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PRODUCT NEWS

The journal for agricultural professionals

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Front cover:
The new ARION 6

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CLAAS Foundation honours young talent

Over the past 26 years, the CLAAS Foundation has supported young talent and set an example for innovation, education and international cooperation in the field of agricultural technology.

At this year's award ceremony held at the CLAAS headquarters in Harsewinkel, talented students from around Europe were honoured for their forward-looking research work, including two from the UK.

The Helmut Claas Scholarship awards were presented by Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser, Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees, who praised the scholarship holders' commitment and highlighted the significance of the achievements presented and the role of the CLAAS Foundation in supporting young talent in the agricultural sector.

Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser (second from right) presented the certificates to the scholarship recipients (from left) Bendix Markus Sommer, Flora Lucy Gray, Laura Eckhardt and Lukas Musser.



UK AWARD WINNERS

Flora Lucy Gray from Durham University was awarded the second of the four main Helmut Claas Scholarships for her work on investigating how maize cultivation and nitrogen-fixing plants can serve as indicators for different farming systems. Her comprehensive analysis of the effects of regenerative and conventional agriculture on soil quality provides valuable insights for sustainable practices.

The other three awards were presented to Laura Eckhardt from the University of Hohenheim for her work on how artificial intelligence can help make agricultural work processes not only more efficient but also more sustainable. Lukas Musser from Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences was recognised for his innovative development of an adaptive welding device for vehicle frames, while Bendix Markus Sommer from Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences presented a particularly practice-oriented contribution with his work on the evaluation of alternative machine concepts for sustainable arable farming systems.

In addition, three bonus prizes were also awarded in recognition of special student projects in the areas of 'protection of staple foods', 'innovation in agriculture' and 'environmental management':

In this category, Maria Pinheiro from the University of Glasgow was honoured for her pioneering research in the field of molecular biosciences. Her project investigates chemical enhancers as a means of increasing the bactericidal activity of bacteriocins against plant bacterial pathogens, which promises significant advances in the protection of staple foods.

These awards symbolise the diversity of innovative approaches developed by talented young researchers, whose work not only demonstrates academic excellence but also makes a decisive contribution to overcoming current agricultural challenges. The CLAAS Foundation remains committed to promoting such forward-looking approaches and supporting the bridge between science and practical implementation.

Record beating JAGUAR 1200



The JAGUAR 1200 has set a new official world record in forage harvesting, harvesting 4,096 tonnes of whole crop silage in 12 hours. In addition to the harvesting performance, the efficiency was also record-breaking with just 0.49 litres of fuel consumption per tonne of silage harvested.

The new record smashes the previous record of 1,891 tonnes set by a JAGUAR 900 in 2001, showing just how far CLAAS forage harvester development has progressed in the past 25 years.

Organised with contractor Todd Poling from P.M.S. Harvesting, the record was set harvesting a centre pivot irrigated whole crop wheat near Dalhart in Texas. Supporting the 1,110hp JAGUAR 1200 using a PICK UP 4500 header, was an CLAAS AXION 960 CMATIC with CLAAS DISCO 9700 RC AUTO SWATHER plus an XERION 12.590 TRAC with 18 foot (5.5 m) wide Grouser silo blade on the clamp, while 30 articulated lorries were responsible for haulage.

Starting at 8.00am and chopping at 17mm, 12 hours and 266 lorry-loads later, a record breaking 4,096 tonnes of crop had been harvested at a rate of 2:42 minutes per lorry load while consuming just 0.49 litres of fuel per tonne.



PERMANENT MONITORING VIA CLAAS CONNECT

During the record beating attempt, CLAAS connect was used to continuously monitor the forager performance and process data. In addition, the new NUTRIMETER was used to monitor moisture content, which was accurately recorded at 59.4%, so almost exactly on a par with the 60.006% taken on the scales by P.M.S. Harvesting. In addition to the moisture, dry matter content and the crude fibre content, the NUTRIMETER is also able to determine the crude ash content and ingredients such as crude protein, starch (maize crop) and sugar.

AXION 9.450 TT wins Tractor of the Year 2026



Despite fierce competition, the AXION 9.450 TERRA TRAC was announced as the winner of the coveted Tractor of the Year Award in the HighPower category at the Agritechnica show.

The jury praised the AXION's combination of power density, hydraulic performance and data-driven performance management."

In addition to its unique tractor concept, the award-winning features that appealed to the judging jury included the intelligent solutions in the areas of driver assistance and machine optimisation, comprehensive digital connectivity and the newly developed, quiet cab.

The jury, consisting of 26 international agricultural and agricultural engineering journalists, stated: "The CLAAS AXION 9.450 TERRA TRAC combines high performance with machine optimisation tools specially developed for large agricultural businesses. Its CCLS hydraulic system delivers a flow rate of up to 370 l/min, with a rear lift capacity of over 11 tonnes and full ISOBUS and Power Beyond connectivity. Intelligent features such as CEMOS, Dynamic Auto Droop and CEBIS connect increase precision, while the four-point suspended cab ensures a high level of comfort at only 66 dB(A).



FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY IN DEVELOPMENT

The AXION 9 CMATIC series sets new standards in comfort, automation and connectivity, and was developed with the aim of bringing maximum performance to large farms and contractors even more efficiently and economically in the field and on the road. Sophisticated and further optimised hardware such as the engine, transmission and axles, as well as TERRA TRAC running gear, have been combined in the series with a completely newly developed cab with a noise reduction of up to 66 dB(A) and a volume of three cubic metres, a new electronic infrastructure and new, intelligent assistance systems up to Level 2 Autonomy.

Behind the VISOR

Aside from all the new features incorporated into the new AXION 9, at first glance outwardly it does not look too dissimilar to its predecessor, apart from in one main respect – its ‘face’.

Christened ‘the VISOR’, this new design which features a striking look coupled with daytime LED running lights and an illuminated CLAAS logo will form the basis for the look of CLAAS tractors going into the future.

CLAAS tractors have always been distinctive, mainly on account of their seed green colour. “If you took away the colour, there was nothing to clearly identify the product as a CLAAS. We were determined to change this – radically,” says Markus Grevinga, Vice President of the CLAAS UI (User Interface)/UX (User Experience) design team. The objective was clear: to move away from designing individual products and towards creating a coherent brand family with strong visual DNA.

Designing a new tractor bonnet began with the insight: “What we had been missing for years was a quintessential CLAAS face”, explains Maximilian Bohl. “Our objective was to make the front just as distinctive as the side view.”

The first stage in the process involved lots of sketches in order to find an initial design direction. Once established, CAD modelling was used to create more detailed 3D designs before then sitting down with the engineers to see how feasible the new design is in reality.

“A completely new, specific headlamp for each individual tractor series would not have been financially feasible”,

explains Markus Grevinga. “In the past, we basically cut a hole in a plastic part and bolted a standard headlamp in place. But we no longer saw this as the face of CLAAS. The solution was to develop a modular system. The external headlamp modules are now identical – from the smallest model right up to the XERION. Only the middle section of the VISOR varies in width, allowing it to adapt to the specific proportions of the respective machine.

“We would never have been able to afford this high-quality automotive look without this identical part approach”, emphasises Maximilian Bohl.

The new look is complemented by striking LED daytime running lights, which make the facial contours seem even sharper. Another highlight that CLAAS is launching as one of the first manufacturers is the illuminated CLAAS logo on the front.

“We made a conscious decision here to set ourselves apart from the design language of many competitors, who use a very aggressive front with an ‘attack’ design.”

The team drew instead on a scale from ‘attractive’ to ‘spirited’ that reflects a sense of being in touch with reality: self-assured, clear and premium quality. A straightforward shape will make a smaller tractor seem calmer and more likeable. By contrast, a big XERION exudes unadulterated power with its more pronounced hood and sharper lines – without losing any of its fundamental elegance. Here, the VISOR design remains as the connecting link that marks all models as part of the same family.



AXION 9 and ARION 6 production starts

Production of the new AXION 9 series has started at the CLAAS tractor plant in Le Mans, with the ARION 6.190 due to start going down the production line in May.

