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AUTUMN 2014

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This is the time of year when John Deere is scheduling it's harvesting machinery production for 2015 and to get an understanding of what our customers may need, they are offering substantial discounts for orders placed in the autumn period so that early manufacturing production can commence straight away to meet annual production requirements.

more information on discounts and special offers inside...

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THE LAND IS OUR FIELD

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WELCOME TO SENTINEL

Our company Newsletter by Ben Tallis

In this newsletter, you will see that Tallis Amos Group (TAG) has roots that spread way back for as long as any of us can remember. We have evolved not only by the joining of companies, but many of our staff members have been with us since day one and on a long term basis. Most have been involved in agriculture, engineering, grounds-care and allied industries, since they first started their careers, continually undergoing technical training on the latest technologies and are considered industry experts at what they do. We are fortunate to have such an experienced and knowledgeable team within our group, something that is never taken lightly. It makes the difference between just average and excellence, about right and perfect, make do and a job done right, I hope you get the idea of what we are all about.



Ben Tallis

Such is the depth of experience and customer service which has been developed from dealing in our industries for many years and passed on to new employees, that we genuinely feel that we have so much more to offer our customer base. Customer Service is our focus and we will stop at nothing to ensure that your dealings with TAG will be a memorable and rewarding experience.

Simon and I joined forces because we wanted to create an even stronger business and to ensure we are here for the long term to fulfill the needs of our customer base. I hope you will enjoy your business dealings with our company, because we are professional at what we do and we care about you, our customer.

In this issue, we provide detail and information on progress and expansion within the Tallis Amos Group (TAG), to keep you advised of events and announcements that may interest you as a valued customer. You will also see that we have included testimonial stories from customers who have acquired equipment from TAG or are using our services to help them become more efficient in their business. These testimonials provide user qualification and recommendation

on how the machine worked, the benefits of the machinery or the after-sales-service they may have received from any one of our five branches. Because our area of responsibility with our main franchise, John Deere, spreads anywhere from Worcestershire in the West Midlands, including parts of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxon, Shropshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, we need to understand the needs of all kinds of consumer. Likewise our product franchises cover a wide choice of agricultural machinery, professional golf and commercial grounds care, as well as homeowner products and, ISUZU pick-up trucks.

As you can imagine, our customer base is as diverse as any within the UK and therefore we have to be prepared to handle all kinds of specialist equipment for different customer types and applications. Consequently, we employ and train very capable and qualified personnel who all undergo specific accreditation processes in order to be able to install, advise on, maintain and repair what is a very technical and efficient range of products.

As new technologies emerge, so we need to evolve our technical staff profiles. For example, Precision Farming systems such as AMS and Greenstar requires personnel that are dedicated to this product application. There are just too many technologies for one person to be 100% prepared for, therefore we need to train a specialist team to give valuable customer support. You may have heard the phrase FarmSight used? Well, this is a new pre- and after-sales service facility that is all-encompassing around the subject of GPS controlled machine operation, something that is being used not only in agriculture, but also being applied to the professional turf and grounds care industry. One of our following testimonials covers such an application. TAG has set-up specialists under the FarmSight banner, operating throughout our territory to serve you, our customer. Importantly, John Deere Precision Farming technology is also available to suit other brands of equipment and is the most widely used of its kind in the UK marketplace.

Take a look at our user stories and applications and if you want to know more, you can contact us at any of the Branch numbers shown in this publication. You can read more about TAG and its history on the next page - our history shows our solid foundation and we intend being here for many years to come.

Enjoy your read and let us know if you would like us to take a look at other applications and technologies in future issues.



Princess Anne visiting the TAG stand at The Forest of Arden Ploughing Match, 18th September 2014

WHAT'S THE TAG STORY?

by Simon Amos

Everyone remembers the original, locally based agricultural or grounds-care dealership, as the name rolls of the tongue after years of reputable service, because it was always part of everyday life in the community. Go back 50 years and how big were the farms then? How many golf and amenity courses were there, and take a look now - many farms are at least triple the size they used to be and the number of Golf courses seems to have grown ten-fold, and it's all down to progress. What about even further back when the forge was a central pivot in village life everywhere. How many Blacksmiths do we see in the villages today? By comparison, virtually none! Everything has evolved.

The same happens in many other industries, and likewise, the birth of the Tallis Amos Group in 2012 was an amalgamation of three reputable, strong, successful dealerships; Alexander & Duncan, Chris Tallis Farm Machinery and Parks and Grounds Machinery, pooling talent and resources to further expand capabilities to the customer. The ultimate aim being to streamline operations, enhance profitability to become leaner and more efficient as market demands increase.

