

Proven Performance

OUR COMBINE STORIES



CLAAS LEXION
2020-2021

CLAAS



WELCOME



2019 witnessed a revolution in harvesting technology with the launch of the new LEXION APS SYNFLOW HYBRID 7000-8000 series combines. This year that line up was completed with the arrival of the new LEXION APS SYNFLOW STRAW WALKER 5000-6000 ranges.

Offering unprecedented performance and efficiency, and with a total of 14 models to choose from between the 2 ranges, there's now a new LEXION to suit every requirement.

In this testimonial magazine we focus on three customers who have had pre-series straw walker machines this harvest. We also talked to three customers who have been running their current straw walker combines for up to nine years and asked the reasons why the performance of their LEXION straw walker remains unrivalled.

We've also revisited our APS HYBRID customers, now in their second season with the machines and we are delighted to report that the combines are delivering exceptional results, both in terms of efficiency and productivity.

We pride ourselves on keeping close to our customers, we listen, we learn and we move forward with innovative technologies that are providing LEXION with increasing levels of throughput, comfort and reliability and, as you will see from these testimonials, performance is proven.

Jeremy Wiggins
Chief Customer Officer, CLAAS UK

September 2020

early action
Before 30.11.20

Call your local CLAAS dealer today for our Early Action Finance Terms.
claas.co.uk



CONTENTS

Part 1 Introducing the NEW LEXION 5000-6000 APS SYNFLOW STRAW WALKER 4-9



Part 2 Our pre-series 2020 straw walker customers 11-31



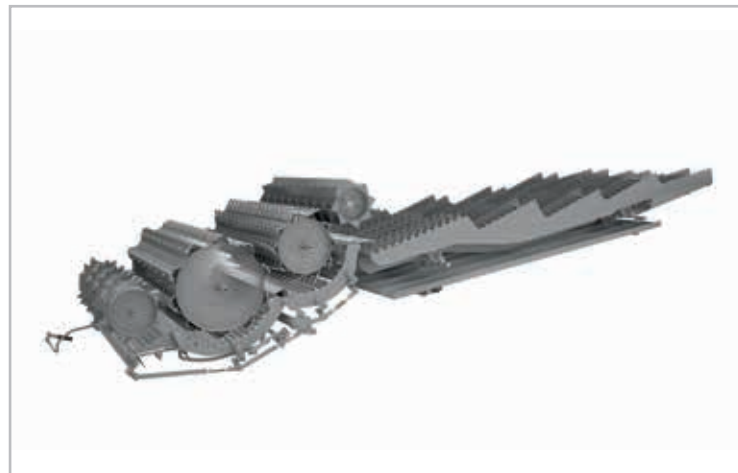
Part 3 Our customers with long-term straw walkers 33-51

Part 4 Our second year LEXION 7000-8000 customers 55-75

NEW LEXION 5000-6000

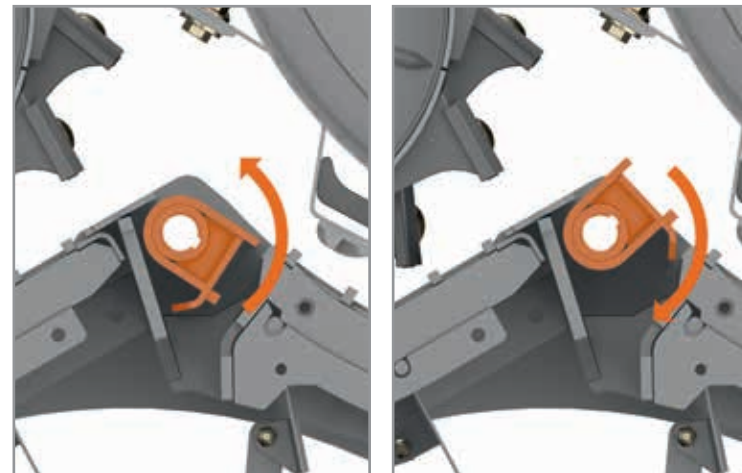
APS SYNFLOW STRAW WALKER

New for 2021 in the UK and Ireland, the LEXION 5000-6000 straw walker range. With the unique APS SYNFLOW, this new series shares a host of exceptional features with the LEXION HYBRID 7000-8000 series, to deliver greater efficiency, productivity and outstanding performance.



APS SYNFLOW WALKER

New larger threshing system with wider drums and an additional separator drum for increased separation performance.



NEW PIVOTING CONCAVE

Can be operated via CEBIS, for a rapid response to change in crop type or conditions in the field.



NEW JET STREAM CLEANING SYSTEM

Comes as standard on all new straw walker machines.



CAB

Additional cab space, greater legroom, more CEBIS adjustment and new CMOTION favourites management.



ENGINES

313-790 hp with DYNAMIC POWER and DYNAMIC COOLING.



CEBIS Touch Screen Display

CEMOS Automatic
For intelligent operator assistance at the touch of a button.

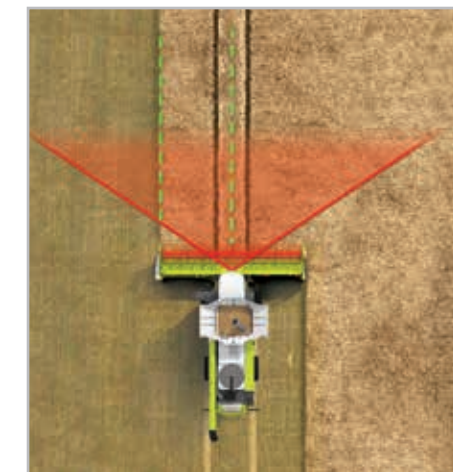


MAIN DRIVES

For smooth engagement of the threshing system. Longer belt life. Straight line drive with low redirection losses.

GROUND DRIVES

More powerful ground drives for road and field transport with the option of 40K road speed on narrow and wide body machines.



FIELD SCANNER

For precise guidance.



QUANTIMETER

For precise measurement of yield with simplified calibration.



LEXION 5000-6000 straw walker

APS SYNFLOW Threshing System

755 mm

1

Large threshing drum: threshing drum 26% bigger for optimal crop flow.

Automatic adjustment

8

All settings for the threshing unit are applied by CEMOS AUTO THRESHING.



Gentle on grains and straw

7



Parallel and synchronised adjustment of all concaves.

Pivoting concave bar

5



Can be operated via CEBIS and can be engaged hydraulically from the cab. For a fast response to a change in crop type or the conditions in the field.

Hydraulic threshing concave flap

6



Can be engaged hydraulically from the cab or manually from the outside. For a fast response to a change in crop type or the conditions in the field.

Smooth and even crop flow

4



Synchronised setting of speed for smooth crop flow in all speed ranges.

Maximum separation performance

2



Smooth acceleration of crop flow to as much as 20 m/s by APS SYNFLOW across all concave areas.

600 mm

3

Large, additional separator drum with active separation delivers greater throughput.







Our pre-series 2020 straw walker customers



LEXION 6900 TT
Chris Ascroft
Cambridgeshire



LEXION 6700
Rob Hales
Sussex



LEXION 6800 TT
George Crane
Norfolk

The best deal on offer

With a mix of owned, rented and contract farmed ground, the team at Wilbraham Farms need to know they've got a harvester that's capable of comfortably clearing their 810ha of combinable crops when they're at their best.

FARM FACTS

FARM	Wilbraham Farms, near Cambridge
FARMED AREA	810ha (2,400 acres)
CROP	Winter wheat (350 acres), winter barley (350 acres), spring barley (350 acres), peas (350 acres), sugar beet (350 acres)
SOIL TYPE	Predominantly sandy loams over chalk
STAFF	Chris Ascroft and Phil Baynes plus two others at harvest

“This latest generation of LEXION are different beasts altogether. It's a combination of all sorts of things from simple bits like the header pitch function to the really clever CEMOS automatic setting system.”

Chris Ascroft, Cambridgeshire, August 2020, LEXION 6900 TT.

Things have moved on

For the last six seasons Wilbraham Farms have run a LEXION 670 with 9.3m VARIO cutterbar but this year that's been replaced by a brand new 6900, again with a 9.3m VARIO.

WHY CHANGE?

"We generally look at replacing the combine every five to seven years," explains farm manager Chris Ascroft.

"That way I think we find the right balance between depreciation, residual value and reliability – if we went any longer than that we'd be exposing ourselves to a much greater risk of breakdowns and we'd see the second-hand value of the machine drop significantly, making the cost to change even greater.

"Although we have no fixed replacement policy, we're in a cycle that sees our main prime movers swapped out at somewhere between five and seven seasons, spreading our capital expenditure accordingly.

"The other factor I'm very aware of is the need to keep up with technology and to go any longer than that would mean we were seriously lagging behind."

"When it came to making the decision about which machine was right for the job, several different colours were trialled last season but nothing quite measured up to CLAAS' straw walker LEXION.

"Having a number of machines on demo last harvest really opened our eyes up to how things have moved on. Six years ago the 670 was the height of technological sophistication – now it's been blown out of the water.

"This latest generation of LEXION are different beasts altogether. It's a combination of all sorts of things from simple bits like the header pitch function to the really clever CEMOS automatic setting system."

HOW HAS THE 6900 PERFORMED?

