

MACHINERY



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Farmers spread RTK signal cost to achieve group savings

► Possible £19/ha saving on inputs

A GROUP of south Cambridgeshire farmers is setting up its own network of fixed RTK base stations to allow subscribers to achieve savings such a system offers, while spreading the setup costs between them.

The six founder members, who have formed RTK Farming and applied for Regional Development Agency funding, aim to provide an affordable signal for farmers in the area covered by base stations on each members' farm.

"An RTK correction signal, with the sub-inch accuracy it provides, is essential for farmers wanting to get the full benefits from auto steering, such as minimising overlaps or misses, putting tramlines down in the same place or being able to adopt a controlled traffic system," said group member Tom Banks at the firm's launch.

"Mobile RTK receivers are



RTK Farming has been set up to help farmer members achieve savings on the cost of RTK signals. It uses a Trimble VRS system to ensure the signal can be used with a wide variety of available systems.

costly, have to be moved around and are easily damaged. The high cost of installing a fixed RTK base station – around £12,000 – makes this option too expensive for most businesses to justify.

"With our system, which uses an almost universal Trimble VRS Now signal, all types of farm will be able to benefit, regardless of their size."

Initial coverage will be for at least 70 farms (70,000ha/173,000 acres), and a further six base stations, planned to be installed on new recruits' farms in the firm's second season, will extend its range to 160,000ha (395,000 acres). RTK Farming wants to calculate potential savings in fuel, seed and fertiliser by comparing data with farms not

using the system. HGCA studies suggest, on average, RTK use can save £19/ha (£7.68/acre) in seed and fertiliser alone.

Proposed yearly charges for subscribers to RTK Farming's network are £500 per GPS receiver, with a flat rate of £2,000 for farms running four or more. There is also a one-off joining fee of £200 per farm.

DD packer roller available for the Spaldings Flatlift

SPALDINGS has introduced a range of DD packer rollers for the Flatlift to enhance the performance of the subsoiler in certain soil conditions.

Available in 2.85m specification to work with a three or four-leg machine, or 3.5m version for four, five and seven-leg versions, the packer option can be retro-fitted on to both sizes of subsoiler too.

Soil contact

Aimed at ensuring an 80 per cent contact with the soil at all times, the DD packer roller has been developed to consolidate and level seedbeds, while retaining moisture. This, says the company, leaves a ridged, weatherproof surface.

Spaldings claims the axle tensioning system ensures the discs have a sharp cutting edge for the life of the DD rings, which will provide optimum clod cutting and improved cultivation.

"The DD rings are manufactured from the highest quality Boron steel," says Alastair Ramsay, marketing manager for Spaldings.

"The quality of material and the tensioning system eliminates the need for welding the rings, and the

specification of the material leads to excellent wear and durability against damage caused by stones or rocks."

Spaldings says the relationship between ring spacing, diameter and width plays a key part in significantly reducing soil blockage between the rings.

This design ensures the soil is not too consolidated, which is critical to forming a weatherproof surface. This helps maintain soil moisture in dry conditions and promotes good drainage in wet conditions, reducing soil erosion.

Pricing

All DD Packer Rollers and retro-fit units are supplied assembled and pre-tensioned. Each retro-fit unit will be equipped with a scraper bar and all fitting instructions. A DD packer roller with frame to go on to a 2.85m three- or four-leg Flatlift costs about £6,000.

A retro-fit roller to convert an existing spiked packer roller to DD style using the existing frame costs £4,800 and for the larger model, allow £6,900 for the full roller and frame, or £5,700 for the roller-only replacement.

Yamaha revamps Grizzly 450 with added EPS option

LESS than a month since Yamaha launched a non-EPS (electric power steering) version of its Grizzly 550 at the Royal Highland Show, it is bringing out the new Grizzly 450 at the Royal Welsh.

This all-new 450, says Yamaha, is more versatile, durable and agile than its predecessor. Two new

versions will be available – with and without the EPS system.

Yamaha says the non-EPS version will be ideal for flatter land, while the EPS model is aimed more at extreme conditions and heavy towing duties.

The EPS system works with a speed sensor to alter response ac-

ording to the role in hand and uses the same technology as its heavyweight brothers, but the EPS has been re-programmed to suit the different characteristics of the lighter 450 model.

A lighter, stronger chassis was required for the EPS system and a new rear gear case and wet sealed

multi-plate brake have been added.

A new steering column and some suspension components were redesigned, along with enhanced seat, bodywork and tyre specification.

Prices are due within a couple of months, says Yamaha.

Gamble joins Vaderstad

VADERSTAD has appointed Andy Gamble as its new marketing manager to support new and existing dealers and the company's sales team.

Mr Gamble will be based at Vaderstad's Grantham headquarters, and brings a wealth of experience with him, having spent 14 years working for the Vicon division within the Kverneland Group as key account manager for the eastern counties. Prior to that, he graduated from Harper Adams with a BEng (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering.

Reliable farm hands

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