Alexander & Duncan (Leominster) was founded in the late 1800s as an Ironmonger. Became a limited company in 1912, initially concentrating on barn building. In 1920, A&D became agricultural engineers. In 1967, they were appointed the seventh John Deere dealer in the UK. Simon's father Cyril Amos joined the company in 1962 eventually, in 1984, taking over the business as owner, with colleague Brian Davies. In 2006, A&D were invited to share the dealer territory of Malvern with Chris Tallis Farm Machinery, which is where the joint working relationship started. In 2011, A&D was the largest single outlet John Deere dealer in the UK, an achievement that has rarely been fulfilled by other companies. Simon Amos, Cyril's son, joined in 1991, assuming the senior role at A&D in 2006. Simon Amos is now TAG Sales Director.

Parks & Grounds Machinery (PGM) (Bidford on Avon). Founded in 1989 by Andy Perkins and Dave Tullet, originally setting up their



Simon Amos

store in Bromsgrove catering for domestic, home-owners and amenity facilities. In 1993, about the time John Deere got involved with professional golf equipment, PGM moved to larger premises in Redditch, expanding the business and appealing to a much wider audience. Following further expansion, the company moved facilities to Bidford-on-Avon where they developed an excellent reputation for an extensive customer base including professional green keeping as well as amenity customers and home-owners. The company joined forces with Chris Tallis Farm Machinery in 2011. Andy Perkins is now TAG Turf Director.

Chris Tallis Farm Machinery (Hinton-on-the-Green) Established in 1983 by Chris Tallis and his wife Gill. Chris was previously a Territory Manager for John Deere, the company developed a solid reputation for after-sales service and and put John Deere well and truly on the map in an area where there had previously been little or no representation. Ben Tallis, Chris' son joined the family business in 2004. In 2006 the company was asked to take responsibility for Gloucestershire and part of Wiltshire and Oxon, and opened two additional branches in Bibury and Dursley in 2007. In 2009, the company appointed Colin McIntyre as Director to run the Bibury and Dursley outlets at which point, Ben Tallis assumed the senior role, based at Evesham. Ben is now TAG Managing Director.

The Tallis Amos Group.

In 2012, through a joint agreement, the formerly known companies of Alexander & Duncan, Parks & Grounds Machinery and Chris Tallis Farm Machinery, joined forces to form the Tallis Amos Group. In just two short years, the company has grown considerably and enhanced the reputation of its individual business components into a very successful regional organisation, employing some 120 people. LAS Narberth, covering Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion joined the business in 2012, expanding the territory with branches from Evesham, Bibury in the East, Leominster in the North, Dursley in the South and Narberth in the West.

Today, by pooling resources and facilities, the company provides a wide range of products, services and after-sales service that meets the needs of tomorrow's growing farming enterprises and professional grounds-care organisations, not to mention the rapidly growing Home-care markets. TAG is considered one of the top 14 dealer groups in John Deere's designated 'Dealer of Tomorrow' programme and is destined for even greater achievements.

Now you know a little more about us, come and introduce yourself. It's likely, seeing as our roots go back over two hundred years, someone in your family may well have dealt with us in the past. We look forward to working with you for years to come.



SUCCESSFUL CONTRACTOR KNOWS THE DRILL.

Agricultural Contractors like Henry Righton, offer the full range of arable services from tillage and drilling to spraying and combining. “The growth in our business has come from being flexible,” explains Mr Righton. “We have a wide variety of crops, soil types and customer requirements to consider, so high performance and flexibility in the machinery we use is essential.”

Operating in a 30 mile radius from its base in Moreton In Marsh, Gloucestershire, the business now services more than 8,500 acres, including 2000 acres of land farmed under contract. Mr Righton’s team of 10 full-time and 10 seasonal operators ensures 3500 acres are harvested and 7000 acres are drilled each year.

“Drilling is clearly the major part of our contracting services and we’ve have a long history of using Horsch kit, starting with a C04 drill back in 1992. We replaced that with another C04 before moving to a 4m Sprinter and then a 6m model. We’ve always got on very well them as a good all-round tine drill that is simple and easy to use. The reliability is great and it performs very well straight after cultivation.”

In addition to two Sprinter drills, the business now operates an 8-row Maestro maize drill, 4m Terrano MT and 8m Joker RT cultivators. So when Horsch launched its new Focus TD drill, which offers

the benefits of a strip-tillage drill and a conventional drill in one machine, Mr Righton was keen to see if it matched the performance and reliability of his other Horsch equipment.

Horsch has developed the Focus TD with the TerraGrip 3 tine system with release forces up to 800kg and a 30cm spacing so the tines move smoothly in the ground even when loosening very deeply. For rape, sowing on the deep loosened area is very successful and fertiliser can be placed shallow, deep or 50/50. The Focus TD features a 5000 litre grain and fertiliser hopper with a 60:40 split.

