



PRESS RELEASE

TRAILED SPRAYER FLEXIBILITY HAS EDGE OVER SELF PROPELLED – Dec 07

Replacing an ageing self-propelled sprayer with a new state-of-the-art trailed machine with larger tank and twin spray lines, means Essex arable farmer Andrew Kerr can now pick the best spray days, increase output and make better utilisation of the farm tractor.

As a one-man band farming some 700 acres at New House Farm, North Weald limited spray capacity was putting enormous pressure on Mr Kerr who also runs a number of other businesses from the farm site. And as work load increased at critical times of year the arable business was beginning to suffer.

So why did Mr Kerr opt for a larger trailed machine rather than a Mirage self-propelled sprayer? Justification, he says was simple.

"A self-propelled comes with a large price tag and whilst owning one would tick all the boxes it just did not make economic sense in my situation," he says. "I also only have one tractor on the farm and it made good financial sense to utilise it. Most tractors and trailed sprayers can travel faster on the road just than a self-propelled machine. I was also offered a very good trade in for my old Mirage.

"I also wanted a sprayer with dual spray lines to apply fertiliser and agrochemicals.

Adapting an old self-propelled machine would not have been ideal.

"I was in the market for a second hand self-propelled sprayer but when I saw the drawings for the new trailed Chafer Guardian I put an order in even before the prototype came out," he says. "It wasn't economical

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for me to repair my 10 year old self-propelled Mirage when I could invest in a new sprayer with a capacity of 40,000 litres of liquid fertiliser per day. With an output likely to exceed 500 hours per year it should keep going for at least another 10 years.

"I stuck with the 24m boom because there are some small fields on the farm – 20 acres in place – but a bigger tank means I am no longer dependent on a water bowser. I can spray the largest field on the farm that is furthest away from the water point with only one tank full. I also drill with a 4.8m Claydon machine so there is no problem with the tramlines."

Mr Kerr says that the Guardian is a simple and effective design, which means it can easily be upgraded at a later date to accommodate auto-boom GPS shut-off, auto boom height and N sensor without too much cost or revamping. A hydraulic pump also removes any issues with a PTO.

Close proximity to neighbours and the distance some fields are from the farm – up to nine miles away – has been a major issue for Mr Kerr. He does not spray in built up areas when the wind is too strong and this has caused serious problems in the past given the small number of available spray days in the season. Also, when spraying programmes dictated travelling large distances and having to use a bowser, output suffered. A bigger tank got around both these issues.

Quick folding booms on the Guardian are especially important when there is no bowser support. It is also compact when in the folded position so it does not get stuck in tight corners, narrow lanes and under low bridges.

Mr Kerr has had a Renson 1100l/min pump fitted because of the high rates of fertiliser application. Without the bigger pump he would struggle to achieve the necessary output at speeds of 8 kph.

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New machines also come equipped with up to date spray handling and washing facilities on board, which helps to keep one step ahead of the environmental regulations.

“Trying to do a job faster than the equipment allows can compromise operator safety. The new sprayer has about 50% less pipe work as well so cleaning is simpler and quicker and there is less chance of cross contamination,” says M Kerr.

“If I had 2000 acres then a self-propelled machine would have been the answer. As it is today I can still take on more land with the new trailed machine. The new generation of trailed machines operate at the same speed as a self-propelled so I don’t feel that I have lost any speed in the field. Air suspension has made a big difference to speed in the field and gives a very good ride to the boom.”

Mr Kerr also felt that his old self-propelled sprayer was underpowered where as his 150hp tractor is easily man enough to pull the Guardian. The old Mirage was 130hp but it also had to run the hydrostatic wheel motors and so torque suffered.

“Newer self-propelled machines obviously don’t have this problem but then they are more expensive.”