Since the acquisition of the tractor plant in Le Mans, France, in 2003, more than 200,000 CLAAS tractors have rolled off the production line there, while more than €80 million has been invested, both in the Le Mans site and the test and validation centre in nearby Trangé.

This included the complete modernisation of the assembly line, including digital transformation, from 2019 to 2021 and the introduction of automated guided vehicles (AGVs) to the plant for the first time, making Le Mans one of the most modern tractor production facilities in the world. Most recently, in July 2025, ground was broken for a new 3,800 m² multifunctional production facility.



In parallel with the production launch of the new AXION 9 CMATIC, more than 1,300 customers from 20 countries, including the UK, were able to experience the new tractors and the state-of-the-art production facilities first hand at an exclusive series of events at the Le Mans site between January and March 2026.

Baler assembly capacity expanded

In order to meet future increased baler production demands, including the new CEREX round baler, CLAAS has inaugurated two new assembly lines at its Metz-Woippy baler site.

The Metz-Woippy site combines 65 years of industrial heritage with a broad range of expertise, including laser cutting, bending, robotic and manual welding, painting, and the assembly of round and square balers.

“As a family business, balers have been part of our DNA for more than 100 years. Metz is our home for baler production, and France is one of CLAAS’ core markets. This is an investment in our future and reflects our commitment to the Metz region and to France as a whole. I am particularly proud of what our teams in Metz have achieved. I sincerely thank our institutional partners, especially France Relance 2030 and the Mercy Endowment Fund, for their support”, said Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser, Chairwoman of the Shareholders’ Committee, at the inauguration.

STRONG LEGACY MEETS FUTURE-PROOF INNOVATIONS

Balers are at the core of CLAAS’ business and represent one of the key competencies of the company. The past 100 years have seen the development of milestones such as the knotter billhook, VARIANT round balers, ROLLATEX net wrapping and QUADRANT square balers.

In addition to the inauguration of the two new production lines and renovation of the assembly areas, 1,800 m² of production space previously occupied by a logistics warehouse has been freed up. New test cabins dedicated to test larger machines, which are more ergonomic and soundproofed, and intuitive ergonomic manipulators have also been installed.





Award winning JAGUAR 1200

Recent months have seen the new CLAAS JAGUAR 1200 picking up awards both in Europe and the USA.

At the Agritechnica show in November, having both been awarded Silver Agritechnica Innovation Awards, the JAGUAR 1200 and the CEMOS AUTO CHOPPING system then also went on to also be awarded FARM MACHINE 2026 by a 21-member international jury of trade journalists.

Using a camera with a CMOS image sensor installed in the discharge spout, CEMOS AUTO CHOPPING automatically analyses the CSPS value (Corn Silage Processing Score), a key indicator of the degree of maize grain processing and thus of the quality of corn silage. If there are deviations from the set value, the forage harvester automatically adjusts the CSPS-relevant settings, such as the cracker gap, the driving speed and the engine power of the forage harvester. The data determined can also be transferred to the cloud-based farm management system CLAAS connect.

This was followed in January by the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineering (ASABE) honouring the JAGUAR 1000 forage harvester series and the ORBIS 10500 corn header with AE50 Awards. The ASABE jury in particular highlighted the ORBIS 10500 for its sophisticated engineering and its contribution to increasing overall harvesting efficiency.



Martyn Henderson retires

R This spring saw the retirement of Martyn Henderson who, in the course of his 34 years with the company, has been the 'heart and soul' of RICKERBY and a driving force behind the company's growth to become one of the UK's largest dealerships.



Martyn joined RICKERBY on the 14th January 1991 as a salesman covering the north of Carlisle. Thanks to his dedication, expertise and infectious enthusiasm, he transformed it into one of the very best areas in the company. His journey from salesman to Carlisle branch manager in 1995, then Regional Sales Manager for the West in 1999, and finally Sales Director in 2013, tells the story of someone who never stopped growing, learning and leading.

Under Martyn's guidance, RICKERBY West expanded from two branches to four, but his impact goes far beyond numbers. To name just a few of his achievements he has built relationships with customers that span decades and

helped navigate the company through both challenging times and periods of growth.

But Martyn has been more than a Sales Director. Alongside Ken Conley, he's been part of a partnership that has steered RICKERBY with wisdom and care. Their long hours and road trips together, fuelled by coffee and bacon rolls, are well-known throughout the company.

As Martyn trades his daily schedule for more time with his collection of vintage David Brown tractors, cheering on Carlisle United with renewed passion, and finally being able to take his time over a coffee without rushing to the next appointment - we wish him the very best.



CLAAS on tour

The summer show season is around the corner, kicking off with the return of ScotGrass in May.

As in past years, CLAAS will be centre stage at the event and making its debut there will be the World Record beating JAGUAR 1000. Also making its first UK public appearance will be the revolutionary new AXION 9, which

sets new standards for comfort, automation and connectivity and is this year's Tractor of the Year in the High Power category.

In addition to these major new products, also on display and working will be the numerous new additions to the CLAAS Green Harvest forage harvesting and baling range.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO OUR STAND AT THESE SHOWS IN 2026:

ScotGrass

13th May 2026
Lockerbie

Royal Welsh Show

20th - 23rd July 2026
Builth Wells

Royal Highland Show

18th - 21st June 2026
Ingliston, Edinburgh

FTMTA Farm Machinery Show

17th - 19th November 2026
Punchestown, Ireland

Keep an eye on your local
CLAAS Dealers' social
media pages to discover
where you can find them
at local shows near you!



The ARION 6: Premium comfort features and new design

The Agritechnica show last November saw the launch of a new addition to the CLAAS ARION range – the ARION 6.190 CMATIC, adopting the new VISOR design and numbering, first seen with the XERION 12 and AXION 9.

Due to enter production in May, the top-of-the-range ARION 6.190 CMATIC model will initially be introduced and offered alongside the ARION 660 CMATIC. Features include premium driver's seats with massage function, a high-end multimedia system with wireless smartphone connection and Apple CarPlay or Android Auto, as well as a new lighting concept.

SMART POWER TRAIN FOR OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE



The ARION 6.190 CMATIC is powered by a smooth-running 6.8-litre six-cylinder engine with up to 205 hp maximum output with CPM and a maximum torque of 849 Nm at 1,500 rpm. The additional power provided by CLAAS POWER MANAGEMENT (CPM) is now gradually activated in the new ARION 6.190 CMATIC from 185 to 205 hp and thus in line with demand, which increases effectiveness and efficiency, especially for jobs such as transport work and powering PTO driven implements or hydraulic drives.

The CMATIC gearbox developed and built by CLAAS Industrietechnik is characterised by highly efficient power train management. In addition to first-class load reactivity and tuning of engine characteristics and transmission ratio, it has functions such as the automatic trailer stretch brake and the unique wheel loader mode for front loader work.

The CEMOS operator assistance system is also available as an option for the ARION 6 CMATIC. Based on self-learning algorithms, it optimises area output and efficiency during field work in dialogue with the operator and helps with the correct ballasting and tyre pressure.