“The Focus was brought in to give us an extra dimension. It allows us to directly drill into stubble and to put some fertiliser down as we drill,” explains Mr Righton. “We started a pre-production model and got very well with it. In 2013, we took on 4000 acres and that drove our decision to purchase a new Focus.”

Last year Mr Righton’s team drilled around 1500 acres of winter cereals with the previous version of the Focus TD and 1600 acres of oilseed rape. “The Focus has proved to be a big success for us and has opened up new business by solving some issues we were having with drilling OSR in a single pass.

“We had tried different routes including using a sub-soiler with a seeder or using discs with a seeder and placing the seed before or after the packer, but this was not giving us the results we were looking for. With the Focus we can drill rape in a single pass using the strip-tillage configuration and place a bit of fertiliser as we do it. This has worked very well and enabled us to drill up to 200 acres per day. Once, done, we can then change it to the disc coulters to convert it to a conventional drill.”



The Focus TD's tine cultivation frame can be quickly and simply released from the chassis at four mounting points. Once taken from under the machine, it can easily be replaced with the DiscSystem with 52cm discs to create a compact rotary disc harrow, increasing the flexibility of the machine enormously.

"The Focus is a good complement to the Sprinters and given us more options. On some lighter ground we might run with the Joker to get the chitting then go straight in with the Focus with some fertiliser, and then roll. On heavier ground we break up the clods with the Terrano, run the culti-press and then go with the Sprinter. Our business relies on flexibility to meet the different requirements of our customers."

With the addition of the new Focus TD, Henry Righton's customer list now includes drilling rape on Chris Tallis's farm, one of the founders of the Tallis Amos Group dealership where Mr Righton purchases his Horsch and John Deere machinery. "We've worked with Tallis Amos for many years now and they've provided the good service and support we need to run a busy contracting business. I'm delighted to be able to working on Chris's farm with machines they've supplied."

Looking to the future, can Mr Righton see a second Focus TD joining the fleet? "I'd say it's quite likely once one of the Sprinters is due for a change. We're seeing more and more spring cropping so less reliance on using a Sprinter in the autumn. If the Focus has the build quality and reliability of the Sprinter, then the additional flexibility and performance it gives us makes a lot of sense."



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NEW 3R & 4R SERIES COMPACTS FROM JOHN DEERE

John Deere's new mid-chassis 3R Series and large-chassis 4R Series compact tractors for 2014 replace the previous 3020 and 4020 Series models.

The four-wheel drive 3033R, 3038R, 3045R, 4049R and 4066R models feature powerful three- or four-cylinder Yanmar diesel engines from 33 to 66hp. They are equipped with John Deere's well established automatic eHydro transmission, which combines a three-range electronic hydrostatic unit with simple to use TwinTouch forward and reverse pedals.

The eHydro transmission also boasts three unique features for exceptional performance in a wide range of tractor applications:

LoadMatch automatically adjusts the machine speed to the engine load for maximum performance without stalling the engine, which is useful when moving heavy loads or mowing thick grass;

quick-adjust MotionMatch adjusts the transmission response instantly to the task at hand – ideal for front loader work, for example;

SpeedMatch allows the operator to preset a maximum speed when the pedal is fully depressed, which is particularly useful when operating rear-mounted implements.

A ComfortGard cab is standard on the 4R models and optional on the 3R Series, and keeps noise levels down to just 79dB(A). A standard joystick control is also available to operate mounted implements, including a new John Deere H Series front loader and optional front hitch with pto.

The 3R Series tractors are fitted as standard with rear- and mid-mounted ptos to accept a wide range of implements and attachments, including a choice of John Deere AutoConnect drive-over rotary mower decks and an optional materials collection system.

In addition John Deere's award-winning Hitch Assist system, which is standard on the 4R Series models, makes coupling up implements and trailers to the tractor's rear hitch quicker, easier and safer, and means the operator only has to leave the tractor seat once.

Overall tractor lift capacity at the rear linkage is 1148 or 1420kg and towing capacity is 4000 or 5000kg respectively for the 3R and 4R Series.



RELIABILITY IS LIKE A HOLE IN ONE.

With an eighteen hole golf course and a 112 bed luxury hotel with extensive conference facilities set in 150 acres of prime estate near Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, Hilton Puckrup Hall has got to be one of the finest Golfing facilities in the West Midlands.

Supporting a membership in excess of 500 and many fee-paying guests and large corporate organisations who are utilising the extensive facilities throughout the year, Course Manager, Richard Jones and his team of six greens staff are kept very busy maintaining the entire gardens, grounds and 18 hole Golf Course in nothing less than perfect condition.

"With so many visitors using these facilities, we really have to be on our game. commented Richard Jones. "we just have to have the most reliable equipment and back-up available because we can't afford to have breakdowns."

