cyl. units (610 to 660).

NEARLY 9,000KG KERB WEIGHT

With a maximum output of 205hp, the Arion 660 is the flagship of the range. To our measurements, its kerb weight including the front weight and the tyre pressure control system is 8,970kg; the total width is 2.68m when clad with

710/60-42 tyres on a 1.97m wheelbase – a configuration that ensures an excellent performance on slopes. The inner turning diameter is 5.9m (4WD disengaged) and 6.9m (4WD engaged) – excellent stats in this power bracket.

HIGH-VISIBILITY CAB

Mounting and dismounting the tractor up and down the wide and sturdy steps is safe and convenient. The cab offers ample space for the operator and one passenger and also all-round visibility, although the view of the continental hitch is clearly restricted when this is in the low position; and the mirror on the rear window is not a great help in this regard.

As for operator comfort, the Arion 660 is simply superb courtesy of the excellent suspension system, which mounts the cab on four springs and

provides the PROACTIV suspension for the front axle.

Inside the cab, operators find numerous cubby holes and a large cooling box beneath the passenger seat. Our impression of the noise level was that this was low, so that the cab has basically everything it takes to spend a long working day in it.

6.8-LITRE JOHN DEERE ENGINE

Under the bonnet is a 6-cyl., 6.8-litre and Stage V DPS Powertech engine from John Deere. In our pto test at 906rpm, we measured a torque of 1,286Nm and an output of 167hp, with an additional 20hp boost to kick in during pto and road work.

The engine can be described as quiet running and high drive. As for consumption during pto work and the all-important transport work, the DLG

KEEPING IT BRIEF

The 660 is the flagship in the Arion range and develops up to 205hp.

Our test tractor had the stepless CMATIC transmission which convinced the test team in our field and road tests.

The suspended cab and front axle as well as the CEBIS terminal provide a pleasant environment for working long hours.

The CEMOS assistance system is an option which optimises the tractor and attachment settings for enhanced efficiency.

Powermix tests revealed that Arion's average consumption rate was below the average consumption rate of all tractors tested to present (profile 12/2024).

With regard to the transmission, Arion is available either with the Hexashift powershift transmission or the stepless CMATIC box. Our test tractor had the latter and this achieved the maximum speed of 50km/hr at 1,500 engine rpm. The box offers three freely selectable speed bands in either direction of travel and the current speed band is displayed on the CEBIS touchscreen and can be shifted on the move.

The CMATIC transmission can be operated in three ways – using the drive pedal, the drive lever or manual mode. You can change between lever and pedal mode on the move by pressing a button on the armrest. Find out yourself what's your favourite.

Another practical feature is the active standstill control, which keeps the tractor stationary without requiring the operator to step on the brake. As the two speed ranges are changed automatically and on the move with shifts being hardly felt, acceleration is smooth through the entire speed range from 0 to 50km/hr.

CONVENIENT OPERATION WITH CEBIS

Our test tractor boasted the CEBIS system, which manifests in the multi-function armrest and above all in the 12-inch CEBIS touchscreen. This means, most operations are managed from the armrest where all controls fall into place for easy use.

The CMOTION joystick controls the direction of travel, the linkage, the spools, everything. In addition to that, there is a large number of customisable buttons for programming all kinds of extra functions. The direction of travel is selected either with the Power Shuttle control or with the joystick, but you can't switch between the two.

When you use the Power Shuttle and this stays in its current position instead

PROS AND CONS

Claas Arion 660

- + Operator comfort
- + Operation
- + Gearbox
- + High-quality build
- Power Shuttle
- Wiper

of returning to neutral, the joystick is disabled for shifting. We didn't like that. Claas says this is "a boon in transport work, as it prevents operators from unintentionally changing the direction of travel." On the positive side, as the Power Shuttle moves into parking position it engages automatically the handbrake. You can also increase the engine's braking effect substantially by pulling the joystick to the rear. This reduces the gear ratios so that engine revs increase, a concept that leads to reduced brake wear.