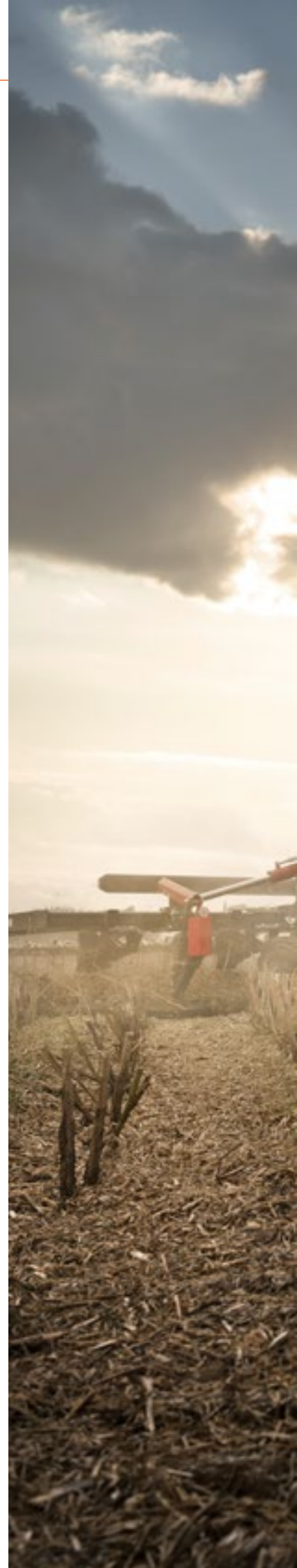
FATIGUE-FREE WORKING

Numerous comfort features such as the sprung front axle and the quiet, fully suspended cab of the ARION 6 CMATIC enable stress- and fatigue-free working, even on long days. The controls are clearly organised, and with the CMOTION multifunction control lever there are eight freely assignable function keys as well as operation of the rear linkage and headland management CSM in one hand.

New premium driver's seats with massage function, semi-active suspension and seat climate control are available for the ARION 6 CMATIC for the first time.

In addition, a new high-end multimedia system with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and DAB+ is also available.

Setting up and monitoring parameters such as hydraulics, lifting units, ISOBUS-UT or CEMOS is intuitive and clearly organised on the integrated CEBIS terminal in the right-hand armrest. Access and input is either via the touch display or rotary/push switch.





Another new feature is the AUTO CSM function on the GPS PILOT CEMIS 1200. This automatically triggers the individually programmable CSM headland management sequences when entering or leaving the headland. This achieves a new level of automation and thus relief for the operator.

Using the GPS PILOT CEMIS 1200 terminal, reference lines can be planned in advance in CLAAS connect using the field boundaries and then used and shared with just a few clicks. In addition, the new Auto RefLine function automatically recognises the appropriate or logical reference track based on the position and direction of travel of the vehicle, and automatically switches between different reference tracks.



New CONVIO FLEX 15.30m cutterbar

Following successful trials in North America and Australia, CLAAS is now making the new CONVIO FLEX 1530 available to European LEXION customers. The flexible draper cutterbar has an effective working width of 15.30 metres and is equipped with a flexible knife bar as well as all the features and automatic functions already found in the CONVIO FLEX series.

The CONVIO FLEX with its flexible knife bar and ACTIVE FLOAT contact pressure, which can be infinitely adjusted at the touch of a button during operation, automatically adapts to ground contours by up to 90 mm upwards and up to 135 mm downwards in order to always achieve a uniform cutting pattern with minimised header losses. The hydropneumatically suspended stabiliser wheels fitted as standard keep the cutterbar stable and ensure improved ground contour following with a more even cutting height across the full working width.

The power train of the CONVIO FLEX 1530 is divided into two areas. The mechanical section with gearboxes and PTO drive shafts drives the intake auger and knife bar, while the hydraulic section drives the side belts, centre belt, reel and rapeseed knives. Overload protection reliably protects the entire power train from damage.

As with smaller working width versions, the CONVIO FLEX 1530 is fully suitable for rapeseed harvesting. The optional rapeseed equipment includes conveyor augers on the right and left with a diameter of 425 mm in the upper area of the cutterbar rear wall and rapeseed knives that can be attached and removed without tools.



STATE-OF-THE-ART AUTOMATIC FUNCTIONS

The CONVIO FLEX 1530 is equipped with a wide range of practical automatic functions for optimum performance. AUTOMATIC BELT SPEED automatically adjusts the belt speed to the driving speed of the combine harvester and thus the volume and mass of the crop flow. Thanks to the slip and standstill warning of the belts, the operator can intervene early if there is a risk of overloading and thus avoid critical conditions, even in poor visibility due to dust or at night.

In combination with a FIELD SCANNER, the DLG silver medal-winning CEMOS AUTO HEADER is now also available for all CONVIO and CONVIO FLEX draper cutters from model year 2026, whereby the vertical and horizontal reel positions are automated in addition to the speed of the conveyor belts, further relieving the operator. This allows the operator to concentrate fully on monitoring all machine functions and potential overloading during operation, as well as keeping a focussed eye on the crop in front of the combine harvester.



Live grain nutrient analysis in the field



With the new NUTRIMETER GRAIN now available for the LEXION, not only will it be possible to map yield variation, but also to map and precisely analyse grain quality, and is the first transmissive NIR measurement system for combine harvesters that enables online measurement of grain ingredients from the combine.

To achieve this, the cuvette transmission method for stationary centres, which has proven itself in laboratory equipment, has been further developed into a continuously operating throughput method. In contrast to the previously common reflection method, which only measures the surface of the centres, the transmissive method measures the ingredients homogeneously through all layers of the centres.

On the LEXION, a bypass in the grain elevator continuously feeds a small amount of grain through a so-called integrating ball, in which the centre punches are completely illuminated. This enables extremely precise measurement of the protein content in grain and the oil content in oilseeds. The sensor can therefore be used for many types of grain.

The measured values are displayed in the CEBIS terminal and also transferred to the CLAAS connect portal. The data documented there can be used for subsequent storage, marketing and process planning. Since the data is already available during harvest in the field, different quality batches with different protein contents can, for example, be sorted specifically during unloading, transported away from the field separately and stored in sorted batches.

The greatly reduced mixing of qualities and the targeted formation of batches of different qualities means that better prices can be achieved during marketing – especially since the transmissive measurement method is also used in the grain trade and therefore recognised and accepted in the marketing chain.

Precise real-time moisture determination also enables even more accurate, site-specific yield recording and yield mapping. Mapping the nutrients also allows for even more sustainable, resource-efficient cultivation of high-quality grain – for example, through varying fertiliser and drilling rates depending on yield and protein or oil content.

Based on the NUTRIMETER GRAIN data, precise live mapping is also possible on the CEMIS 1200, providing an initial overview of the yield potential and quality differences within an area while harvesting is still in progress – important for both farmers and contractors.

Despite its higher precision, the purchase price for the NUTRIMETER GRAIN is only about half that of NIR devices previously available for combine harvesters ex works. This means that it is economical even for smaller areas of use. In addition to the cost of the sensor technology, there is a one-off licence fee for use on the specific machine.





Revolutionary big baling concept

While only still in development and not due to enter production until 2027, the new CUBIX represents the next generation of big square balers, with potential outputs of up to 70 tonnes per hour with consistent high bale densities of up to 235 kg/m³.

Awarded an Agritechnica Gold Innovation award, the CUBIX features a revolutionary drive concept, AI-supported bale density control and an innovative double-loop knotter.

Creating a 120 x 90 cm bale, the main gearbox for the CUBIX is integrated into the frame with a straight power flow. The innovative drive works with two flywheels, each weighing 202 kg, arranged longitudinally to the direction of travel, which store a lot of drive energy and thus ensure a smooth compressing process.

The two flywheels are started one after the other. Once they have reached their target speed of 1,650 rpm, the ram and finally the rotor are switched on. Power is transmitted from the tractor PTO shaft to the flywheels via a main gearbox integrated centrally in the drawbar and two power belts – one per flywheel.

Power transmission to the secondary units is via efficient, low-loss and low-wear closed planetary gear.



The ram, rotor and rake drives are switched individually via integrated clutches. In addition, when the machine is switched off, the ram is stopped at 35 degrees from the rear dead centre so that when restarted it first performs an idle stroke before the next compression stroke to protect the power train of the CUBIX and the tractor.

PRESSURE CONTROL WITH AI ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

To avoid potential overload, interconnected torque sensors in the rotor and rake gearbox detect the gearbox loads and continuously regulate automatic assistance systems and so enable the CUBIX to be safely operated at its maximum potential.

With the additional AI-supported control of press density and bale length, deviations in bale weights of no more than two percent are possible. The CUBIX is fitted with six double loop knotters that leave no twine waste.

The tensile strength of the twine is retained at around 70 per cent, meaning that either higher compaction or more economical twine can be used with the same strength.

