

Press Information from Knight Farm Machinery

Contacts:
Brian Knight/David Main
01780 722200
Jonathan Wheeler
07879 428540
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Page 1 of 3; 625 words

AGRII EXPANDS KNIGHT SPRAYER TEAM

Agronomy company Agrii is building its Scottish-based sprayer fleet further with the purchase of a third self-propelled sprayer from Knight Farm machinery based on one of JCB's 4000 series tractors.

The new sprayer, in which the tractor's cab is moved to the front of the machine to accommodate a spray tank of up to 4,000 litres, attracted plenty of interest when it was launched at LAMMA in 2016.

It was developed by Knight with JCB to a specification from Agrii, which bought two machines in 2016 and will take delivery of a third in the early part of 2017.

The first has been based at Cupar, Fife since late February 2016 and has run up 1,350 hours work – during which it has covered an estimated 7,000 hectares of work. The second arrived in Forfar later and has done over 800 hours.

A third, fitted with a 36m boom is currently being built, and will head for the company's Inverurie branch, and can expect to be just as busy, says Neil Millar, contract manager for the company's spraying business.

He says Agrii decided to work with Knight and JCB to ensure it had sprayers that fully met their requirements.

The new sprayers are high speed, mechanical drive machines with constantly variable transmission (CVT), producing a mechanical drive machine that drives like a hydrostatic:

“They will tow bowsers of between 5,000 and 12,000 litre capacity regularly and do a lot of road work (the first sprayer has covered 8,000 miles in its first season), so they had to have mechanical drive.

“We might have used a stretched JCB for the job, but the longer the wheelbase the less likely it is that the rear wheels will track the front ones efficiently. They will be doing a lot of work in row crops, so that would have been a problem”.

Putting the cab on the front gives the operator excellent visibility, and also means a 4000 litre spray tank can be fitted while keeping the vehicle’s weight balanced 50/50 between front and rear axle, which is essential to ensure they maintain work-rates on the sloping land on which they work.

The re-design also entailed designing special tanks for fuel, AdBlue and hydraulic oil – and re-positioning them – to ensure the machine’s tight turning circle was maintained.

Using forward control has the additional advantage of enabling them to fit larger wheels, which improves its crop clearance.

Agrii also had some specific demands regarding wheels, which needed to accommodate both crop row and wide floatation tyres. The machine can be fitted with either 380/96 R46 tyres for normal and row crop work, or 710/60 R38 floatation tyres, the latter being essential to minimise compaction risks.

They do that very efficiently, says operator Andy Dall: “In the spring I applied liquid fertiliser on ploughing ahead of potato planting and I hardly left a mark on the ground”.

With the cab being his working environment for most of the year, he is happy to report that it is quiet and comfortable, while the machine is well balanced, quick in work and the user-friendly transmission is a big improvement on the “clunky” one in his previous sprayer.

The self-levelling suspension is also an asset, he says, especially on slopes when he can adjust it to achieve the most comfortable and effective ride.

The range of spray widths offered by the Knight boom enables him to work with multiple customers: “It can spray at 21, 24, 28 or 30 metre widths. Sometimes I stay at 24 metres all day; on other days I am switching between widths regularly”.

Neil also highlights the quality of Knight’s back-up as being important, because – in a region where the weather can bring spraying to a halt very rapidly – they need to make maximum use of the available working days.

STORY ENDS.