



PRESS RELEASE

RETROFIT AUTO SHUT OFF BRING ACCURACY AND OPERATOR IMPROVEMENTS – Aug 2008

Retrofitting the latest Tee Jet Centreline with Swath Manager automatic boom section shut off facility to a three year old 24m 3000l Chafer Multidrive 4140 demount sprayer has increased output, improved accuracy and reduced operator fatigue on a Lincolnshire arable farm.

Steve Skinner of Cliff Farm, South Carlton recently upgraded his sprayer to improve performance of man and machine across the 942 hectare combinable crop and sugar beet farming enterprise.

Switching to liquid fertiliser last year increased the total area covered by the one sprayer to around 7000 hectares a season so a management decision to spend around £3000 on the latest auto boom shut off facility and GPS guidance system has proved to be a wise investment.

"When we purchased our Chafer Demount the auto shut off facility was not available," says Mr Skinner. "The benefits easily outweigh the investment cost. Faster headland turn round and increased forward speed has seen output improve. Driving faster has not compromised sprayer accuracy.

"Over/underlapping is easy to see on the fertiliser side and because there has been no scorching or lodging we know that the system is working well. However, it is difficult to quantify how much money has been saved because each season is different."

Mr Skinner estimates that output directly related to the auto boom shut off has gone up by about 10%. However, the introduction of a Chafer mixer bowser to the spraying operation has also had a significant



impact to output which overall has increased by around 50%. He also had the GPS guidance system fitted with a function to calculate the field area.

"Just keeping the sprayer in the field and being able to pump pre-mixed chemicals and fertiliser direct into the tank without having to go back to the farm has made a significant impact on output," he says. "The auto shut off facility has improved accuracy in that there is now very little over and under lapping. We have noticed this more on the fertiliser side mainly because of the raw material price rises and therefore the savings made."

Sprayer operator Chris Haynes says that auto shut off has improved his working environment considerably. Whereas before he would have to keep looking behind him to manually shut off boom sections he can now remain facing forward and only have to look at the light consul to see which sections are shutting down and when.

He also highlights the resume function which means the on board computer remembers the point in the field where it last finished, allowing the operator to find the exact spot to continue with the spraying operation.

"We like technology advances," says Mr Skinner. "Especially if it boosts performance, saves money and improves operator working conditions. There will become a time when this type of option is fitted as standard.

"We looked around at other systems but this was by far the best value for money. A guidance system alone would have cost £1,200, which will come into its own when spraying off the rape. We have done away with the blob markers and because we drill from the back of a subsoiler there is no marking out so there are no tramlines."

Chafer Machinery

Being close to the Chafer factory meant that Mr Skinner took the sprayer to Upton to be fitted.

"Auto steer is also a possibility," he says. "It would mean a bigger investment but if you want the accuracy then it has to be paid for. We think accuracy is down to about 25cm at the moment but the technology is there to be even better.

"We might well change our Demount in a couple of years for a 30m machine and have all the auto shut off options fitted. A wider boomed machine would definitely benefit from having the auto shut off facility. We will also consider having more shut off sections for even greater accuracy."