New ORBIS and DIRECT DISC attachments for the JAGUAR 1000

NEW ORBIS 12000: POWERFUL 16-ROW HARVESTING

Joining the 12-row ORBIS 9000 and 14-row ORBIS 10500, the ORBIS 12000 has a working width of 12 m, i.e. 16 maize rows with a row spacing of 75 cm. In addition to optimising the forager's hp-per-row ratio, it also reduces the distance travelled during harvest by 33 per cent compared to the usual 12-row model.

As with the two smaller ORBIS headers, the knife and transport discs as well as the feed drums are driven independently of each other for optimum chopping quality in all harvesting conditions and lengths of cut. CEMOS AUTO HEADER automatically controls the speeds of the intake discs separately for the two vertical feed cones. Depending on the length of cut, throughput capacity and driving speed, the speed is adjusted fully automatically. The operator can also adjust the speed manually from the cab depending on the harvesting situation.



Three sensors enable the AUTO CONTOUR system to detect uneven ground and automatically adjust the ORBIS 12000 to the preselected working height, while two actively controlled stabiliser wheels ensure even more precise ground tracking. In combination with the integrated tilting frame on the robust pre-compression unit of the JAGUAR 1000, this enables fast and smooth ground contour following, so that the working height is always maintained regardless of the topography and forward speed.

Thanks to the symmetrical compact folding mechanism, the integrated automatic transport protection and the integrated transport chassis, safe road transport is guaranteed with an external width of less than 3.30 m without any set-up time and having to leave the driver's seat.



DIRECT DISC 8400

The new DIRECT DISC 8400 whole crop attachment has a working width of 8.41m. Two 4.20 m wide MAX CUT mower bars with external drives and a disc speed of 3,200 rpm at an efficient, low input speed guarantee uncompromising cutting performance even at high working speeds and in difficult harvesting conditions. The quick-change blade system ensures worn blades can be replaced in a matter of minutes, while the SAFETY LINK module protects the mower bar from damage caused by foreign objects.

Four touch sensors on the underside ensure optimum ground contour following in and across the direction of travel despite the large working width – with active control of working height and lateral compensation via the tilting frame on the JAGUAR 1000. Thanks to the AUTO CONTOUR control system, a clean cut is achieved under all operating conditions and even on uneven surfaces.

The 800mm diameter feed roller and active hydraulic pre-compression can be adjusted to two different heights hydraulically. In addition, the speed can be adjusted to three different settings to suit the operating conditions and yield.

Optional side cutting blades are available on one or both sides that are switched on and off from the cab and swivelled hydraulically into the parking position.

As with all ORBIS and the PICK UP attachments, the automatic attachment recognition system transfers all stored settings from the DIRECT DISC 8400 to the JAGUAR, so that the operator can get started right away after attachment – without time-consuming readjustments of speeds and height settings.

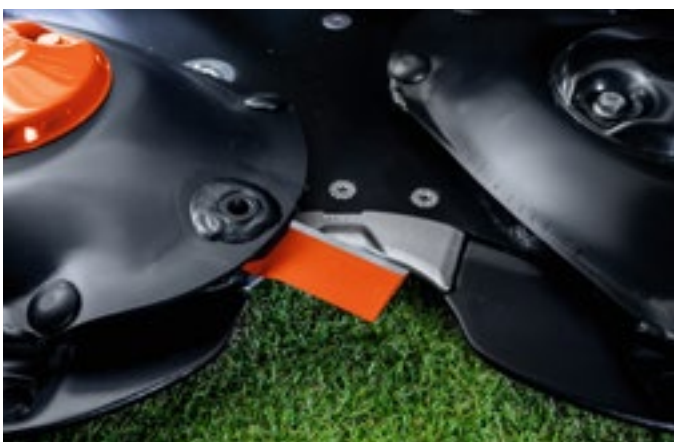


Up to 21 m of swath clearing

Following the introduction of the DISCO 9300 DIRECT SWATHER in 2024, a new version with a cutting width of 10.71m is now available.



Register your interest
with your local dealer for
demonstrations in
Spring 2027



As with the smaller version, the DISCO 1100 DIRECT SWATHER features conical swathing augers and telescopic booms giving infinite working width adjustment from 9.70 to 10.70 m.

Currently it is the largest mounted mower with swath merging available on the market, and when used in conjunction with a four-rotor rake, swaths from up to 21 m can be created to fully utilise the output of even the most powerful forage harvesters.

FOUR PLACEMENT STRATEGIES AND LOW DRIVE REQUIREMENTS

The new DISCO 1100 DIRECT SWATHER gives the option of four mowing and placement strategies dependent on harvesting conditions:

1. Complete wide spreading for effective, fast wilting with large quantities of forage.
2. Mowing with integrated centre swath placement for fast and effective field clearance without tedders and rakes and / or for GPS harvesting or autumn residual area harvesting in a single pass.
3. 21 m mowing on 13 m bed placement (combined swath/wide spreading) for active control of the wilting process and / or optimum utilisation of the forage harvester.
4. Mowing with one-sided swathing for field edge clearing.

Thanks to the absence of conditioners, the DISCO 1100 DIRECT SWATHER can be operated with tractors from 220 hp and is therefore extremely economical.



TAPERED AUGER DESIGN

The two tapered augers are arranged close and parallel to the mowing discs to ensure consistent, reliable crop pick-up even when growth is uneven. The tapered design increases the feed volume towards the middle, as the increasing diameter of the auger enables more crop to be conveyed.

The tapered auger housing has integrated 'pockets' in the rear to expand the available space, thereby significantly increasing the feed volume and thus the throughput. A shear bar and knives at the end of the augers prevents crop build-up and so guarantees blockage-free operation.

Swathing plates mounted on the central console guide the crop flow under the mower frame. Additional hydraulically pivoting and adjustable swath curtains prevent the crop being thrown out during one-sided swath laying. This ensures uniform swath formation under all conditions, maximising the efficiency of the downstream harvest chain.

Where the crop is to be spread for wilting, the top-mounted auger drive in the DISCO 9300 DIRECT SWATHER enables the augers to be swung open hydraulically at any time, allowing the unprocessed crop to be deposited across the full mowing width. The augers can be conveniently swung open or shut individually or in parallel via ISOBUS – even while mowing is underway.





Mean green mowing

The first signs that silage season has started in County Down comes when J D Townley's XERION 3300VC comes out of winter hibernation, and after a service, polish and a bit of TLC, the distinctive bark of its Cat C9 engine can be heard as it sets to work mowing.

This year sees the XERION celebrating its 20th season of mowing, during which time it has worked its way through four sets of triple mowers and is currently paired with a 9.10m wide DISCO 9400 C DUO working with a DISCO 3200 F PROFIL.

Working ahead of a JAGUAR 970, over the course of the season the XERION will work its way through 800ha of first cut silage and then anything up to three further cuts of varying amounts depending on the season.

"The first triples I had were on a reverse drive tractor before changing that in 2000 for a JAGUAR 860 with front mowers that I ran for six years. That worked very well, but was slow on the road," says Roy Townley. "Frank Ward took me over to the factory and having returned on the Friday, I put in an order for the XERION, a set of DISCO 8550 triple mowers, an AXION and a LEXION on the Monday. At the time, we were running a 20,000th Anniversary JAGUAR that had silver wheel rims, so we arranged that the XERION could also be supplied with silver rims to match.

LOW COST OF OWNERSHIP

"The XERION cost £125,000 and the mowers £50,000 and everyone thought I was mad, but I think I have had the last laugh as the cost of ownership has been brilliant over the years. At the time it was the same price as a self-propelled mower, but the benefit of the XERION is that I only need to replace the mowers every four years and not the whole machine. Also it's very recognisable so has been an extremely good advert for the business."

The XERION is driven and looked after by Trevor 'Cleet' Thompson who says that one of the reasons that the XERION, which still shines and certainly not looking its age, has stood the test of time and been so reliable is due to the fact it is only used for mowing.