"The appetite of the new combine is seriously impressive. In typical 9t/ha crops of wheat where the 670 was doing 35-45 tonnes an hour, the 6900 will comfortably romp on at 50-60 tonnes and spot rates regularly exceed 75 tonnes.

"Getting 33% more throughput you might expect fuel usage to have crept up too but the reverse is true. The old machine would get through an average of 16-litres/ha across all our cropping whereas the new one sits closer to 12-litres/ha.

"Again that's got to be down to a combination of factors but the single most noticeable difference is the smoother flow of crop through the machine – I'm convinced that makes it a good deal more efficient."

But it's not all about output. For the team at Wilbraham the quality of what drops out of the spout is a big factor too.

"One of our contract farming customers said the sample was the best he'd ever seen come direct off a combine, which speaks volumes for itself," says Mr Ascroft.

"Every improvement on the machine is having an impact – the extra drum up front, the tm sieves, JET STREAM cleaning and the grain quality camera. It all adds up to doing a really impressive job."



“And it’s not just the sample that’s clean. The combine itself is a much cleaner beast too – there are so many fewer places for dust and chaff to hang up.”

“Previously we would blow off the 670 every day with a road compressor, now it just needs a quick whip round with the on-board air line.”

QUANTIMETER

“The accuracy of the new Quantimeter is significantly improved. As an example, on one day it recorded that we had cut 508 tonnes of barley. When we checked it, it amounted to 502 tonnes. I’d say an accuracy level of 1% is pretty good.”

“In fact, we now have so much faith in it that we’ve stopped using our trailer weighers. That saves us a good two to three minutes per load – the man on the grain cart just comes in, tips and goes again. It’s a good job given the output of the 6900 – any longer and we’d be struggling to keep up!”

CEMOS

“I was initially dubious about the CEMOS auto settings system, but the guy that drives the combine had driven other LEXION with it previously and had absolute confidence in it.”

“It’s proved to be fantastic and we especially like how easy it is to customize the preferences. Given we’re well over capacity we tend to set it to minimise losses and have the cleanest sample possible – even so, it just eats up the acres at an eye-watering rate.”

“The other benefit is the reduction in fatigue, knowing the system is constantly tweaking things to get the best out of the threshing gear. That works in tandem with the CLAAS S10 steering system which has integrated faultlessly with our RTK Farming Dual Sim correction signal.”

HEADER PITCH CONTROL

“Being able to alter the angle of the cutterbar is fantastic for getting in underneath laid crops like peas, without the need for lifters.”

TERRA TRAC

“The 6900 is the fourth combine we’ve had on tracks. I’m very compaction conscious and when we initially demo-ed a tracked machine, I measured the difference between it and a wheeled combine with a penetrometer, which made the decision easy.”

“With our trailers running on flotation rubber it was nearly always the combine doing the damage, so we decided to take the leap and go down the TERRA TRAC route. The initial outlay was significant but with every change of machine we’ve seen that premium realised in the second-hand value.”

WHY CLAAS?

“We’ve stuck with CLAAS because we’ve always been so well looked after by our dealer MANNNS. Their main depot is very close by, but more important than that, they’re so much better staffed with more knowledgeable people than other dealers.”

“When it came to changing last season we did look at other brands but they couldn’t offer the back-up and, when you looked at the deal, there wasn’t a lot in it. In fact, when you took into account all the extras on the LEXION like header pitch control, CEMOS and tracks it was the best deal on offer.”



FARM FACTS

FARM	DE Hales, near Rye, East Sussex
FARMED AREA	500ha (1,235 acres) plus another 200ha (500 acres) of contract combining
CROP	Winter wheat 261ha (644 acres), OSR 50ha (124 acres), winter beans 100ha (247 acres), spring barley 80ha (198 acres), spring oats 25ha (62 acres)
SOIL TYPE	Predominantly Weald clays with some sandy loams
STAFF	Rob and Nick Hales plus one full-timer and one extra at harvest

“What’s so impressive is that the new combine is doing similar tonnages on about half the fuel. I’m convinced that’s all down to the smoother crop flow through the threshing gear. The bigger drums and concaves make all the difference – it never feels pushed.”

Rob Hales, East Sussex, August 2020, LEXION 6700.

A walker that ticks all the boxes



Farming in the heart of the rolling Sussex countryside, the Hales family have considerable experience with CLAAS combines.

Over the last 30 years DE Hales have had more than 15 CLAAS harvesters pass through their gates, starting out initially with a DOMINATOR 106 and progressing on through the decades with 218s, 480s, a 530 MONTANA, a 570 LEXION TERRA TRAC and most recently an eight-year-old 770TT.

With some 3,000 engine hours on the clock, the 770 TT had seen over 60,000 tonnes of grain pour out of its spout and, despite being a rock-steady, reliable performer over its time at Clayhill Farm, the concern was that its dependability could falter if push came to shove in a tricky ninth harvest. So late last year the decision was taken to trade the 770 in for something newer.

“With our old LEXION being a Hybrid we knew we could comfortably cover the acres but I was conscious that we needed to maintain a reliable machine to keep our contract farming customers happy,” explains Rob Hales.

“The 770 had put a really good stint in but was beginning to show its age so we started looking at our options. Initially we had thought we’d be going down the same route as before, but talking to the team at our local dealer – MANNIS Kent – they came up with an alternative option.

“Based on what they had seen, they were confident that the new generation of straw-walker machines could match our expectations in terms of output.

“To be honest I was very sceptical at first, but on closer examination I could see the merits of going back to a walker machine, if it could comfortably handle our workload which extends to about 700ha in total.

“I was impressed with how much the technology had moved on and I liked the idea of having a straw walker combined with JET STREAM sieves. Having had quite a bit of experience of both Hybrids and walkers in the past, I was convinced that the sieves would make the difference.

“I’d always felt that we could achieve lower running costs with a walker machine but until last year there hadn’t been anything on the market that could provide the output we require. These new 6000 series LEXION seemed to tick all the boxes so we took the plunge and signed up for a mid-range 6700.”

HOW HAS IT PERFORMED?

“With our old 770 we could comfortably churn out 50 tonnes an hour in standing wheat. Despite being a much lesser machine on paper, the 6700 can get pretty close to that if we’re pushing it.

“What’s so impressive about that is that it’s doing similar tonnages on about half the fuel. The 770’s Merc V8 would guzzle through 550-600 litres a day, whereas the straight-six in the new combine is only using 300-330 litres in the same time.

“I’m convinced that’s all down to the smoother crop flow through the threshing gear. The bigger drums and concaves make all the difference – it never feels pushed. On top of that, the DYNAMIC POWER system is clearly helping too – it senses when the grunt isn’t needed and cuts back the fuelling accordingly.

“That smoother crop flow also makes for much quieter running – I can now hear the returns and can tell when CEMOS Auto is tweaking the bottom sieve.”



Rob Hales

HOW DO YOU GET ON WITH CEMOS?

"We've had LEXION in the past with CEMOS but this is a completely different animal. Initially I didn't trust that it could do as good a job as I could, so when I started out I had it switched off.

"Then gradually I started turning on the various elements and quickly realised that it was doing a far better job at constantly tweaking everything. Enabling CEMOS to first start making its own drum and concave settings and, then working that in tandem with fan speed and sieves as well as cruise control, I gradually gained confidence.

"Now I just pull into a field, hitch on the header, select the crop type and just let it do its own thing, tweaking settings constantly throughout the day."

AUTO SLOPE

"Adding AUTO SLOPE into the mix with CEMOS is just fantastic. By automatically adjusting fan speed as the machine goes up and down hill, it keeps output to the max without any increase in losses – it's really impressive on our undulating ground."

GRAIN QUALITY

"The Grain Quality camera is an essential part of the CEMOS set-up. I like to be able to see it identifying rubbish and broken grains on the screen, but ultimately I let the combine decide what it wants to do about it and the result is consistently a fantastic sample.

"Part of that is down to the JET STREAM sieves which I know from previous experience are unbeatable. But also CEMOS is running the drum faster and the concaves more open than I'd ever have felt comfortable with before. The result is fewer broken grains and less smashed straw, but strangely not at the expense of losses."

QUANTIMETER

"The new yield-monitoring system is unbelievably accurate – in one 200 tonne batch of barley it was just 620kg different from what was measured over the weighbridge.

"But that level of accuracy isn't just for cereals, in rape it's equally precise. In fact, it's now given me the faith that we can reliably build up some proper yield maps with a view to potentially moving towards variable rate applications of fertiliser and seed in the future."

TELEMATICS

"Although we're not running a fleet of combines I find the TELEMATICS app on the phone very useful.

"Simple things like being able to check the fuel level means I can decide where to take the bowser out to. Critically it's a fantastic health and safety aid, providing traceability and tracking for lone-working."

WHY CLAAS?

"It was a big leap of faith putting our names down for one of the first new generation straw-walker LEXION, particularly not having had a demo.

"However I have absolute faith in the team at MANN'S and if they say a machine is capable of doing the job, I know that it will be. More importantly, if we have any issues I know we'll be well looked after and if it isn't a quick fix then a replacement will be in the yard within hours."







Always one step ahead

“When CLAAS started talking about a walker combine that could match and potentially exceed the output of a Hybrid, we were very interested.”

George Crane, Norfolk. August 2020, LEXION 6800 TT with CONVIO FLEX header.

With a diverse range of crops all going for seed production, the Crane family need a combine that’s capable of handling everything that’s thrown at it.