The regular service brake also decelerates the trailer with the help of a trailer brake. At the same time, the operator accelerates the tractor from the pedal or joystick, thereby maintaining the tension in the combination. This increases road safety and is crucial for safe travel in steep terrain.

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△ The Arion suspension system convinced the team in road work, transporting straw bales, for example. The 6-cyl. engine delivered a strong pull when harnessed to the cultivator.

DATA SHEET

Claas Arion 660 CMATIC

Engine: 6-cyl. DPS engine of up to 205hp incl. CPM; max. 833Nm (ECE R 120) and 6.8-litre displacement; two automatically adapting idling speeds (650 and 800rpm) reduce consumption when the tractor is idling.

Transmission: Constantly variable transmission CMATIC, 1,500rpm at 50km/hr

Track width: 1,856mm

Total height: approx. 3,180mm (depending on tyres fitted)

Kerb weight: 7,860-8,335rpm (depending on specification)

Total weight: 12,500kg

Max axle load: 5,200kg on front axle, 9,000kg on rear axle

Wheelbase: 2,820mm

No. of spools: 4 electr. spools at the rear; 2 electr. spools mid-mounted

Hydraulic pump: 150l/min load-sensing system

Linkage: Front linkage 4,000kg, rear linkage 8,000kg; vibration damping and electr. position control front and rear

Pto: 540/540 ECO & 1,000/1,000 ECO rpm at rear, 1,000rpm at front

Tyres: 600/60 R30 at front, 710/60 R42 at rear

List prices incl. VAT:

Base specification: €266,652

Test specification: €325,100

Options include: CEMIS 1200 terminal incl. RTK NET and Section Control and TC Geo (€15,450), automatic service brake (€1,458), tyre pressure control system (€16,842), CEMOS optimising system (€5,478)

Our test machine was equipped with the automatic option of the trailer brake, which permanently keeps the combination under tension during road work without requiring constant input from the operator. This worked very well, but make sure the trailer brakes don't overheat during prolonged downhill travel. The 12-inch touchscreen is very user-friendly and provides a clear layout of all the setting options. It also offers excellent control of ISOBUS machines.

FAST TYRE PRESSURE CONTROL

Our test machine also had the Claas-developed CTIC 2800 tyre pressure control system, which is also operated through the Isobus. On our machine, the air was supplied by a higher-capacity version of the screw compressor, which mounted on the right-hand side of the tractor and next to the door, where it slightly obstructed offside visibility.

Nevertheless, we found the system extremely convenient to use as it inflates the tyres from 0.8bar to 2bar in just 1 minute and 40 seconds, which is really fast. Provided the system is used correctly, it offers significant benefits in terms of compaction, drawbar power and tyre wear. Moving to the rear end, we find four pto speeds – 540, 540 Eco, 1,000 und 1,000 Eco. The rear linkage operates with precision and lifts 8,000kg according to the brochure, whereas the front linkage hoists 4,000kg. External controls reside on both mudguards for operating the linkage, one spool and the pto.

The LED lights illuminate all areas of work perfectly and are easily switched on and off. Forward visibility could be improved by increasing the wiper field on the front window, which could easily be done by increasing the radius of the wiper motor.

CEMOS ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

Our test tractor was also equipped with the CEMOS operator assistance system which optimises the settings of the tractor and the attachments such as the cultivator or plough, assisting the operator in selecting the optimum front weight and tyre pressure.

CEMOS prompts suggestions for all major setting options including engine, transmission and attachment for optimising traction and minimising compaction, thereby increasing work rates, quality of work and fuel savings of up to 16.5%, says Claas. We couldn't verify these consumption rates in our small fields, but our impression was that they are representative.

In the service and maintenance department, we found all liquids easy to check and the radiator packs perfectly protected by the bonnet screen. They also fold out easily for a blast of air.

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