"We did initially think about doing arable work with it, but the fact we didn't use it for cultivations or one-pass drilling has certainly benefited it, with the result that it only has 6,500 hours on it so has plenty of life left in it yet," he says. "Other than treating it to a new set of injectors last year, the only other things needing doing have been a new driveshaft and fuel delivery pump. The front tyres are original but we did replace the rears due to the weight of the mowers.

"With the cab turned around the XERION is ideal for mowing. You are sat right above the mowers and can see everything around you. Also having the engine behind you, I can easily hear any stones or branches going through the mower, so can stop and move them out of the swath."



Pictured left to right: Trevor 'Cleet' Thompson with father and son, James and Roy Townley.

machine

“With the cab turned around, the XERION is ideal for mowing. You are sat right above the mowers and can see everything around you.”

STILL GOT ALL ITS HORSES

Even when working in heavy crops, Cleet says it does not miss a beat and has the power to just push on, comfortably averaging 8.0ha an hour at 14-16 kph, with a best of 12.8ha in just 55 minutes. Field size can be anything from 0.4ha up to 12ha, but with its four-wheel steering, which Cleet has set to come in above 15kph, it is more than manoeuvrable enough.

“Due to our conditions, you are usually faced with a wall of grass, especially with the beef boys who only take one cut, but the XERION is more than up to it. Overall fuel consumption is only about 2.0 to 4.0 litres a hectare and as it has got older and loosened up, the better the engine has become. It just sits there quite happily and the temperature gauge doesn't move.”

Just how well the engine now performs was highlighted last Christmas when Cleet put it forward for a charity dyno test. This showed that instead of its nominal 335hp, at 1,000 rpm the C9 engine was generating 345hp rising to a max power of 351.9hp, with max torque at 2128 lb ft/hr. “It's still got all its horses and they are alive and well,” comments Roy.

The XERION is also a regular at various charity tractor pulling events that can see up to 60 tractors competing, “which I often win,” says Cleet, grinning. “It will certainly outpull a 400hp tractor and has even been up against tractors tweaked to over 600hp, but due to its even sized wheels and weight distribution it leaves them standing! The last event we organised here was for Macmillan Cancer Support which raised over £25,000 and we are currently planning another for this Christmas.”



Market leading cab comfort



One of the two pre-series AXION 9.450 TT tractors that have been working in the UK since last summer has been at Sparsholt Manor Farm in Oxfordshire, where it has mainly been responsible for drilling with a 12m Horsch Avatar.

The arrival of the AXION 9 TERRA TRAC represents a conscious step away from the twin track tractors that farm manager Piers Cowling has historically run on the 1,300ha farm on the Lambourne Downs, as he gradually moves away from minimal cultivations toward direct drilling.

“My number one priority is blackgrass,” he says. “We have been growing cover crops here for the past 13 years and now run a seven year rotation where first and second wheat accounts for about 50% of cropping.

At the same time I have moved more toward direct drilling and run the Avatar since 2022, while also concentrating on

boosting soil health, with the result that organic matter now stands at 7% compared to 5% in 2018. This has also helped in the drive to maintain yields while reducing N use, and by using inhibitors I have been able to maintain our rolling average of 9.5 tonnes while reducing N use from 220kg in three passes to 160kg in two.”

One of the main drawbacks to running tracked tractors is scuffing on the headland, which previously would have been pulled out while cultivating. With the move to direct drilling, in 2024 Piers started looking at other options and based on his good relationship with CLAAS WESTERN from running LEXION combines, he approached them about an AXION 960TT.

“We had one on demonstration along with a four-track tractor and we liked the concept of the half-track system and transmission. The farm ranges from 600 to 800ft and we have a lot of steep banks, so while at 448hp it was more powerful than our twin track machine, it put the power down far better. However, while we liked the track system, engine and transmission of the AXION 960TT the big drawback for operator Liam Alley was the cab which was dated and not on a par with other tractors.”

Knowing that a replacement for the AXION was in the pipeline, while he was not given a lot of the detail, Richard Hutchinson from CLAAS WESTERN was given permission to reveal to Piers that a replacement was imminent, with the cab and the operator comfort being one of major new features.

DEFINITELY THE BEST ON THE MARKET

“From what Richard was able to show me and knowing the high level of support we have had from CLAAS and WESTERN over many years, in agreement with the farm’s agents and owners, I confidently took on one of the pre-series machines, which arrived in June.

“The new AXION 9 addresses all the drawbacks that we found with the old AXION 960. The cab is absolutely fantastic and has undoubtedly taken the AXION right to the top of the league when it comes to comfort, which is far superior. Without doubt I would say it is now definitely the best on the market.

“Performance wise, all up the Avatar fully loaded is 17 tonnes, but the AXION handles it with ease and is comfortably on top of the job when working on our banks. It certainly puts the power down to the ground far better and is far kinder to the soil when turning, but fuel consumption is very good and similar to our old 400hp tractor. In addition, it is very good on the road which then gives me more options as to what we use the AXION for. Technology wise its early days, but for drilling using section control and variable rate, it has handled that well.

“Yes, having a pre-series version has been a leap of faith, but has certainly been worth doing. The new AXION is a very impressive machine and the operator comfort is superb. Overall, we are extremely pleased with the new AXION, plus it has also been very interesting just getting involved in the process and meeting so many different people from CLAAS who are involved in the project.”



“Yes, having a pre-series version has been a leap of faith, but has certainly been worth doing. The new AXION is a very impressive machine and the operator comfort is superb.”
 Piers Cowling

Liam Alley

Massive change for the better

For operator Jamie Wood, when it comes to driver comfort and user friendliness the new AXION 9.450TT is a complete game changer compared to the AXION 960TT it replaced.

“The cab is a massive improvement,” he says. “It’s extremely user friendly, everything comes to hand and I like how the main dashboard is now mounted on the A pillar. The cab is amazing; it’s so spacious and quiet. Even at 6ft, having swivelled the seat round I can fully stretch out my legs, which I certainly could not have done before. Even when power harrowing it’s so quiet, you just don’t hear anything. It’s just like being in a car. I’ve been surprised by quite how much it has changed.”

JDF Farming farm 1,689ha, split between three units in four counties. David Foers explains that in order to handle the wide range of soil types and with only four main tractors on the farm, they need a high horsepower tractor that is versatile and capable of handling a wide range of implements.

“We probably have far too many implements, but on some ground and depending on cropping we might need to plough, while elsewhere we will be direct drilling. The AXION works with everything from a Horsch Avatar, to a Rapid or a combination drill, through to ploughing on the land, pulling a Terrano or pan busting with a ripper.

ALL ROUND TRACTOR

“The AXION TT is an ideal all round tractor. In the past we have run crawlers, and then for a number of years used a conventional 415hp tractor, which while we like them as a general purpose tractor, for heavy cultivations it was really on its limit all the time.

“We looked at all options and of all the dealers we work with, CLAAS EASTERN are one of the best, so two years ago we approached them about trying an AXION 960TT. We put it to work on some ex-root land that was in a right mess and it just floated over it.

“What really sold it to us was when we compared it with another tractor, pulling a Simba SLD on some reclaimed open cast land. The other tractor struggled and was working at 9kph with 16% wheelslip, whereas the AXION TT was working at

13kph with just 2% slip – and it was only afterwards we realised that we had not even put it in 4-wheel drive!

“The AXION 960TT was a fantastic tractor, we loved it and were really impressed with it as it far outperformed anything else, but the only thing that let it down was the cab. So even though it was only 18 months old, when Josh (Billyard) offered us the opportunity to replace it with a pre-series AXION 9 series, we jumped at the opportunity.”

20% FUEL SAVING

Aside from the spacious new K09 cab, the other main difference that Jamie Wood has noticed is in the fuel consumption, which he says is far less. “Overall, I think fuel consumption is about 20% less, mainly due to the combination of CEMOS AUTOMATIC and the new torque sensing transmission system. Regardless of what I am doing, 90% of the time I just leave the AXION in automatic and just let it sort itself out as that seems to be the most fuel efficient.

“The transmission is far smoother and seems to work very well in conjunction with the brakes. With the torque sensing system you can drop the implement in and go; there is no drop in speed and you don’t need to think about putting more power on.