FARM FACTS

FARM Hugh Crane Ltd, near Norwich, Norfolk

FARMED AREA 810ha (2,000 acres)

CROP Winter wheat 210ha (520 acres), potatoes 162ha (400 acres), sugar beet 120ha (300 acres), peas 81ha (200 acres), winter barley 120ha (300 acres), spring barley 40ha (100 acres), linseed 32ha (80 acres), grass 40ha (100 acres)

SOIL TYPE Predominantly sandy loams

STAFF George and Nicholas Crane plus another 6 full-timers and up to 12 casuals for potato harvest



Phenomenal output

This year has seen a significant shift for the Norfolk business Hugh Crane Ltd., moving from a Hybrid LEXION 750 with 9m VARIO cutterbar to a brand-spanking new straw-walker 6800 TT equipped with a belt-fed CONVIO FLEX header.

WHY A STRAW WALKER COMBINE?

“We’ve always had to balance the need for output with having a combine that’s capable of dealing with our wide range of seed crops.

“Until now there hasn’t been a straw walker machine that could match our requirements in terms of workload.

“The 750 was great for capacity, but we were cautious of potential issues with damper-than-ideal grass and linseed wrapping around rotors. So when CLAAS started talking about a walker combine that could match and potentially exceed the output of a Hybrid we were very interested.

“In the past we’ve run straw walker combines so know their strengths. We took the view that if CLAAS was prepared to put its name to a

machine capable of matching a Hybrid, we had the faith that it would do the job.”

HOW HAS IT PERFORMED?

“In terms of output the 6800 is quite phenomenal. It regularly exceeds the daily throughputs of the 750 and it does so comfortably.

“It’s rare I’ll see engine loading getting anywhere close to 90% even when we’re unloading on the move and we’re chopping the straw with a blunt set of blades.

“I’m convinced this is down to the changes made at the front end of the machine. That extra separator and concave plus the bigger diameter main drum means the crop flow is so much smoother and much more of the threshing is done up front.

“With previous straw walker machines we’d always be driving to walker losses, this was our limiting factor, but that’s rarely the case now. We just leave it up to the CEMOS auto settings system to determine what’s best to get the best end result.”

HOW HAVE YOU GOT ON WITH CEMOS?

“Initially I experimented a lot with trying to beat the computer and for a short while I might be able to get a bit more output or reduce losses. But that was only temporary. I quickly learned that I couldn’t maintain the level of performance that CEMOS can, constantly tweaking settings as crop conditions alter.

“What’s interesting is that it’ll tend to run with the concaves wider and the drum running faster than I would, but it doesn’t seem to lose any more or smash the straw, despite some of the really dry conditions we’ve had this harvest.

“What I’ve learnt is how critical the grain quality camera is to all of this – I have the system set to minimise returns, but even so the sample is super clean.

“Normally everything we cut goes through our seed cleaning plant, this year certain crops like the oats have gone straight from the combine into a bin and are going straight out for seed. We never imagined we’d have a combine capable of doing that.”

WHY A CONVIO FLEX HEADER?

“In the past we’ve used a stripper header to harvest our grass seed but we had to creep along to avoid overloading the returns. When it came to changing the combine this time we knew we wanted to switch to a Draper-type belt-fed header, but we were wary of going to a third-party make.

“We liked the idea of sticking with a CLAAS header on a CLAAS combine because everything is made to fit and is properly integrated. A good example is the header speed-matching – as you push the stick forward the CONVIO automatically picks up the pace according to forward speed. That sort of thing makes all the difference – machine talking to machine seamlessly.

“With the CONVIO we’ve found that the crop flow is so much better – when the grass gets damp and chewy the belts keep feeding it in and there is none of that nasty “whooping” as lumps enter the drum.

“With lots of secondary regrowth and laid patches in this year’s grass it’s proved ideal. Usually it’d be pretty stop-start going backwards and forwards. Having the ability to pause the belts to feather any lumps makes a huge difference and the overload clutch in the knife-drive means it doesn’t get damaged.

“The other massive benefit is that we haven’t had to fit lifters for any crop other than the peas, which are generally flat to the floor. We carry the header much higher than before but pitch it right forward to scoop up laid patches. That way there are no stones coming in which is a huge cost saving – the damage to concaves, etc... can be a big expense to put right.

“But even in standing cereal crops we’re seeing big advantages with the CONVIO. Because everything is fed head-first into the combine, it’s always presented to the drum as it should be. That makes for better threshing, fewer losses, reduced engine loading and a cleaner sample.”

FIELD SCANNER STEERING

“The new steering system is a big step forward from the old LASER PILOT – there’s no need to constantly stop, calibrate and clean, it just keeps working.

“I use it in tandem with GPS, setting out a straight first run with satellite steering and then letting Field Scanner take over for the rest of the field.

“It’s fantastic for keeping on track and because it takes account of crops leaning over into the previous bout you don’t suffer losses on the end of the header as you would with GPS running straight up and down with a full header every time.”

WHY CLAAS?

“As a family we’ve run CLAAS combines for the last 60 years – my grandfather was one of the first people in the area with an original SF.

“And, although we’ve remained loyal to the brand, we’re always keen to see what other manufacturers are doing. When it comes to innovation, CLAAS always seems to be one step ahead of the competition and the 6800 is no exception – it’s got some really clever technology on board.

“As seed producers we’re frequently changing varieties and every change requires a full clean down. CLAAS combines are well designed in this respect, crop doesn’t seem to hang up in the guts of the machine and everything is easy to get to to clean down.”

“From a financial viewpoint, CLAAS combines always seem to hold their value well, so that when it comes to changing the depreciation isn’t crippling. When you start to look into it they’re actually very competitively priced combines – comparing spec-for-spec with the competition they’re pretty good value.”

“But it ultimately comes down to back-up. We all have breakdowns but we know the service we get from MANNIS is always absolutely superb.”



Our customers with long-term straw walkers

“The single most noticeable difference is the smoother flow of crop through the machine – I’m convinced that makes it a good deal more efficient.”

Chris Ascroft, LEXION 6900, Cambridgeshire, August 2020

The Proof is in the Performance

The NEW APS SYNFLOW STRAW WALKER 5000-6000 series

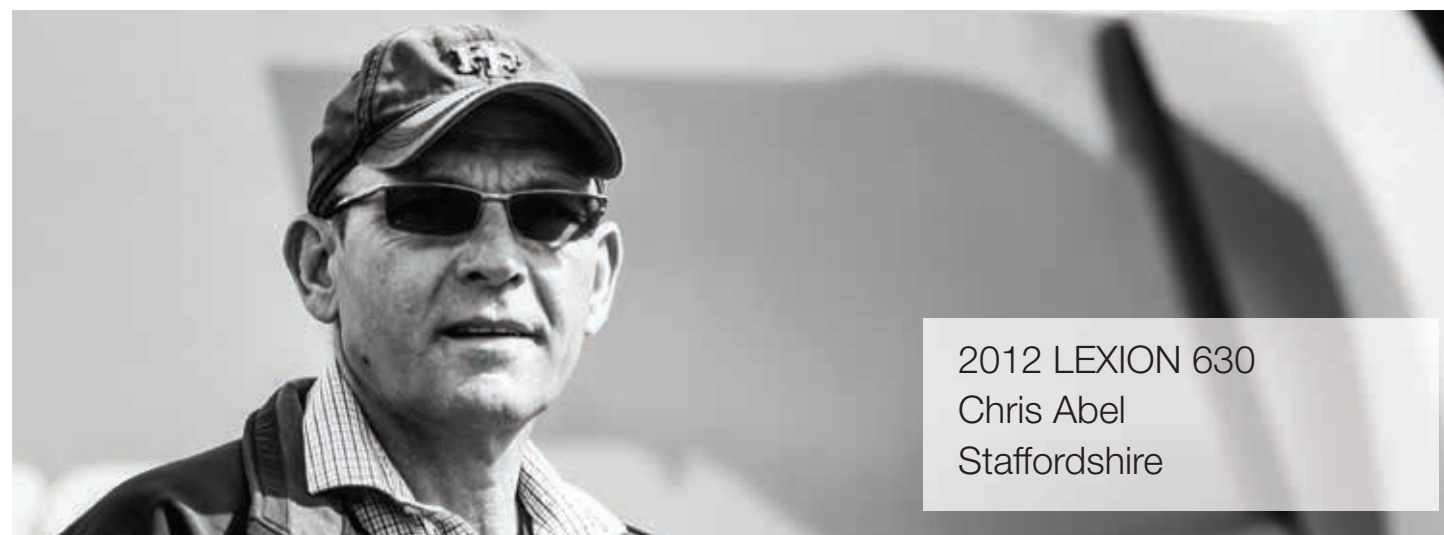
Chris Ascroft, Wilbraham Farms, Cambridgeshire, replaced his LEXION 670 for the 2020 season with the new LEXION 6900. A combination of new features on the machine including new CEMOS Automatic, new QUANTIMETER and new JET STREAM cleaning, together with the unique APS SYNFLOW technology, has given Chris unrivalled performance from his combine this harvest. The new LEXION APS SYNFLOW STRAW WALKER 5000-6000 series offers exceptional throughput, excellent straw quality, greater comfort and ease of operation, and with our widest ever model range, we have a combine to suit every requirement.



