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New fertiliser application system for hybrid drill

MACHINERY developments continue with a new fertiliser application system for Claydon's Hybrid drill range.

Available both on new drills, and for retro-fitting to existing machines, on 3m units the system uses a split hopper, capable of carrying 750kg of fertiliser and 750kg of seed, positioned forward on the drill for improved stability. Fertiliser and seed are fed through two individual metering units so that varying rates can be applied.

For 4m, 4.8m and 6m Hybrid drills, a front-mounted 1,250kg capacity hopper has been developed, with fertiliser blown through to a second distributor head. There is also a 1,000-litre front tank option for applying liquid fertilisers, with 1,500-litre and 2,000-litre versions to follow.

In standard format, the fertiliser is fed down the back of the leading rigid chisel breaker tine and is placed 75mm-100mm (2.9in-3.9in) below the seeding zone.

Claydon research and develop-

ment manager Matt Bowe said: "This is the most popular configuration in Europe. However, if required the fertiliser can be fed down the back of the seeding tine, so it is mixed with seed, or placed on the surface, with the latter being more common in Scotland."

Application rate

The application rate for solid fertilisers is set and controlled using the drill's RDS Artemis electronic control system, while the liquid fertiliser system requires its own control box. Both solid fertiliser systems can also be used to apply microgranular fertiliser, and the RDS Artemis control unit enables application rates from 2kg-450kg/ha to be applied.

Claydon is also able to supply a specific micro-fertiliser application system for all Hybrid drills, with microgranules metered into the seed flow using a modified Stocks Rotor Meter.

Fertiliser placement is designed to work with the strip-till system

on the Hybrid drill. Mr Bowe said: "The strip tilling system only works the soil within the immediate seeding zone and leaves areas between undisturbed. Placing fertiliser within the seeding zone at drilling ensures the nutrients are exactly where the young plant needs them."



New fertiliser systems have been added to the range of options for Claydon drills for this season.

Experience drives drilling systems

MACHINERY manufacturer Claydon has developed and continued to refine its drilling systems based on the business' founder Jeff Claydon's (see inset) experiences on his own farm in Suffolk.

Cropping on the 1,400 hectares (3,458 acres) at Wickhambrook is based on winter cereals and oilseed rape, with a small area of spring wheat planted in 2013 where winter crops had failed.

Mr Claydon explains: "After a dry spring in 2012 it then turned very wet - we had 600mm of rain between April and September. The aim was to delay drilling and tackle black-grass but the poor conditions meant that in common with other growers we ended up redrilling in the spring."

He adds the lessons learned from last year include the need to avoid going in too deep and

bringing up clods, and pressing on with late drilling in the wet, with the resulting 'porridge' leading to poor emergence.

"Always check soil temperatures as wet, cold soils will not give good establishment."

"On our spring drilled plots we had to wait until April 26 to get a consistent soil temperature of 8degC."

Claydon has taken part in extensive trials, including a five-year study at Wickhambrook by Saaten Union. A 2011 wheat trial across 31 plots showed a yield average of 9.23t/ha (3.72t/acre) on those drilled with the Claydon direct drill, an increase of 1.94t/ha (0.78t/acre) over conventional plots. Even in the wet conditions of 2012, the direct drilled plots yielded 8.3t/ha (3.36t/acre), compared to 7.5t/ha (3.04t/acre) for the plough.



Spring wheat drilled with the A share system and Twin Tines on Jeff Claydon's farm at Wickhambrook, on April 26.