“The AXION 9.450TT is an extremely good all-round machine. It’s extremely manoeuvrable, very versatile and just feels like a normal tractor; a lot of the time, even on the road, you forget that it has tracks. We just treat it as a normal tractor that is just at home doing heavy cultivations or being used to cart sugar beet.



David Foers



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Jamie Wood



“The AXION 9.450TT is an extremely good all-round machine. It's very manoeuvrable, very versatile and just feels like a normal tractor; a lot of the time, even on the road, you forget that it has tracks.” Jamie Wood

Power in a compact package



The first ARION 570 CMATIC to be delivered in the UK was bought by Mark Burgess, who was in the market for a compact tractor, that would have the power for fieldwork yet would also be good on the road and for haulage work.

“Overall I have been extremely pleased with the ARION; it has done all that I hoped and more.”
Mark Burgess

“I like to try and do as much as possible to be sustainable and as self-contained as I can,” explains Mark, who in addition to the main ring fenced farm of 156ha, has also taken on two off-lying blocks of land, one of which is 30 minutes in one direction, and the second 20 minutes in the other. The main enterprise is a 420-cow autumn and spring calving dairy herd, with calves either for replacements or kept on as beef and taken through to finishing, meaning all-told there is around 1,000 cattle on the farm.

“Until now my main tractor has been an ARION 630 bought new in 2010 that has done over 12,000 hours which has served us very well and definitely earned its keep. Having taken on more land I was looking for a compact powerful tractor that would enable me to take back more work in house, just so as to have control and for timeliness. So, in order to take the workload off the ARION, I spoke to SHARNFORD TRACTORS about having something similar, but with more power.

NEARLY NOT TO BE

“Unfortunately at that stage there was nothing in the CLAAS range that really fitted the bill, so even though I wanted to deal with them, as they have always looked after me so well and they are a proper family dealership, I left it and looked elsewhere.

“It got to the stage where I was going to phone the dealer and order a tractor, but the cattle got out and I forgot, and an hour later Simon (Toon) at SHARNFORD TRACTORS called me to ask if I was still looking, as there was something new in the range.”

Delivered in May, Mark says that he has been surprised by how manoeuvrable and versatile the ARION 570 has proved to be. While more than comfortable on the road thanks to its cab and front-axle suspension, in the field it does everything from fertiliser spreading to mowing with a front and rear DISCO combination. Yet when necessary, its compact dimensions also meant it is quite at home being used around the yard and when needed to drive the feedwagon.

“While I may not necessarily have specified a CVT transmission, it does seem to be the way that tractors are going and is very good for jobs like mowing. It’s also the first time that we have had autosteer on a tractor or air-brakes and 50kph.

“Overall I have been extremely pleased with the ARION; it has done all that I hoped and more. But it is also the support that comes with it from SHARNFORD TRACTORS, which is just as important, along with the reassurance of 5-year warranty. I am so pleased that they were finally able to find me the ARION.”



"I am absolutely chuffed to bits with the AXOS. It means we are more time efficient, allowing me to order and handle larger orders of net and be able to quote for larger jobs that I would not have been able to handle before."

Nick Wiltshire

Fencing efficiency

Investing in a new AXOS 3.95 with an FL80 loader marks a major step up in both power and size of tractor as fencing contractor Nick Wiltshire looks to take his business to the next level.

Until now, Nick has relied on a 40hp compact tractor which, he says, was fine but the business had got to a stage where it was just too small for his needs. "For fencing work I don't need screens or electronics, so the AXOS is ideal for what I want. Mechanically it's a simple, straightforward tractor, but it has a comfortable cab with air conditioning and Bluetooth, plus being able to lock the doors open is fantastic, as when fencing you are always in and out of the tractor.

"I am absolutely chuffed to bits with the AXOS. It means we are more time efficient, allowing me to order and handle larger orders of net and be able to quote for larger jobs that I would not have been able to handle before.

"Looking at what is available, not many manufacturers offer a tractor like the AXOS. I have always been interested in tractors and had my heart set on one day owning a CLAAS, plus I knew from farming friends that CLAAS EASTERN has a fantastic reputation for their service support.

"I am only a small fencing contractor, but they have been absolutely fantastic to deal with. William (Clark) and especially their finance manager Bob Taylor could not have been more friendly and helpful. With a lot of finance companies all they want is to sell you a standard finance plan, but Bob made the effort to come out and meet me, learn about the business and what I wanted and then build a finance offer around that.

THE FULL PACKAGE

"Yes, I could have bought a used tractor, but it's not just a tractor that I have invested in, but the whole package. A good product, with a 5-year warranty – no one else does that, tailored finance and a service package so as to fix my costs, plus a great team of people at the dealership."

In order to make full use of the 92hp AXOS, Nick has invested in a complete range of machinery to go with it. Also new is a Bushpig netting unit to go on the front of the tractor, suitable for 2.0m high netting, which has hydraulic side shift, tilt, clamp and tensioning. In addition, he has bought a 2.1m side flail mower and small hedgecutter.

"The Bushpig is a new venture. I am doing an increasing amount of grant work against hedges and deer fencing around new woodland, as well as quoting for fencing to go around solar panels and dog fields. Previously I just used chains for tensioning, but having the 2.0m netter unit makes tensioning far easier and quicker.

"Having the loader on the AXOS saves a lot of man handling and time. A full pallet of rails is nearly 2 tonnes and a pack of round posts 1 tonne so it takes far less time to lay out a job plus its important to look after your body."





JAGUAR 1100

Getting big acreages of crop chopped in tight weather windows has become an increasing challenge for Yorkshire farming and contracting outfit Metcalfe Farms. With 2100 head of cattle of its own to feed and a further 6000-7000ha of silage work for its customers, the business' three forage harvesters are kept fairly busy throughout the growing season.

Previously running two JAGUAR 990s and a 980, at times the operation could get pretty stretched, especially when the weather threatened to close in peak season. So when the opportunity came up last year to increase output with one of CLAAS' pre-production 1000-series JAGUAR, the Metcalfes jumped at the chance.

"As something of an insurance measure against increasingly challenging weather patterns, we generally tend to opt for the biggest forager on offer," explains Richard Metcalfe.

"The logistics of running three silage gangs at once can be a bit of a challenge so we're keen to look at ways of going back to two teams for the majority of the season. The only realistic way of doing that is by going bigger. With its wider crop channel and of course extra horsepower, the new JAGUAR looked like it could meet the challenge."

So early last season a JAGUAR 1100 arrived in the yard at Metcalfe Farms. With a 1020hp V12 engine under the hood and a 21% wider crop channel than previous models it had the potential to significantly increase output.

HOW HAS THE JAGUAR 1100 PERFORMED?

"We have been blown away by the capacity of the new machine. At the backend of last maize season it was comfortably chewing through 350-370 tonnes an hour while the 990s' hourly throughput was well under 300 tonnes.

"While the output was impressive, what was more remarkable was its fuel usage. Despite the bigger engine it averaged about 10% less diesel per tonne across the entire season.

"I'm convinced that's all down to the wider crop channel and improved feed roller set-up. Having hydraulic pre-compression on both sets of rollers means the mat of crop going into the drum is so much more consistent so you don't get that horrible surging effect in lumpy swaths of grass. A constant, even engine load makes for a more efficient set-up overall.

"Of course the wider rollers, shearbar and drum mean the machine can handle more volume at the front end but often on the 990s the blower and spout could be the bottleneck. Beefing up everything all the way through means it's like having a 990 on steroids."





“While the output was impressive, what was more remarkable was its fuel usage. Despite the bigger engine it averaged about 10% less diesel per tonne across the entire season.” Richard Metcalfe



CHOP QUALITY

“Judging by what ends up in the clamp, the new 24-knife V-FLEX cylinder seems to have done decent job this season. With a big chunk of our workload now for biogas plants we need to be able to get down to 6-8mm and the new drum is able to achieve that consistently. Equally we can go up over 20mm for our dairy customers that want it that bit longer,” says operator Ross Thwaites.