Call your local CLAAS dealer today for a demonstration and our Early Action Finance Terms. claas.co.uk/products/combines/lexion-6900-5300



2014 LEXION 650
David Kempster
Shropshire



2012 LEXION 630
Chris Abel
Staffordshire



2011 LEXION 630 MONTANA
Jack Hinwood
Shropshire



Extra capacity

David Kempster, Shropshire, 2014 LEXION 650, August 2020.

FARM FACTS

FARM	GF Kempster & Son near Oswestry, Shropshire
FARMED AREA	607ha (1,500 acres)
CROP	Winter wheat 271ha (670 acres) OSR 52ha (130 acres), winter barley 20ha (50 acres), spring barley 20ha (50 acres), forage maize 202ha (500 acres) remainder down to grass leys and permanent pasture
SOIL TYPE	Medium clay loams through to light sandy soils across a 10 mile area
STAFF	David and James Kempster plus one other full-time and one casual at harvest

Inevitably as a business grows, so too does the kit required to run it. Never is that more true than at GF Kempster and Son in Shropshire.

20 years ago the family firm's arable acreage stretched to just 80ha (200 acres). Today that figure stands at 344ha (850 acres).

Two decades ago the modest cropped area was accompanied by a much larger grass area to support the farm's 150-head dairy herd. A CLAAS MEGA 106 with 4.5m (15ft) header comfortably handled the workload at the time, but with the demise of the milk production enterprise, cereals replaced much of the grassland, taking the combinable total to over 283ha (700 acres).

"Our old MEGA was a rock-solid machine that would just work away at it without complaining, but the increased area really began to stretch its capabilities," explains David Kempster.

"So in 2008 we took the plunge and splashed out on a four-year-old LEXION 520 with a 6m (20ft) cutterbar. In terms of output it was in a totally different league and when you climbed up into the cab it was huge step forward.

"Six years later our contract farming business had grown again and we needed even more harvesting capacity, so once more we started looking for a decent second-hand replacement.

"But what quickly became apparent was how well CLAAS combines hold their value – it was actually more cost effective to buy new. We decided we needed to future-proof ourselves for further expansion so opted for the biggest straw-walker on offer at the time – a LEXION 650 with 7.5m (25ft) VARIO header.

"It's now in its seventh season and hasn't skipped a beat."

WHAT SORT OF OUTPUT DO YOU EXPECT?

"In a decent crop of standing wheat the 650 will comfortably cover 1.8-2ha/hour (4.5-5acres/hour), so by the end of a 10-hour day we'll usually have a 200 tonne heap in the shed.

"We're probably a little bit over capacity but it means we know we can clear the acres when we need to. It means we don't have to cut anything above 18% which keeps our drying costs down.

"Importantly that extra capacity also gives us the capability to take on more ground should the opportunity come up, without having to immediately shell out on a new combine."

HAS THE LEXION 650 BEEN RELIABLE?

"In seven harvests we haven't once had a single issue that has stopped us. In fact, the only repairs we've ever done have been a handful of belts and bearings during the winter service. I'd say that's a pretty good track record."

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

"The VARIO header is absolutely brilliant for maintaining an even flow of crop, even in cereals, but for switching over to rape it is a bit of a pain having to fit filler-plates.

"I'm hoping my next machine will come with the new generation cutterbar that does away with that issue."

CLAAS RESPONSE:

In 2016 CLAAS introduced a completely new design of VARIO headers that enabled the operator to switch from cutting cereals to rape in a matter of seconds without the need to add or remove filler plates. This is now a standard feature.





David and James Kempster.

“In seven harvests we haven’t once had a single issue that has stopped us. The only repairs we’ve ever done have been a handful of belts and bearings during the winter service. I’d say that’s a pretty good track record.”

David Kempster, Shropshire, August 2020.

WHY CLAAS?

“The build quality and reliability is unbeatable in my opinion and the back-up we get is superb.

“Our nearest MORRIS CORFIELD depot is 35 miles away but that’s never been an issue. If we’ve ever needed anything for any of the combines it’s been on the shelf or we’ve been able to borrow a part off a machine in the yard – that’s true service and is something we simply wouldn’t get if we went to another manufacturer.”

WHY A STRAW-WALKER MACHINE?

“Primarily it’s about output and up until now we haven’t needed the capacity of a rotary or Hybrid combine.

We run our own CLAAS 3200 QUADRANT to bale up some straw for our neighbours and protect against blackgrass coming in on contractors’ balers. To be honest I haven’t seen any issues with the swaths behind bigger LEXION, so I certainly wouldn’t rule out the Hybrid option should we need to increase capacity at any point.”

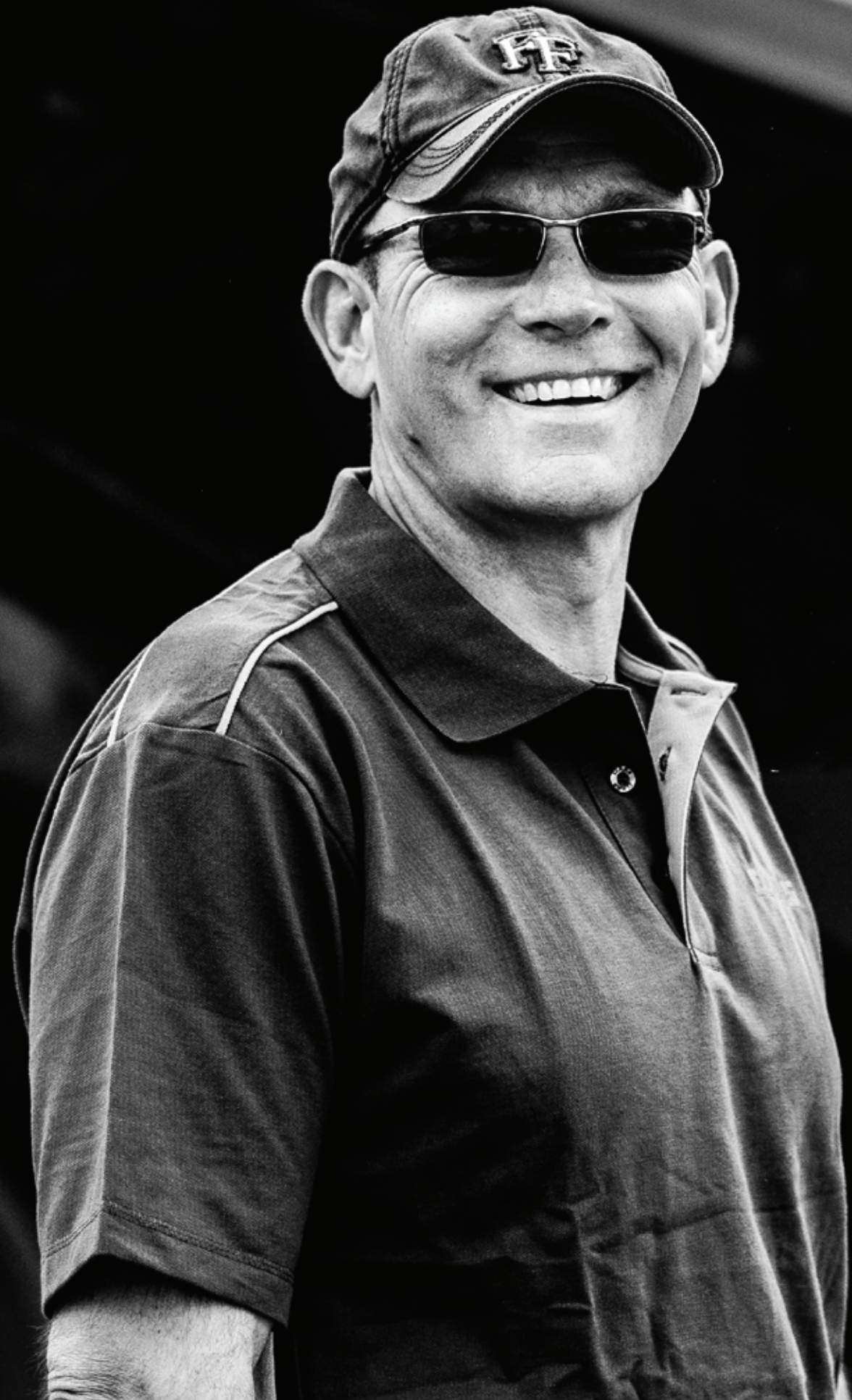
WILL YOU BE CHANGING IT ANY TIME SOON?

“Obviously as contract farmers we’re very mindful of having a reliable machine that will cut crops at their best for our customers. But the 650 has proved so dependable I’m reluctant to replace it unnecessarily.

“Each time we’ve changed a combine it’s because our acreage has grown and that’s likely to be the case next time we’re looking at a replacement. The build quality of CLAAS kit means that I’d be more than happy running the 650 beyond the ten-year point.”



David Kempster (right) with Field Sales Manager Martin Wood from MORRIS CORFIELD



FARM FACTS

FARM	Foden and Abel near Lichfield, Staffs
FARMED AREA	243ha (600 acres)
CROP	Winter wheat 100ha (247acres), OSR 50ha (124acres), spring barley 30ha (74acres), potatoes 30ha (74acres) plus 30ha (74acres) rented out for carrots and parsnips
SOIL TYPE	Predominantly light sandy loams
STOCK	1,200-1,500 head of fattening cattle each year plus 800kW AD plant
STAFF	Chris Abel plus two other full-timers and casuals as required for potato grading

Longevity is key

Chris Abel, Staffordshire, 2012 LEXION 630 with VARIO 660 header,
August 2020.