Richard Jones and his team run mainly John Deere cutting equipment, supplied and backed-up by local John Deere dealer Tallis Amos Group at Hinton-on-the-Green, near Evesham. The dealership has a team of Golf machinery specialists, who are dedicated to professional grounds care sales, after-sales service, maintenance and parts back-up.

"John Deere made their name with reliable, user-friendly tractors, said Richard "and

we have a twenty-two year old model 1070 that we use for general duties but it's still reliable and still going strong and proves the point. But we also use a wide range of cutting equipment including a 2653B Surrounds Mower, 7700 Precision Cut Fairway Mower, and we have some of their latest professional grounds-care models such as the 2500B Greens mower which I really love. It's so easy to use especially when setting the cutting height. It does an amazing job, but most of all, I am really impressed with the new cutting head unit"

"I totally trust John Deere for their reliability, enthused Richard, "and in the unlikely event of getting a problem or malfunction, I can trust the excellent service I get from Tallis Amos, I just can't fault them. They always go out of their way to help if we have an issue and are always at the end of a phone in an emergency. They have a brilliant team of support staff and always maintain a competitive edge. Which is just like the philosophy that we hold here at Hilton Puckrup Hall."



Richard Jones



JOHN DEERE

PROFESSIONAL GROUNDS-CARE

JOHN DEERE LAWN TRACTORS GET A FACELIFT

A new design for the John Deere X300 Select Series range of lawn tractors has been introduced to coincide with this year's launch of the new X310 model. The bonnets across the range now match the John Deere family style of the company's agricultural tractors and present the same fresh and modern appearance.

Suitable for areas of grass up to 8000m², the lawn tractors in this range are extremely straightforward to operate. Performance and reliability are guaranteed with a powerful, fuel-efficient engine and easily adjustable cutting height, which can be changed without having to leave your seat.

Excellent manoeuvrability in the tightest spaces ensures a perfect cut, even in the most intricately landscaped gardens. Standard features include automatic transmission, Twin Touch foot pedals, cruise control and an ultra-comfortable seat.

The five lawn tractors that make up the X300 Series offer a choice of mower decks with cutting widths from 97cm (38in) on the X300 model to 122cm (48in) on the X320, plus options to collect, side discharge or mulch grass clippings. For year round versatility, these lawn tractors can be fitted with a front-mounted brush, snow blade or snow blower.



John Deere's new 1500 Series TerrainCut commercial front mower.

Equipped with powerful, high-torque, three-cylinder diesel engines, four-wheel drive, high-capacity rotary mower decks and a new optional grass and leaf collection system, the 1500 Series can mow and collect thick grass at high speeds and still produce a quality cut.

Featuring a compact design for manoeuvrability and easy transport, the range has been designed to suit the various needs of landscapers, contractors, groundsmen, green-keepers and local authorities. The new 2014 line-up consists of five TerrainCut models, with a choice of 1.5 and 1.8m (60 and 72in) side- and rear-discharge decks:

1550 – 24hp with four-wheel drive

1570 – 29.5hp with four-wheel drive

1580 – 36hp with four-wheel drive & two-speed transmission

1575 & 1585 – 1570 & 1580 models with John Deere factory fitted cab

A robust hydrostatic transmission allows the mowers to perform well over rough terrain and in tough grass conditions. The two-speed transmission on the 1580 and 1585 models also allows faster working speeds and a transport speed of up to 25kph (15.5mph).

All 1500 Series models come with durable 7-iron mowing decks, so they can tackle thick, wet grass with ease and disperse the clippings evenly; a mulching kit is also available. A new 25 to 152mm (1 to

6in) height of cut adjustment improves cut quality and performance by stabilising the deck's rake angle.

Key user-friendly features include cruise control, a comfortable seat, Twin Touch pedals for the transmission and an electro-hydraulic deck drive clutch, while an air ride seat is optionally available. The 1585 model also comes with an increased axle load capacity to hold the high-specification cab as well as the optional quick-attach GLC1500 grass and leaf collection system, which has a hopper capacity of 600 or 900 litres. The mower's front pto is used to supply power not only to the mower deck but also to the collector's blower drive, which makes installation and removal easier and also reduces heat in the hydraulic drive system.

When the hopper is removed, the drive train – which includes the motor, oil tank and blower – remains with the hopper, making the whole machine more flexible in use. The collector's fast dump speed and 203cm (80in) high tip/83cm (33in) long reach features also increase overall productivity.

Additional attachments such as a front-mounted brush or blade allow the mowers to be used year round for a wide range of other commercial applications, including both leaf and snow clearance.

New X950R Diesel Lawn Tractor

John Deere's all-new X950R is the company's first commercial rear discharge/rear collect diesel lawn tractor and is available from the Tallis Amos Group. The 24hp X950R is aimed at professional groundsmen and green-keepers, landscape contractors, educational and recreational markets, and land management organisations.