“I like the way it’s been designed to better cope with foreign objects going through the machine. We were fortunate enough not to swallow anything nasty last season so we haven’t had to put it to test as yet.

“In a big part that’s down to the reliability of CLAAS’ Stop Rock system. The new version has so much more adjustment so I can tweak it to suit the conditions - that’s important given the amount of stony ground we cover.

“The V-FLEX knives seem to last that bit better too. In 800 hours we put two sets on last season whereas with the 990 we’d have got through three lots in that time.”

CLUTCHLESS PICK-UP

“Forager output isn’t all about chopping capacity. Often it’s how the crop is fed into the machine that makes the difference. On that front the new grass pick-up has transformed things.

“By doing away with slip clutches CLAAS has massively improved the pick-up’s performance and reduced our downtime. Even in the chewiest swaths of tilled, knotty grass the hydraulic relief valves don’t give out – the pick-up just keeps shoving crop in to the feed rollers. It’s clearly been built to take the load.”

“The new flat-face cooling package in the middle of the machine has made so much more room for getting the corn cracker in and out. It’s no longer a battle – it slides in and out square and true every time.

“And swapping the complete spout over for the longer maize version makes it so much quicker. I undo a ring of bolts, a few hydraulic couplers and a couple of plugs and it’s a straight swap.

“I can now switch the cracker, grass box, belly-plate and spout all in under an hour and a half.”

“Being located in the Yorkshire Dales we have some pretty serious slopes to deal with at times. Having central tyre inflation on our foragers is essential – we need all the traction we can get.”

QUANTIMETER YIELD MONITORING

“We’ve had CLAAS’ QUANTIMETER yield monitoring system on our foragers for a number of years. It’s really useful in giving us a good idea of exactly what we’ve got in the clamps for our own cows and our customers’,” says Richard.

“The accuracy of the QUANTIMETER set-up means we can precisely work out exactly what each tonne is costing us to chop whether in light or heavy crops.”

“When the 1100 is on song you can tell it has huge potential. Its sheer appetite suggests that it could give us the option to go back to just two silage gangs which would significantly help us to streamline our operation.

“That combination of the improved pick-up, the more consistent feed, the wider crop channel and of course the extra horsepower is going to take some beating. Having taken all those factors into account, we’ve now placed an order for a second JAGUAR 1100.”



Precision chop revenue boost

By changing from a forage wagon to running his own JAGUAR 840 forager, not only has Richard Threlfell sorted out the problem of cattle sifting through their ration, but as a result, yields have increased and monthly revenue boosted by around 10%.

Running a 350-cow fully housed pedigree Holstein herd milked using six robots installed five years ago, in addition to a further 450 followers and beef cattle, for many years Richard has relied on a forage wagon for his silage making. While the system was cheap to run, one of the drawbacks was cattle sifting out the concentrates and leaving the silage.

"This was particularly apparent with the mix for the dry cows coming back into the herd, where we were seeing higher levels of milk fever," says Richard. "Speaking with my nutritionist Philip Robertson at New Breed UK, he suggested that to avoid this, in addition to using shorter, precision chopped silage, at calving the ration should also include straw and blends. We tried that, took the expensive cake out and it has worked well ever since.

"On the back of that, we then turned our attention to the main herd and the ongoing battle we had been having to increase intake and reduce sorting. We tried things like adding molasses but again he said the best solution was to change to shorter, precision chopped silage and put forward costings to show that if I made the change and invested in a forage harvester, it would quickly pay for itself due to an increase in yield."

Having checked and double checked the figures, Richard took the plunge and contacted RICKERBY about buying his own JAGUAR forager, rather than rely on a contractor. "I was a bit apprehensive about what a forager would cost, but was quite surprised by the figure that came back."

NO SORTING

With the order for the JAGUAR 840 placed last March, RICKERBY initially lent Richard a JAGUAR 970 until his new forager could be delivered later in the spring. "I think when my neighbours saw the 970 they really were questioning what I was doing," says Richard.

"All our silage has gone through the forager this year and the results have been fantastic. We chopped at 10mm and now see no sorting whatsoever. The results have exceeded my expectations and when I did the costings I was convinced that I had got them wrong.

"Overall, we are hitting all our quality targets and due to the increase in milk yield and savings in the amount of concentrates now used in the mix, we have seen at least a 10% increase in revenue, even at the current milk price of 33p/litre (March 2026)."

MILK YIELD INCREASE

"Milk from forage has gone up by 4 litres a cow, concentrate usage has dropped to 0.08kg/litre and overall milk yield has increased by 2.9 litres a cow. You can see that the cows just take a full mouthful every time and we don't get any sorting at all now. There is no waste, forage intake has increased, the cows' rumens are full all the time and herd health has been increased. Also with the dry cows, the transition into the milking herd has been considerably easier.

"Also the shorter chop takes up far less space in the clamp and for the sake of the sanity of my nephew, who does the buckraking, it's a good sight easier to clamp! Yes, it will be more expensive to run than a forage wagon, but by having our own forager, it gives me control over our silage making and also gives me options such as maize or whole crop which we are considering for this year."

Supporting the JAGUAR, Richard runs a DISCO front and rear mower combination, plus a LINER 2900 rake. Generally aiming to take four cuts of around 160ha, the other advantage of running their own forager is that rather than have to cut the lot in one go for a contractor, they can just pick their days, then knock down 80ha so as not to have too much grass left on the ground in front of the forager.

"RICKERBY have been great in helping us and I know that if ever we have a problem, there will be someone at the end of the phone to help. I was also able to go to Harsewinkel and see how the foragers and other machinery is built and the control they have over the quality. It was all very impressive and really gives you a lot of confidence in what you are investing in," concludes Richard.

Ideal light crop mower



"The crop was very high but the swath it left was unbelievable."

Melvin Nelson

By adding a new DISCO 9300 DIRECT SWATHER to their mowing team, which uses two tapered cross augers instead of a belt to create a central swath, this has provided Melvin and his brother Stuart with an additional mowing option to handle differing conditions.

Farming 304ha outside Carlisle where, in addition to cereals, they take in over wintered B & B cattle, both dairy heifers and beef cattle, the Nelson's also run a contracting business providing a wide range of services, including foraging running two JAGUAR 960 foragers.

While the majority of early season grass is cut using a DISCO triple mower conditioner and then rowed up using a LINER 4800 to put two rows into one, it is in lighter crops where the new 9.1m wide DISCO 9300 DIRECT SWATHER comes into its own.

"As far as possible we try to avoid raking because of the stony soils," explains Melvin. "For foraging it's all about acres per day and putting as much grass as possible in front of the forager.

MOISTURE RETENTION

"A lot of our customers are on multi-cut systems taking up to five cuts a season. In later, lighter crops we are looking to try and keep as much moisture as possible in the plant to avoid it drying out too much. Last year at times we were literally just mowing the crop and immediately picking it up.

"Because we don't want to condition it, being a straight mower the DISCO 9300 DIRECT SWATHER is ideal.

This also means that because it does not have belts, it is not so heavy, so although we run it on a far more powerful tractor, you could easily run it on a 150hp tractor."

In addition to mowing grass, last year the Nelson's were also approached about mowing a crop of rye grown after maize. "The crop was very high but the swath it left was unbelievable. We found the sweet spot was around 12.5 to 15.5 kph and it left just the most perfect swath with all the heads standing up and perfectly presented with no lumps for a consistent, even feed into the forager.

"Overall its very easy to set-up and just tweak it to get the swath just right for the forager. It's not often that we would lift the augers out of the way and just use it for mowing. You do just have to think as to how you lay out a field, but with autosteer that makes it far easier as you can miss out bouts. In a good day you could comfortably knock down around 80ha of grass."



With their compact dimensions, robust build, manoeuvrability and ease of use, the TORION Small Series and TORION SINUS have proved to be ideal handlers for dairy farms.