Elliot Richie, Foden and Abel.

Buying machinery that is built to last, looking after it and keeping it for a decent length of time is the key to keeping costs under control for Staffs farming business – Foden and Abel.

Longevity is central to the family firm which is this year celebrating 100 years at Shenstone Hall Farm, just north of Birmingham. The farmed area encompasses some 180ha (445 acres) of combinable crops plus another 30ha of potatoes.

When it comes to combine ownership the policy is pretty clear-cut – buy a decent machine, look after it well and expect it to put in at least eight to ten years' active service.

Nine years ago the farm's ten-year-old Laverda was beginning to show its age and it was decided it was time for a replacement. Changes in local dealers meant it was an open field in terms of colour choice and so some extensive research was done into finding the right machine for the job.

"We had demos of all sorts of makes of machine," explains Chris Abel.

"They all had their strengths but the CLAAS won through on one simple thing – its build quality was way better than anything else on the market.

"I visited the CLAAS factory eight years ago and was impressed with the engineering that goes into the combines and the focus on build quality. Having been round other combine factories, CLAAS' is the most impressive.

"With build quality comes reliability and having spoken to other CLAAS users locally they were reckoned to be rock-solid performers."

"The other big factor was pricing – the LEXION certainly wasn't the cheapest on paper, but when you compared it to the competition there was very little difference in it. The critical thing was that if we were planning to run it for at least ten years it needed to be built to last."

WHY A LEXION 630?

"We settled upon a 630 with a 6.6m header because although it sounds a bit over the top for our acreage, it bought us the capacity to only cut crops at their driest.



“ the CLAAS won through on one simple thing – its build quality was way better than anything else on the market.”

Chris Abel, Staffordshire, August 2020.

"We rarely go at anything over 17% moisture because we know we've got a machine capable of getting the grain in the shed without having to dry it – that can be the difference between making a profit and a loss.

"It also reliably produces a clean enough sample that we never have to worry about grain quality.

"The big sieve area is more than enough to get rid of the rubbish. Once I get the settings right for wind speed and openings, I can just drive the combine to the loss monitors without worrying about anything else."

WHY A VARIO CUTTERBAR?

"Having the ability to vary the knife to auger distance is just brilliant in getting tricky crops like rape to feed properly.

"Even in cereals I'll be tweaking it to get the material to flow in evenly, especially in laid or short crops. I wouldn't want to be without it now."



WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

“Although we’ve got yield monitoring on the LEXION we could now really do with mapping – our next combine will certainly have that facility.

CLAAS RESPONSE:

Working in combination with CLAAS GPS systems, the new QUANTIMETER offers unparalleled levels of accuracy, producing precise yield maps that can be used to build a true picture of crop performance.

“I’d like to see the engine bay redesigned to avoid the build-up of dust and chaff. We’re pretty meticulous about blowing it off between fields but a few less nooks and crannies would help.

CLAAS RESPONSE:

New machines have a revamped engine bay with CLAAS’ Dynamic Cooling package, all designed to keep as clean as possible, keeping maintenance downtime to a minimum.

“The only other feature that could do with a tweak is where crop drops off the walkers into the chopper – rape stems can bridge at this point causing material to back up.”

CLAAS RESPONSE:

Redesigned straw choppers introduced in 2016 have a larger diameter cylinder and a bigger chamber to accommodate bigger volumes of crop passing through the chopper.

HAS THE LEXION 630 BEEN RELIABLE?

“In the last nine harvests the 630 has had just one major repair – a knife-drive wobble-box. That’s a pretty good track record in my book.

“We get excellent back-up from our dealer MORRIS CORFIELD which, despite being over 50 miles away, look after us really well.

“While we do all the more straightforward maintenance work, we get CORFIELD’s technicians to do the major services. It’s not a cheap operation but if it keeps the combine going faultlessly through the season then it’s peace of mind that I’m happy to pay for.”

WOULD YOU HAVE ANOTHER?

“I’d like to think the 630 would do another couple of harvests, but when it comes to changing another CLAAS will certainly be in the running, especially if it retains its faultless track record.

“That dependability is the key – it gives me peace of mind when we’re up against it and the weather’s set to change. Although I’m always looking at potential replacements, I can’t really see any need to change when what we’ve got is so good.”

“That dependability is the key. Although I’m always looking at potential replacements, I can’t really see any need to change when what we’ve got is so good.”

Chris Abel, Staffordshire, August 2020.

FARM FACTS

FARM BK Hinwood and Son, near Ludlow, Shropshire

FARMED AREA 445ha (1,100 acres)

CROP Forage maize 101ha (250 acres),
wholecrop rye 101ha (250 acres)
spring barley 60ha (150 acres),
winter wheat 81ha (200 acres),
fodder beet 20ha (50 acres),
ryegrass seed 40ha (100 acres),
remainder down to permanent pasture

SOIL TYPE Predominantly clay loams

STOCK 1,200-1,500 head of fattening cattle each year
plus 800kW AD plant

STAFF Paul, Kim and Jack Hinwood plus two
full-timers and another two casuals at harvest



Keeping everyone fed

Jack Hinwood, Shropshire, 2011 LEXION 630 MONTANA, August 2020.



With 400-500 hungry beef cattle to feed at any one time as well as an anaerobic digester the Hinwood family know the importance of making the most of all they've got.

Based close to Ludlow in Shropshire the BK Hinwood & Son business is a truly mixed enterprise with mainstream arable cropping and herbage seed, beef and renewable energy.

Such a varied mix means the machinery fleet needs to be as versatile as possible to meet the workload which can alter significantly season-to-season.

"Before we had the biogas plant we pretty much knew that our combinable cropping would sit at around 400 acres year-in, year-out," explains Jack Hinwood.

"But the addition of the AD unit made things a whole lot more variable. It reduced our dry-cut grain area with much more land put over to maize and cereals for crimping.

"But depending on the season we may also switch some of that to wholecrop, so our combine workload can be unpredictable."

"The one thing the reduced workload does mean is that we no longer clock the hours on the machine, so we can keep it longer, potentially making it more cost effective."

Currently a nine-year old LEXION 630 is the weapon of choice. Equipped with MONTANA hill-side levelling and a 6m (20ft) VARIO header it cuts an average of 160ha/year (400 acres/year). But the workload isn't an easy one – a good chunk of it comes in the form of green-strawed barley for crimping and chewy ryegrass seed, gathered with a stripper header.

"While the total combinable acreage has pretty much halved since we built the digester, it's a much harsher workload.

"We're asking a lot of the combine and so we need to know we've got a robust, well put together machine that will stand the test of time."

Having just completed its ninth season, in 2011 the 630 replaced a five year-old 530, again equipped with MONTANA slope-compensation.

"Although our old machine had done only five seasons it had clocked over 1000 engine hours – about the same as our current combine.

"Despite that it had proved a rock-steady, reliable workhorse and that's really what's given us the confidence to keep our 630 as long as we have."

HAS THE LEXION 630 MONTANA BEEN RELIABLE?

"In nine harvests, we haven't had any major stoppages which is pretty impressive for a machine with over 1000 hours on the clock.

"In fact the biggest issue we've had was the fan speed variator which had seized over winter – that was simple enough to free off without any parts required."

WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR MAINTENANCE?

"We tend to do the lion's share of the servicing ourselves and that's when you really begin to appreciate how well engineered these CLAAS combines are.

"Everything is easy-access. Simple things like the indicators on the belt tensioner springs mean you're never in any doubt that things are running as they should be."



Jack Hinwood with his parents.

WHY A MONTANA?

"In my opinion there is no substitute for full body levelling. Our ground can get pretty steep in places and without a hill-sider things can get a bit dicey.

"The other big factor is output. We had a contractor in to help out with a level-land machine a few years back, when we were up against it with the weather, and he was reduced to a crawl to keep losses to an acceptable level.

"The MONTANA system means we can keep going at a reasonable pace whether we're on the flat or on a serious bank.

"By distributing the weight of the machine evenly it also works in tandem with the diff-lock and Michelin Ultraflex tyres, to help with hill-climbing and avoid crabbing when working across side-slopes.

"And, when you come to trade the combine in, there's definitely a better second-hand value to it. We nearly always seem to recover the money we shelled out for body-levelling in the first place."

WHAT SORT OF OUTPUT DO YOU EXPECT?

"In 10t/ha crops of wheat we'll comfortably average 25-35 tonnes an hour which puts us well over capacity. But that's great because we can go out and cut it at its driest.

"With the crimping barley we are asking a lot of the combine – it's harder to thresh. We run a high fan speed and set the drum in to 10mm which takes quite a bit of extra power.

"However the 630 doesn't grumble and in our experience outperforms the competition by a long stretch in these harsh crops.

"Before we had the stripper header we found that in grass seed the mountains of green chewy material going through the guts of the machine slowed things right up. But to be fair the build quality of the LEXION meant it could cope with such a harsh diet."

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

"I like to use cruise control where I can because I think it helps load the combine up evenly and ultimately does a better job. But I think it could do with being a bit more proportional."