The basic machine is available in four different configurations to suit different customer needs, with a choice of 122 or 137cm (48 or 54in) rotary mower decks and either a 550-litre (low dump) or 670-litre (high dump) materials collection system.

The deep design of the high capacity steel decks allows a constant grass flow and easily copes with all mowing conditions, while the collector can be opened in any position, which saves time when discharging collected material.

Additional user-friendly features include a unique single multi-function hydraulic lever for operating the mower deck, collector and front mounted implements, and a separate hydraulic pump for lifting and emptying the collector quickly at low engine rpm.

Equipped with a front hitch and pto, the versatile X950R can also be used all year round with a variety of specialist grounds-care implements and attachments.



HIGH OUTPUT RAKE FEEDS TWO HUNGRY SELF-PROPELLED FORAGERS

With a forage harvesting contracting service that cuts, rows, forages, transports and clamps around 6000 acres of grass a year, reliability, output and performance are essentials that have to be at the top of the pile. Such are the requirements for agricultural contractors, Rees Brothers (KS Rees & Sons) operating out of ParkWall Farm, St.Florence, Tenby, Pembrokeshire.

In addition to farming some 500 acres of a mixed, dairy enterprise, the Rees Brothers' business provides a renowned, high-quality contract service, with a reputation of doing the job right every time. Some 80% of their business occurs within 8 miles of home with a maximum travel distance of around 15 miles.

"We have two John Deere Self-propelled Forage Harvesters, said Peter Rees, "and they are chopping anything between eighteen to twenty five acres per hour. Grass yields at first cut are pretty heavy in this part of the country and we found we needed a high-output rake that was capable of keeping ahead of the forage team."



Peter Rees

Michael and Peter, the Rees Brothers met with Matt Blackburn at the Tallis Amos dealership in Narberth, They went looking for a multi-rotor rake with a wide reach. "We took a look at the Pöttinger 1252C because it has a reputation of being built of high quality steel, added Peter, "and we wanted something that wasn't going to fall to pieces by the second season. We got a great deal from Tallis Amos,

much better than anywhere else and they also have a reputation for excellent after-sales back-up, which suits us fine because it is the same philosophy as our customer service"

First-cut was very heavy this year and the flexibility of row width adjustment ranging from 8 metres right up to 12.5 metres, means the Rees Brothers can adjust the rake's row width to accommodate the crop density and to present the perfect windrow to gain maximum forage harvester throughput. "filling the forage harvester correctly with the right volume of crop means an efficient, fine chop to make the best silage, added Peter. "quality is what we are all about. We have gangs of up to ten trailers carting from the field to the clamp, where a JCB loader handles all the clamp material. The Pöttinger rake does an excellent job, can be set easily so we avoid any contamination of the silage with soil and stones and therefore it provides the best quality forage for our customers and their high quality milkers."

When heavy crops are the norm, the Pöttinger can be adjusted to take a narrow sweep, but second and third cuts, being generally lower yields, the 1252C can be extended to a full width of 12.5 metres and pulls in crop from a vast sweep, making it more efficient for the forage team.

"the high quality construction of the Pöttinger has certainly shown through this season, commented Peter. " we expect a lot from our machinery and we've been very happy with our purchase. It's physically stronger than previous rakes we have used. It folds very easy for transport from field to field, so saves us time, and time is money. It hasn't taken much looking after, the only replacement we have had is for a couple of tines, which got damaged by trees. But we have had great support from Tallis Amos at Narberth who always seem to have the right parts available, have a long-standing team of knowledgeable technicians who know their stuff and we can rely on them to carry out the servicing of our machinery so we can provide the best service for our customers."

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GOING GREEN IS A GOOD INVESTMENT

When a successful businessman decides to change his existing farm machinery and go John Deere, there's more than just the brand behind his decision. Mr Ean Branston who farms 1800 acres of combinable crops and contracts a further 200 acres, has a cropping regime of Winter and Spring Barley, Winter and Spring Wheat, Oil Seed Rape and Beans. The farm also runs a reputable, commercial shoot.



His business - Equine Spa (www.equinespa.com) manufactures and supplies self-contained spa units which use cold salt hydrotherapy to treat a multitude of injuries to competition horses prior to and/or following competitive events, training sessions and rehabilitation programmes. Some 80% of his production is exported, much of it to the USA.

Ean Branston's Bourton Hill Farm, in Gloucestershire has a soil type that consists of variations of Cotswold Brash and there isn't a level piece of land on the farm, but that doesn't deter Mr Branston from driving his HillMaster combine in the most difficult of terrains.

