



PRESS RELEASE

SELF PROPELLED SPRAYER KEY TO FARMING JOINT VENTURE – Feb 08

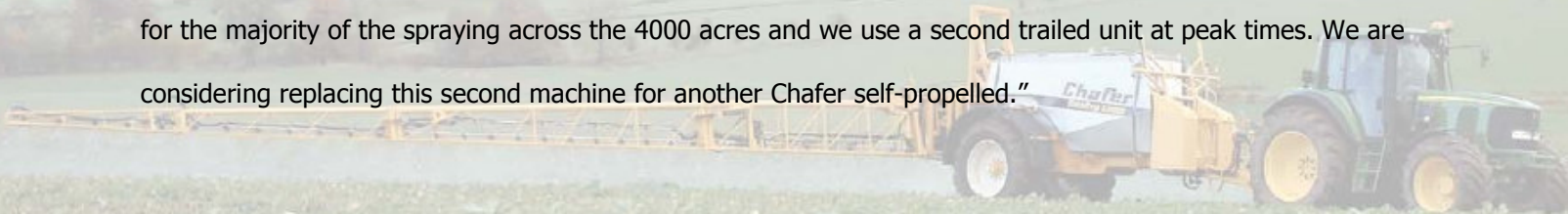
Setting up a new 4000 acres farming company between two neighbours to improve economies of scale by pulling resources, has reduced costs while increasing output and has freed up valuable management time.

Tom and Will Streeter of Harps Farm, Bishop's Stortford, and David Tinney of Matching Hall Farms, Harlow, set up TS Arable (LLP) earlier this year to jointly farm their combinable crop enterprises. A February farm sale cleared out ageing and redundant machines allowing for reinvestment in key equipment.

"All our machines were getting tired and in the current financial climate it was the right time to reinvest," says Mr Streeter. "We could have carried on the way we were with the high prices in the short term, but to remain sustainable in an industry that will eventually become financially unsupported in the present way, we needed to make serious policy changes."

Harps Farm machinery that was not sold included one large and two mid range tractors and a Chafer self-propelled 24m Mirage. The new business has halved the number of machines and labour, whilst at the same time has doubled the acreage.

"The Mirage is our main sprayer which is in to its third season," says Mr Streeter. "The Mirage is responsible for the majority of the spraying across the 4000 acres and we use a second trailed unit at peak times. We are considering replacing this second machine for another Chafer self-propelled."





With more land to service with one sprayer it is essential to have a robust and well-designed machine. The Mirage is capable of a working speed of up to 17kph and with automatic boom levelling and superior suspension, accuracy and comfort are not compromised. Output has gone up and ease of operation has improved.

At present the sprayer is applying 20,000 acres worth of liquid fertiliser and agrochemicals per annum.

"A major benefit of having a dual application sprayer with twin lines and dribble bars plus three spray nozzles means we can continue spraying in conditions that are unfit for agrochem by switching to liquid fertiliser. This is an option not open to many of our neighbours with solid applicators.

"It means we can make better use of the available spray days that increases our window of opportunity and allows us to fully utilise the sprayer.

"Our business is now spread out over quite a large area – 10 miles from end to end –so we need to be doing as little road travel as possible. The Mirage has a large 3,500l stainless steel tank that gives us extra capacity, but we also follow the sprayer around with a bowser to allow filling up in the field," says Mr Streeter.

"We have a good relationship with Yara and excellent Chafer back-up service from Chris Saunders so this has helped improve our logistical situation."

He says that there was an option to go for a bigger tank, but with so much road work a smaller tank reduced the weight, even though when full the Mirage is still very stable and safe on the road. Filling up in the field with the bowser has virtually negated road travel between loads and has increased output by at least one more tank load per day or 20ha of spraying.