CLAAS RESPONSE:

All LEXION now have the option of CRUISE PILOT that controls forward speed depending on crop volume and engine loading. The system also monitors losses, using all this data to adjust the forward speed of the combine before peak loads occur. Within this there are five response levels, providing different levels of proportionality.



“In my opinion there is no substitute for full body levelling. Our ground can get pretty steep in places and without a hill-sider things can get a bit dicey.

“And, when you come to trade the combine in, there's definitely a better second-hand value to it. We nearly always seem to recover the money we shelled out for body-levelling in the first place.”

Jack Hinwood, Shropshire, August 2020.

"We used to find grass seed could bridge in the tank which meant it could take up to 15 minutes to drop a load. When you're unloading on the headland to avoid wind losses that's an awful lot of downtime.

"Initially we tried a tank vibrator of the type used in quarry machinery. It helped but it wasn't really the answer so two years ago we fitted CLAAS' own tank agitator system which works an absolute treat. Now we're down to four minutes to unload which is a huge saving over the season."

WHY CLAAS?

"Fifteen years ago we had a hill-sider that was a different shade of green and, although it wasn't a bad machine, when we demo-ed a

CLAAS we realised what we'd been missing out on.

"There were significantly fewer losses behind the MONTANA, it produced a noticeably better sample and it was just so much easier to set up and use.

"Much of that was down to the CEBIS computer – it is just so straightforward to operate. Hotkeys take you directly to the relevant settings pages."

"The other major factor for going with a CLAAS machine is dealer back-up. MORRIS CORFIELD nearly always have the parts we need on the shelf and if you've got a query or need advice there's always a knowledgeable person on the end of the phone."



Take advantage of CLAAS **early action** finance.



Act now for the very best deal on a NEW combine.



Early Action 0% Finance

- Pay over 4 years
- 1 + 3 Annual Payments
- First payment on signing
- Offer ends 30th November 2020
- For business users only. Terms and conditions apply. *

We understand the need for flexibility, and work directly with you to develop bespoke finance solutions that can help you replace old machinery with new CLAAS machinery. You can choose between four core finance products.

- Hire Purchase
- Operating Lease
- Finance Lease
- Commercial Loans (UK only)

To find out which finance option is right for you, try our product selector, www.claas-finance.com/product-selector

CLAAS Financial Services packages are available through any CLAAS dealer supported by a nationwide dedicated team of Regional Finance Managers. Every member of CLAAS Finance has excellent product knowledge and financial experience.

Find your local Regional Finance Manager via www.claas-finance.com/contact-us or contact our central office sales team on +44 1284 777 663 email salesoffice@claasfinance.com



* Finance for business purposes only. Subject to acceptance and affordability checks. Applicant must be 18 or over. Promotion valid until 30th November 2020. Available on new equipment only. The interest free offer is subject to a maximum balance to finance of 50% (based on RRP). The finance product offered under this promotion is Hire Purchase. First payment, full VAT and a documentation fee of £160 are all due on signing. An option-to-purchase fee of £85 (plus VAT) will be collected with the final payment. You will own the machine when all payments have been made. Alternative finance options are available. Terms and conditions apply. Images are for illustrative purposes only. Finance provided by CLAAS Financial Services Ltd, Northern Cross, Basing View, Basingstoke, RG21 4HL. Registered in England No: 5854271.

Our second year LEXION 7000-8000 customers



LEXION 8700 TT
Kit Papworth
Norfolk



LEXION 8900 TT
Richard Ledger
Kent



LEXION 8900 TT
James Burton
Lincolnshire

Fulfilling great expectations

“ I just wasn't convinced CEMOS could do as good a job as our main man Patty who's just completed his 50th harvest with us. ”

Kit Papworth, Norfolk, August 2020, LEXION 8700 TT.





When it arrived on farm early last summer, there were big expectations for LF Papworth's new LEXION 8700. Replacing a pair of CLAAS Hybrids – a 750 and 760, it needed to be capable of comfortably handling the workload previously dealt with by two machines – some 1,300ha (3,212 acres) of combinable crops.

Having completed its second season for the north Norfolk business, it has more than lived up to those expectations.

"Having a minimum of two combines run up to 2018, I must admit I had my reservations about moving to a single machine," says Kit Papworth.

"But the CLAAS team were confident this latest generation of LEXION was up to the job and I trust their judgment. There were massive

efficiency gains to be had by going down that route, but with 26 contract farming customers to keep happy I had to be sure whatever we went with would comfortably do the job."

HOW HAS THE 8700 PERFORMED?

"Last year's harvest pretty quickly proved the new combine was capable of meeting our requirements and more.

"Previously with our 750 and 760 running together we'd be averaging 50 tonnes an hour coming into store. With the 8700 running solo it's closer to 60 tonnes an hour. I'll admit I was initially nervous about switching from two machines to one, but the new combine exceeded my expectations.

"All that output is great but you've got to have the quality to match it. The sample produced by the 8700 is streets ahead of anything else. Everything going into our bins always goes through the cleaner first which used to be a bottleneck.

"Because what's coming off the combine is so trash-free, we can run the cleaner at a pace to match it.

"What we really like is that we've now got the flexibility to match crop conditions – if harvest is going well we can bias it much more towards cleanliness. If we're up against it we can just tell the CEMOS auto settings computer to go for flat-out output. Even then the sample comes back virtually spotless.

"It's so good that this year we've even drilled rape with seed straight out of the combine."

CEMOS AUTO SETTINGS

"We had CEMOS on previous combines but to be brutally honest I was very sceptical of it. I just wasn't convinced it could do as good a job as our main man Patty who's just completed his 50th harvest with us.

"This new version however is a different beast altogether. It makes the combine a really smart machine, altering settings constantly throughout the day to find that perfect balance between output, losses and sample quality.



No matter how good the operator, he can't hope to match that consistently through a 12-hour working day.

"The biggest challenge we've had this harvest has been the ultra dry conditions. Going on last season's performance we knew we were best to let the machine sort itself out. Patty now has complete faith in letting the computer do its job. The results speak for themselves."

QUANTIMETER

"The new Quantimeter yield monitoring system is a serious step forward. Last harvest our total tonnage going out of store was within 1% of what the combine had recorded.

"It's transformed the way we view yield maps and has given us the faith to accurately use it as the basis for breaking down what each of our contract farms has produced.

"It also makes harvest logistics easier and we're a better seed producer as a result. Critically it's meant we haven't had to shell out £40,000 on a weighbridge."

WHY CLAAS?

"The back-up we get from our local MANN'S dealership is absolutely

second-to-none and that's recently got even better with their new depot.

"Their service has always been to a very high standard and as a business we rely on that and measure others against it as a benchmark. In truth they're the only firm locally we'd have the faith in to back up such a critical machine as a combine.

HAS THE 8700 BEEN RELIABLE?

"Over the last two harvests we haven't had a single issue that's stopped us. In fact, the only time we've seen a fitter is to add upgrades.

"As a pre-production machine last year it had a whole range of mods over the winter to bring it up to speed. It's great to see a company like CLAAS so clearly committed to making continual improvements."

WOULD YOU HAVE ANOTHER?

"Without any shadow of a doubt we would have another 8700 but we like this one so much that we want to keep it as long as possible.

"To be honest I struggle to see how CLAAS can improve on it further."

A GOOD HALF CENTURY

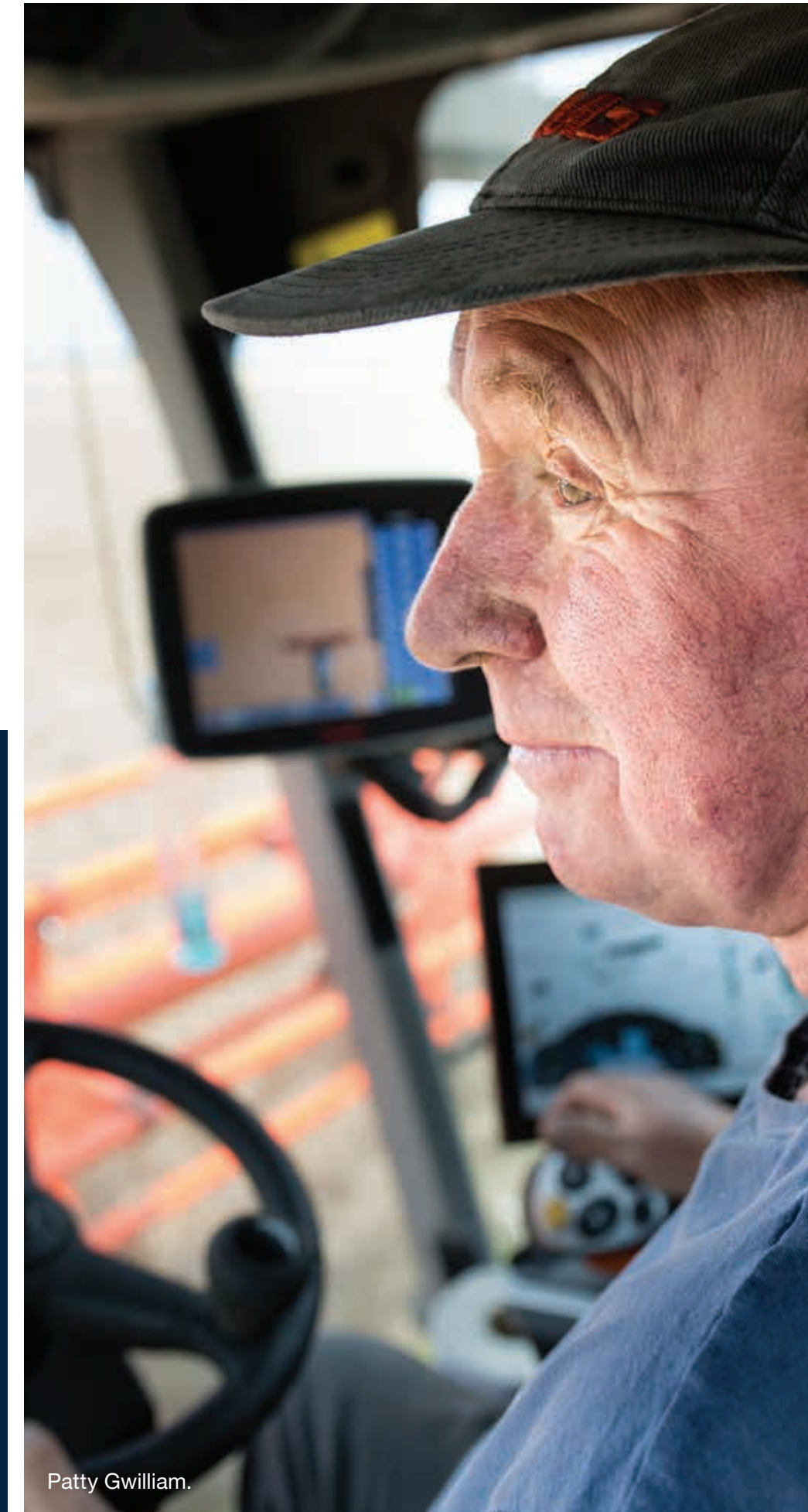
Patty Gwilliam has just completed his 50th harvest at LF Papworth and is very much viewed as a top-flight operator locally.