"I've always believed that quality products will be in demand, no matter what the market, explained Ean Branston. "that's the ethos behind the Equine Spa products we produce and why we have been so successful. "we tried a John Deere 6930 on rental from my local dealer Tallis Amos in Bibury and there was no contest with what else was available on the market. We were so impressed with the build quality and performance that we decided to buy it."



Trying the tractor before making a decision was the reason behind Mr Branston's choice, because he could test it on his own farm, using his own equipment and this essentially introduced him to the John Deere brand and his local dealer. Bourton Hill Farm, now owns a number of John Deere products including 6830 and 7810 tractors, a 732i Sprayer with BoomTrac and a T670 HillMaster combine, new this year.

"The capacity of the John Deere T670 combine is incredible, said Ean. "It's a six walker machine and easily has the capacity to handle all of our combinable acreage with ease. It has plenty of power, doesn't smash the straw and provides an excellent sample. Even with all these steep hills on our farm, the combine takes them all in its stride without losses."

One of the major features on the John Deere combine is the AMS Precision Farming system which is transferable from the combine to his John Deere tractors. This links to Gatekeeper software in the office and provides reports on yields by spot area, moisture, output and machine performance.

"All of our machines are AutoTrac complete, which includes AutoSteer, which takes away the often tiring process of keeping in a straight line and avoiding overlapping or leaving gaps. commented Ean. "For example, we can drill with our Horsch Sprinter, the tractor steers an absolutely straight line, therefore tramlines are perfect. Then when the sprayer and spreader come down they also steer in an absolute straight line so we avoid overlap. That means we can save on input costs and, we also get better efficacy, all of which add up to better efficiency. Likewise when combining on undulating land, the combine maintains a full cutting width and maximises throughput without leaving gaps."

All parts, service and after-sales support comes from his local John Deere dealer, Tallis Amos Group at Bibury. "They have an excellent back-up service and are always with us quickly if we ever get any issues. They always seem to have the parts on the shelf and their staff are always very helpful. I really can't fault them." he said

Apart from a commercial farming operation, Bourton Hill Farm is heavily involved in environmental practices which is encouraging the regeneration of endangered species.

"we are doing our bit to encourage some of our birds which are suffering difficult times. added Ean. "Skylarks, Grey-leg Partridge, Lapwings and Corn Buntings to name but a few and we try to help out by feeding year round." he concluded.

OFF-ROADER IS THE BEST OPTION



Bob Bower

Having heard the rumour that Land Rover were going to discontinue making the Defender, Bob Bower, Head Gamekeeper at Downton Estate, Ludlow decided he would explore the market to see what else on the four-wheel-drive market would be suitable for his purposes.

With some 6000 acres of farming estate, much of which is down to a commercial shoot, access for feeding and shoot maintenance requires a practical vehicle that can go anywhere, anytime and is reliable with it. The basic need is in carrying feed, pheasant and partridge poult, guns and a whole host of equipment, regardless of terrain or conditions.

“we took a look at all the nice shiny vehicles in the glossy showrooms and to be honest, walking in with mud on our boots felt a little out of place for our liking. commented Bob Bower. “even after requesting a demonstration, some of the so-called leading brands didn’t show much interest, which was disappointing to say the least.”

In Leominster, local agricultural machinery dealer, Tallis Amos Group, deal with farmers throughout the region and offer the range

of ISUZU Pick-ups which have been making a major impact in the marketplace. Bob got a totally different response than he’d been getting from the glossy showrooms.

“when I went to enquire about the ISUZU, I got a good, positive response from the very start. said Bob. “they were hungry, eager to show their product and they knew how to deal with our marketplace. We were able to try the ISUZU Utah on our own farm and right from the start, it was much better than I was expecting. It was a unanimous choice, no question and we got a great deal on our part exchange.”

No-one is suggesting that the Land Rover and the ISUZU D-Max are equals, they are both entirely different vehicles, rather that they both have benefits over each other and are both capable of carrying out all the tasks, year-round at Downton Estate.

“compared to the Land Rover, the ISUZU is a whole lot more comfortable to drive, exclaimed Bob Bower. “the driving position is very convenient, more roomy, you get more for your money, in fact you get everything including air conditioning and leather seats. On shoot days, you can move more equipment and more people and four-wheel-drive is just a flick of the button. With its wide, lined cargo box we can carry more poult crates and still have the twin cab capability for passengers.”

But what about reliability and service, how much does that matter to the customer? “the truth is, Tallis Amos have been really good. They have a ‘can-do’ attitude, nothing is too much trouble and they know what kind of service we need. They provide a courtesy vehicle if we need one and I consider them to offer a first class service.”

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LAWN TURF PRODUCTION BENEFITS FROM SATELLITE CONTROL

One would never have thought that efficiency improvements to high quality turf growing could have been influenced so significantly by global satellite positioning (GPS), but for Worcester based Teal Turf Ltd., it's signalled a major enhancement in production techniques.