Small machine big impact

Typical of those who have found that the TORION has benefited their businesses are dairy farmers Tim McCormack and Simon O'Donovan, whose machines were supplied by BREENS FARM MACHINERY based outside Cashel in Co. Tipperary.

"The great thing about the small TORION is its simplicity," says Donal Coman of BREENS. "The TORION is very underrated. Compared to a telehandler there is very little to go wrong and apart from the reach will do anything a telehandler can, but is less costly. Once they have tried one there's no going back. It's the kind of machine that gives them options that after five years or so there's still plenty of life in it so will hold its value well for trading in, or it's so robust that they could just opt to run it for 15 years."

TIME AND FUEL SAVER

Running a dairy herd of 130 cows, plus some beef cattle, Tim McCormack made the move to a Small Series TORION 639 two years ago, in which time it has clocked up over 900 hours. Prior to the arrival of the TORION, all the handling work and loading the feeder wagon was done using a 2011 ARION 420 and loader.

"The tractor has 8,500 hours on it, so it was either a case of replacing the tractor or buying a stand-alone machine to reduce the ARION's workload and give it an easier life. It now spends a lot of the winter parked up," explains Tim.



Tim McCormack and his son Dáithí

"I did initially think about going for a telescopic and buying a used machine, but when you look at what they were making but then also the benefits of the TORION and what that cost new, it made sense to go that way. Firstly you are not buying anyone else's problems from how they have treated the machine, and then there is the whole package of warranty and the finance options that come with a new machine, so it made far more financial sense."

GOOD DECISION

"The TORION has a massive place on the farm and a decision that I am very glad I made. It's very simple and straightforward to use with very little to go wrong. There is plenty of steel in it and the weight is in all the right places. It's not only replaced the loader and tractor, but also the quad bike as it's far easier and more comfortable for rounding up the cows."

With its 3.9 tonne lift capacity and max. lift height of 3.34m, during the winter the TORION will load around 8 tonnes of silage, making up to 4 silage mixes a day. For this it is fitted with a Redrock push-off silage block cutter that in itself weighs around 600kg, cutting a 600kg block of silage.

“It’s very stable and even though its only 75hp it has masses of power. For general handling work, mucking out and all the other jobs it does it just saves so much time and is a good 10% quicker than the ARION, so in reality has taken far more than 900 hours off the tractor.

“Apart from being able to get to places that would be difficult with the ARION, it is also far more fuel efficient and probably uses a quarter of what the ARION does. Even though it only has a 65-litre tank, that will comfortably last a week, I reckon I am saving at least 100 Euro a week in fuel, which goes a long way towards the repayments.”

IDEAL DAIRY FARMER’S MACHINE

Like Tim, when Simon O’Donovan initially dropped into BREENS it was with a view to buying a used telescopic handler as a replacement for his tractor and loader. “I was not even aware of the TORION and thought CLAAS only did side arm machines,” he says. “It was only when I was shown the TORION SINUS and tried it in the yard that I could see how much better suited it would be for the farm.”

Unlike Tim’s TORION 639, while it has a similar lift capacity and height, Simon’s TORION 537 SINUS has the benefit of rear wheel steer in addition to pivot steering, making it extremely manoeuvrable around traditional tight buildings. “While our main sheds are fine and its low height means we have not had to make any changes to them, because of the steering it can also get into our calf shed for cleaning out, which I would never have done with a tractor. My main priority was that whatever I got should be able to lift a full pallet of fertiliser, which it does easily.

THE PERFECT MATCH

“The TORION is very well priced and the perfect match for me. I thought that a new machine would be out of reach, but when I looked at all the figures and the whole package of finance and warranty there was no comparison,” says Simon who farms a total of 84ha at Drangan near Thurles, with a 120 cow dairy herd milked using two robots, plus some beef cattle.



Simon O’Donovan

In addition to all the main handling work, loading the diet feeder and even taking the bins down to the end of the road, due to the TORION’s manoeuvrability Simon also uses it to do all the scraping out and for loading stone out of a quarry on the farm.

“That’s not something I would ever have done with a tractor loader, they are just not built for that. The TORION just makes tasks so easy and quick to do and is a joy to use. I never thought that I would put 1,000 hours on it quite so quickly and it has enabled the tractor to go back to what it’s mainly designed to do and certainly prolonged its life.

“The driver comfort is good, it’s very easy to operate and extremely stable. You never feel as if you are under any stress and it’s a well thought out machine, even down to the sticker by the door showing all the main lubrication points. The all-round visibility is good, and because you are sat right above the arms, when loading you look right down onto the pallet tines or grab. In addition the lighting is excellent which is important when working in buildings or during the winter when we are starting at 4.30am.”

“For any dairy farmer the TORION is the ideal machine.”

Simon O’Donovan



Time saving accuracy

CLAAS connect has provided an important final piece in the jigsaw as Worcestershire farmer Tom Hughes works towards his objectives of improving financial margins through input savings and yield improvement, while at the same time enhancing soil health and wildlife on the farm, plus minimising soil erosion.



“So far, despite a very wet winter, this has worked extremely well.”
Tom Hughes



The key to me is that I now have repeatability and it ensures that I have clean data from which to work.”

Having initially changed to CLAAS connect with his 3-year-old AXION 870, this has now been joined by a second new AXION 870 this spring. At the same time, in order to progress to variable rate liquid fertiliser application, he has also invested in a 36m Horsch Leeb LT trailed sprayer with individual nozzle control, also supplied by CLAAS WESTERN at Evesham.

“While one of my priorities is to increase margins through the use of variable applications and yield improvement, in hand with that another major driving factor is to improve soil health and reduce blackgrass.”

Soils range from very heavy Evesham silty clay through to sandy clay loam and silty alluvial soils by the River Avon which borders the 440ha farm. In addition to cereals, mainly growing Group 3 soft wheats used for feed for a broiler unit on the farm, land is also rented out for vegetables, plus Tom grows maize and forage rye for a local AD plant.

With around 3,500 tonnes of chicken muck to spread every year from the broiler unit, this is all tested and spread using a Richard Western spreader with weigh cells to ensure application rates are accurately maintained. This is also then reflected in the liquid fertiliser rates.

“Having the Avon on our boundary and with every field ditch leading into it, I am mindful that having a chicken unit on the farm we are very much under the spotlight, so it is important to avoid pollution. Each field has a margin between the crop and the ditch, but this year to avoid soil erosion down into the ditch I have also experimented with not putting in any tramlines, and to just rely on CLAAS connect and the accuracy of the tractor’s steering system to accurately follow the 36m AB lines. So far, despite a very wet winter, this has worked extremely well with no signs of any soil wash.

“In addition, I like the fact that all the operator’s manuals and service information for both the tractors, but also my TORION and SCORPION which are also on CLAAS connect, are easily available. Also the extra element of service support that CLAAS WESTERN can now provide, by being able to see the tractors and advise me when a service is due, is very helpful. In addition, it’s also reassuring if my operator is out doing a job, that from a lone worker safety aspect I can just check on a map where he is and that everything is OK.”

The ease with which data such as AB lines, variable maps, application data, etc can be transferred between his computer and tractor via the cloud, not only saves him a lot of time, but also makes it so easy to set-up, transfer and then implement that plan at the press of a button.

“I have been variable rate drilling for the past 5 years using the S7 terminal and while it was possible to transfer data, it could be time consuming and often resulted in a lot of swearing. Realistically it was simpler to just create a new AB line every time I went into the field,” explains Tom.

“Because it is cloud based, CLAAS connect makes it so much easier to upload and transfer variable application maps and other data. When we are planning on going drilling or spraying, I can set everything up in the office and transfer the maps and AB lines over to the tractor the evening before, so that it is all ready to go at just the press of a button in the morning.

DEPENDABLE REPEATABILITY

“Not only is CLAAS connect saving me a lot of time but it enables me to work more efficiently, which is important as I also want to spend time with my family. It ensures greater accuracy as all the field information is immediately there so saves a lot of time scrolling down to find the right field. Also the field boundaries and AB lines are consistently the same, which is important as we move more towards CTF, plus its far easier to fine tune any actions.



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