"We're incredibly lucky to have someone as competent and experienced in the seat as Patty. He and his dad were the only two people trusted to drive our first CLAAS combines back in the 1970s and it's a real pleasure that we've also got his son Roger working here," says Kit Papworth.

"They're a really hard-working, conscientious and talented family. They treat the business like their own – when there's a job to be done, they get on and see it through to the end. I just hope we can persuade Patty to stay on for another half century!"

FARM FACTS

FARM	LF Papworth Ltd, near Norwich, Norfolk
FARMED AREA	1,700ha (4,200 acres)
CROP	Winter wheat 500ha (1235 acres), OSR 400ha (988 acres), spring barley 200ha (494 acres), winter barley 200ha (494 acres), vining peas 70ha (173 acres), potatoes 200ha (494 acres), sugar beet 130ha (321 acres)
STOCK	250 finishing cattle
STAFF	Tim and Kit Papworth plus eight others full-time

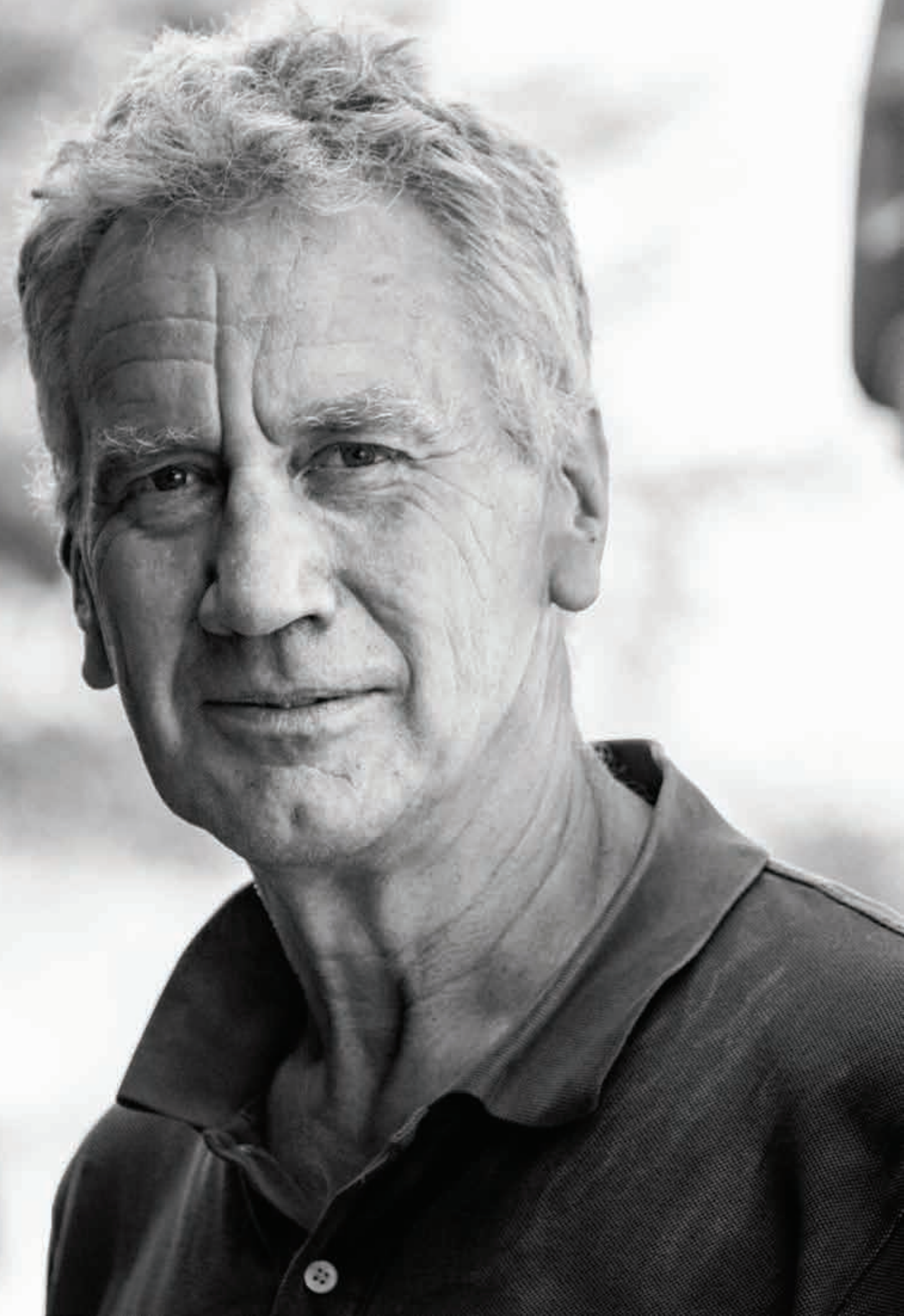


Patty Gwilliam.

There's no stopping it

“With the differing crop conditions over the last two seasons we can now confidently say the 8900 will do at least 20% more than the old combine, if not more.”

Richard Ledger, Kent, August 2020, LEXION 8900.





This season is the second harvest for Little Mongeham Farms' LEXION 8900 which has the task of single-handedly knocking down some 1,425ha (3,520 acres) of combinable crops.

A pre-production model last year, it took over from a 780TT and immediately impressed the team at the Kent-based operation with its appetite.

"Initially we were sceptical about how much more capacity the 8900 would have but from the outset it was clear it was something else," says Richard Ledger.

"With the differing crop conditions over the last two seasons we can now confidently say it'll do at least 20% more than the old combine, if not more.

"But that's not the most impressive part. What's really striking is the fuel use. It'll cut all that extra tonnage while using significantly less diesel.

"While the old combine would go for a maximum of 11 hours between fill-ups, the new machine will stretch to 14 hours. Logistically that can make a big difference, avoiding a stop at a time when you could still be combining."

This difference in both output and fuel use is felt to be mainly down to the improved flow of crop through the LEXION 8900.

"It's a whole lot smoother and quieter than our 780," says operator Nigel Richardson.

"Sitting in the seat you can feel that the combination of the bigger diameter drums and concaves, the new engine, the new unloading auger and the rubber-belted intake elevator all work to put less stress and strain on the machine which has got to be better for diesel consumption."

CEMOS AUTOMATIC

There aren't many operators with more experience of flagship LEXION than Nigel, who has been at the helm of Little Mongeham's combines for some 35 years. Two seasons in with the new range-topper, he believes he's still got plenty to learn.

"I've been lucky to see the evolution of CLAAS' CEMOS auto settings system over time and this new version is a real step forward.

"Being more familiar with the combine in this second season I've experimented a bit more, tweaking settings and fine-tuning the system to get the best from it. Each time I delve deeper into CEMOS I find something else that either ups output, improves the sample or helps to kerb any losses."



Harvest worker Matt Laslett.

GRAIN QUALITY CAMERA

Nigel continues, "Having the camera constantly monitoring sample quality is what really makes the difference with CEMOS – I can just leave it to do its own thing safe in the knowledge we won't see any extra rubbish in the tank. In fact I never touch the sieve or fan settings, the only thing I tend to tweak is rotor or drum speed and, even then, more often than not I find that I'm better just sticking with what CEMOS has selected."

"The sample itself is so clean that I nearly always have CEMOS set to maximum throughput. Even then there's hardly a sign of any chaff or straw in the tank."

QUANTIMETER

"Yield monitoring is so much more accurate than before. We can now trust that what the combine says it has cut is pretty much exactly what's in the heap."