The company, founded in 1990 by Peter Lole, farms 400 acres of prime sandy loam for turf production, supplying the general public, landscapers, garden centres, amenity and sports facilities to name but a few. High quality lawn turf production usually takes around 18 months and requires multiple operations to ensure the best result.

“We concentrate on growing the highest quality turf, because that’s what our customers demand,” said Peter Lole, “we only use the highest quality Perennial Ryegrass and Fescue mixes, which although an expensive investment, helps us differentiate from the cheaper options.”

Prior to seeding, the ground is prepared with several passes of equipment including; cultivation, stone burying, levelling, rolling, fertilising, seeding and then many sessions of rolling, mowing and brushing. Many of these procedures occur at a slow pace as low as 0.4km/Hr up to around 12km/Hr and often it is difficult for the operator to maintain straight lines and avoid gaps or overlapping, which is where the John Deere Precision Farming GPS system come into its own. Automated steering takes over from the operator and enables multi-tasking while maintaining high levels of accuracy.

Peter commented “Roger, my father does much of the mowing and operating a nine metre specialist rotary mower behind a John Deere 6105R tractor. Making regular passes it was often difficult to see where the mower had cut on the previous run and there was a likelihood of missing some grass, but doubling over other areas, therefore it wasn’t very efficient. We had a demonstration of the Precision Farming - GreenStar system from local John Deere dealer Tallis Amos Group. It includes AutoSteer, which steers the tractor without intervention from the operator and allows for precise passes without overlap or gaps. As soon as we had used it, we could see it was so much easier and more efficient, and that I had to buy one. It has proven to be an absolutely accurate and ideal system for our purposes. We now have six John Deere tractors, all fitted with the GreenStar system and it makes us far more efficient in quality turf production.”

With M-RTK signals through a sim card, accuracy is plus or minus 2 cm. Prior to the GreenStar equipment, there was always a danger of running down the same tracks and causing ruts, which inherently interferes with turf harvesting machines. Now, with Greenstar on our tractors fitted with wide turf tyres, the turf field can be crossed and catered to spread wheelings and it can all be done automatically without the operator having to think about where he is in the process.

The same applies for chemical and fertiliser applications as well as rolling and Peter Lole reckons it has saved him an immediate 10% in production costs.

“Previously, when turning on the headlands, we used to scuff the grass and lose a lot of turf production added Peter. “now, we don’t have to turn so sharp and come back in the run the next bout down, controlled by the GreenStar system. We now avoid almost total wastage from scuffing and tractor wheelings, which adds up to a significant improvement in efficiency and more turf per acre. The AMS specialist at Tallis Amos Group, Trevor Bolton came and set it all up. As a support resource they really know what they are doing, which makes a seemingly complicated technology, really simple to understand. The back-up has been excellent and Trevor is always at the end of a phone if we need to clarify or check something. Technology can be complicated so it’s nice to be able to have someone to rely on should we need help and assistance at any time.”



Stone burying at 0.4 km/h can be demanding for the operator, but Green Star Precision Farming technology from John Deere, means the 6210R tractor purchased from Tallis Amos Group, steers in a straight line, automatically avoiding overlaps.



Roger & Peter Lole

BIG TRACTOR PROVIDES ENOUGH GRUNT FOR DEEP CULTIVATIONS AND MORE.

When farmer Stephen Watkins of Sheepcote Farm, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire was looking for a large tractor to handle extra deep cultivations for potatoes, he felt he only had one reliable choice and that was a John Deere,

“we went for the new John Deere 7250R and had one of the first in the country of this new range, said Stephen. “My Grandfather bought our first John Deere Model B in 1942, part of the World War II Lease-lend programme. It was a three wheeler and we kept it on the farm for many years, swapping it out for a straw-chopper for our 1075 combine harvester. The model B is still going strong today looking after the local cricket pitch. Since then we have always favoured the nine litre engines in the seven series John Deeres, they are excellent performers”

Stephen Watkins is a Nuffield Scholar and is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He has an equal share with a business partner in a 2000 acre enterprise where the crop rotation and machinery is managed as a single unit. The aim is to achieve maximum return on investment. Sheepcote Farm, is said to be in its own unique microclimate, considered to be the earliest inland farm in the UK and Stephen claims that they “plant potatoes by Valentines Day, much earlier than anywhere else in the proximity.” Around 1000 acres of the farm is on the flood plain, 750 acres of which is down to arable and they grow some seventeen different crops for specialist growers on a Joint-Venture arrangement, including Potatoes, Spring Onions, Hand-picked peas for supermarkets, French beans, Lettuce, Herbs - such as Coriander, Mint, Dill, Parsley and Spinach. In addition, the enterprise grows wheat and barley crops.