"Last year we cut 11,640 tonnes according to the 8900 and the total across the weighbridge was pretty close to that – that level of accuracy is pretty impressive."

MAINTENANCE

"The 8900 is a much cleaner machine than anything we've ever had before. Along with the horizontal radiator package, there are so many fewer places for dust to hang up, especially on the pulleys."

"As a result I'm only having to clean it down once a week with our big road-towable compressor. Each morning I just whip round with the on-board air-line and blow off the worst of it."



Combine operator Nigel Richardson.

FARM FACTS

FARM Little Mongeham Farms
near Deal, Kent

FARMED AREA 1,425ha (3,520 acres)

CROP Winter wheat 774ha (1,912 acres),
OSR 310ha (765 acres),
spring barley 110ha (272 acres),
winter beans 46ha (114 acres),
spring beans 48ha (118 acres),
forage maize 100ha (247 acres)

STAFF Richard and James Ledger
plus Nigel Richardson and
Jim Harmer

WHY CLAAS?

"We're probably a bit over-capacity with the 8900 on our acreage but it gives us the peace of mind that we can comfortably cover all our ground with just one machine rather than two - that's a huge efficiency gain," explains Richard Ledger.

"I believe CLAAS has the edge when it comes to output from these biggest LEXION and the technology they use. But ultimately it all comes down to back-up."

"We know that in our area our CLAAS dealer will look after us better than any other brand if we have anything go wrong."





LEXION – an absolute weapon

“ The improved flow of crop means when the dew comes down in the evening we can keep running for an extra two to three hours with the 7500. ”

James and Simon Burton, Lincolnshire, August 2020, LEXION 7500.



Having completed its second season with Lincs-based D&B Farming, a 2019 LEXION 7500 is continuing to impress, its performance further enhanced with the addition of a CONVIO FLEX header this harvest.

For brothers James and Simon Burton, their combining acreage seems to grow relentlessly year-on-year. Seven years ago the total stood at just 200ha (500 acres), today it stretches to well over 2,225ha (5,500 acres). Such monumental growth in such a short period of time has seen some fairly radical changes in the machinery fleet, not least in the harvesting department.

“Initially we started out with a second-hand LEXION 780 which was well over-capacity for our acreage at the time, but we knew more was coming our way,” explains Simon.

“As the area grew, its appetite meant that we could comfortably handle everything we threw at it – it was an absolute weapon. Then in 2017 we took on a big chunk more work and we knew we’d be stretching the boundaries. We decided the sensible option was another LEXION but a smaller straw walker 650.”

With yet more ground adding to the workload two years ago, that 650 was swapped for a brand new pre-production LEXION 7500 which arrived for harvest 2019.

Its performance surprised the Burtons, coming close to matching the 780 for output and beating it hands down on sample quality as well as fuel use on a litres-per-tonne basis. But with yet more ground to cover for harvest 2020, a good chunk of it spring cropping, there was a need to push harvesting capacity further.

“With more acres to cut and a lot of spring barley that had the potential to be troublesome, we felt we needed a little something extra.”

FARM FACTS

FARM	D&B Farming Co. Ltd, near Sleaford, Lincs
FARMED AREA	1,416ha (3,500 acres) plus 810ha (2,000 acres) contract combining and drilling
CROP INCL. CONTRACTING	Winter wheat 1,416ha (3,500 acres), spring barley 400ha (988 acres), oilseed rape 81ha (200 acres), winter barley 202 ha (500 acres) plus 810ha (2,000 acres) forage maize and 405ha (100 acres) sugar beet
STAFF	James and Simon Burton, Will Dean plus two full-timers and three others at harvest



“We’d heard good things about CLAAS’ new belt fed CONVIO headers and, having had a demo last harvest, could see the potential one could offer in gaining extra capacity, particularly in laid, awkward crops. So we put our name down for one.”

CONVIO FLEX HEADER

When the 7500 first arrived it was fitted with 9.3m (30ft) VARIO cutterbar, but it quickly became apparent that it was no match for the new machine’s appetite and it was swapped for a 10.8m (35ft) VARIO which helped to slow forward speeds while boosting output.

The move to a similar width CONVIO FLEX has taken the 7500’s performance up another level.

“Last year with the VARIO cutterbar in 7t/ha crops of spring barley I’d be averaging 50-55tonnes an hour with the 7500,” says James.

“With the CONVIO it’s more like 65-70 tonnes – it’s like a different machine. When we first got the 7500, despite being a narrow-bodied combine we saw it’s capacity as equivalent with a 760. With the new header it’ll comfortably match a 770 and in brackled spring barley will actually outperform the 780.

“It’s all about the way the crop feeds in – with the belts there’s none of that stalling, bunching and surging that you get from an auger on a conventional header, even in lumpy damp crops.

“In fact the belts seem to even out the flow of material so the combine just runs so much more and more efficiently.”

But it’s not all about extra tonnes per hour, the CONVIO has also

extended the working day so that by the end of harvest 2020 the 7500 had actually cleared more acres than the 780.

“The improved flow of crop means when the dew comes down in the evening we can keep running for an extra two to three hours with the 7500, when the 780 with its VARIO header has to park up because the crop simply won’t feed in the front.

“Where a standard header is often in contact with the deck, in damp conditions it’ll tend to bulldoze. The CONVIO just floats so it’s not an issue and you don’t have all that downtime of clearing soil off the table.

“Not only are we gaining extra output per hour but we’re doing more in a day. Given the CONVIO’s performance this season, we’ll be seriously looking at swapping the 780’s header for a CONVIO for next harvest. Not only does that have the potential to boost what it can do in a day, but by feeding everything in head-first, it should make for an even cleaner sample from the older combine.”

SMOOTH CROP FLOW

“The difference in diesel use between the 7500 and the 780 is unbelievable, which we’re pretty convinced is all down to the even feed of material through the guts of the machine,” says Simon.

“This season we’ve been able to go out with a full tank and go cutting for two ten hour days before refilling – it’s quite staggering.

“That smooth flow of crop also means it’s so much quieter in the cab. In combination with the rubber-belted intake elevator and new unloading auger driveline, it’s whisper-quiet in the cab, so much so that



Simon Burton.

you have to keep an eye on the power monitor rather than relying your ears to really know what’s going on back there!”

CEMOS AUTOMATIC

“Before we got the 7500 we’d never had CEMOS and I was initially very sceptical of a computer system that thought it could set up a combine better than an experienced operator.

“But as soon as I started letting it do its own thing last year it proved it was more than capable of out-witting me. Two seasons in, I still think it’s absolutely incredible.

“I can tinker with any number of settings and the computer will always beat me on losses, sample and output.

“Now I never change a single thing on the machine. I just pull into the field, select the crop type and go. Even with it set to maximum output all the time, the sample is way cleaner than any human could achieve – our customers can’t get over the complete absence of rubbish in the heap.

“Of course it makes sense – with the machine monitoring everything itself, left to its own devices it does a much better job than I can and, in combination with GPS and the CONVIO header, it’s so much more relaxing, safe in the knowledge it’s performing at its best.

QUANTIMETER

“The new QUANTIMETER is deadly accurate and has meant that our mobile weighbridge is now redundant.

“Rather than hauling it from farm to farm to establish exactly what’s coming into store from our various contract farming customers, we know exactly what each field has yielded just from the yield monitor.”

WOULD YOU HAVE ANOTHER?

“There’s absolutely no doubt this latest generation of LEXION is a big step on from what’s gone before and we’re keen to have another when our 780 is due for changing,” says James.

“What we hadn’t appreciated is what a difference swapping to a CONVIO header would make. If we can gain 20% extra output and go on for an extra couple of hours in the evening, then it gives us the capacity to comfortably deal with what we’ve got and a bit more without having to rush to change the combines.”

WHY CLAAS?

“First and foremost it’s down to back-up. The team at CLAAS EASTERN in Sleaford are a really good bunch of lads. Whether you’re dealing with someone in the stores, sales or the fitters, every one of them knows what they’re doing and is willing to help,” says Simon.

“On top of that we like the machines and know they’ll do the best possible job for us. And when it comes to running costs you don’t generally get too many nasty surprises – they hold their value so you can budget properly and plan for a sensible replacement policy.”



“ There’s absolutely no doubt this latest generation of LEXION is a big step on... ”

James Burton, Lincolnshire, August 2020.

Revolutions start in the heart.



The LEXION 7000-8000 series featuring:

APS SYNFLOW HYBRID – for improved throughput and threshing performance

Larger Grain Tank and faster unloading auger with up to 18,000 litre grain tank and 180 litre/second unloading

Larger Concaves – for more controlled threshing and greater flexibility in different crop types

FIELD SCANNER – for precise guidance

CEBIS Touch Screen Display

Engines – up to 790 hp with DYNAMIC POWER and DYNAMIC COOLING

Ground Drives – more powerful ground drives for road and field transport with the option of 40K road speed on narrow and wide body machines

QUANTIMETER – for precise measurement of yield with simplified calibration

CEMOS AUTOMATIC – for intelligent operator assistance at the touch of a button

Cab – additional cab space, greater legroom, greater insulation and new grain tank window



The 7000 and 8000 LEXION HYBRID series, revolutionising harvesting efficiency.

Call your local CLAAS dealer today for a demonstration and for our Early Action Finance Terms.

claas.co.uk

CLAAS