“The flood plain land is very susceptible to compaction on the potato ground, commented Stephen. “we have to plough up to fourteen inches deep with a six furrow Gregoire Besson plough to get through the pan. Soil type varies considerably across the farm, ranging from sandy loam to heavy clays. That means we need some heavy-duty horsepower and the 7250R with its nine litre engine is just ideal for every application.”



In addition to a large 6 furrow, variable plough - each furrow can plough up to 20 inches wide, Stephen Watkins employs heavy-duty cultivation equipment such as a 5 leg Flexicoil subsoiler and a 3 metre Simba DTX to maintain soil condition for all the specialist crop requirements., all of which the 7250R with its AutoPower Transmission, is more than capable of working.

“Our driver tells me that with the new engine management and eco system on the John Deere, he has seen a very noticeable reduction in fuel consumption compared to our previous model and this is a Diesel only tractor, explained Stephen, “and when I drive it, I find it’s so quiet and comfortable. On road work, the engine throttles back to reduce fuel consumption while maintaining top road speed. it’s so quiet that I have to look down to make sure the engine is still running.”

Choosing his local dealer Tallis Amos Group, to supply his new tractor, “they’ve always been excellent when it comes to maintenance and service, commented Stephen., “I’m also lucky because two of their employees live not far from me and if I need anything urgent, they are always happy to drop it off on their way home.”

“I often take a look at other brands and get a quote just to look at comparisons, but I always end up going for a John Deere because you can’t fault the performance of the product and the after-sales service that I get from Tallis Amos, my local dealer.” he concluded.



Stephen Watkins

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TEN THOUSAND ACRES AND STILL GOING STRONG

When a well-used combination drill was struggling with wet and difficult ground conditions, agricultural contractors MC & JM Weaver of Richards Castle, went to their local dealer, Tallis Amos in Leominster to find out what was available to help them through their busy sowing season.

“I met with Simon Amos, the Sales Director at Tallis Amos and asked him what drills he would recommend that would deal with all kinds of ground conditions. said Malcolm Weaver. “lucky for me they had a three metre Amazone KG Special in stock, a combination disc drill on a power harrow and Simon assured me that this drill would be the perfect solution. He brought it out for a demonstration and it was so good, that I never let them have it back. It was doing a great job in what were nothing less than atrocious conditions.”

That was in 2007 and since then Malcolm Weaver’s Amazone Drill has covered in excess of ten thousand acres, so he’s certainly tested it in every kind of soil condition that nature could throw at it and if there were any weaknesses, you can be sure he would have found them. “One of the ideal features of the Amazone is that the depth control of the disc drill is separate from the power-harrow which enables us to set it up for almost any soil type and any seed profile, and seed rates are extremely accurate. commented Malcolm. “a large diameter packer roller crushes any clods and, individual tyre rollers covering the full width of the drill, following directly behind the coulters, firms the ground and helps retain moisture. It does everything it says on the tin” he enthused, “we’ve been very, very pleased with it.”

Based on the Hereford/Shropshire border near Ludlow, the Weaver’s offer a complete general contracting service within a 20 mile radius

of Richards Castle. Such is the flexibility of the Amazone that they have sown all kinds of crops from Grass seed, Wheat, Barley, Peas, Beans, Game-cover, even down to the fine seed of Clover and it has excelled in every condition. Soil types in the area tend to be a high-wearing loamy clay but the maintenance costs and replacement wearing parts for the drill have been minimal.

“we are getting around seven hundred acres of drilling with a set of points, said Malcolm, “and even after drilling ten thousand acres, we are still only on our second set of discs, so it’s proven to be a very low-cost performer. We haven’t had any major reliability issues with it in the last seven years other than a minor hydraulic fault, but Tallis Amos were out promptly and we were soon going again. Tallis Amos have proven to be an excellent company for reliability and after-sales backup, they have a great team of guys there who know there stuff, are really willing to get the job done and care about what they are doing. Any time we have a problem, they are always there to help out, you just can’t fault them”

Averaging around 50 acres a day, the Weaver’s normally drill approximately 1000 acres in the autumn for their customers. They power the Amazone Combination drill with a John Deere 7530 tractor with AutoPower transmission and use John Deere’s precision farming GPS system with AutoTrac. This facility means they can map the customer’s fields and set the tractor to drive perfectly straight lines, so minimising overlap, avoiding input wastage and providing accurate tramlines for following applications.

“after seven years of trouble-free drilling, when we get to the point of changing our drill, we will definitely buy another Amazone, exclaimed Malcolm, “and the new ones have an integrated ISOBUS system so it can talk to the tractor and make all kinds of intelligent output controls, helping us to continue providing the ultimate service for our customers.” he concluded.



Malcolm Weaver

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