

CLAYDON

Press Release

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Tillage-Live – Working Plot 4

Claydon celebrate 10 years of direct drilling

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the development of the Claydon direct drill, during which time the company has led the way in the development of UK strip tillage, which has resulted in a considerable saving in time and establishment cost.

It is therefore appropriate that this year's Tillage-Live should be hosted by H Walker & Sons who run a Claydon SR drill. On their plot at the event, Claydon will be demonstrating the complete Claydon Strip Drilling System, running both a 6.00m Claydon Hybrid drill and the new Claydon Straw Harrow.

Such is the effectiveness of the Claydon System, aside from a considerable reduction in establishment costs, recent trials have shown a 26% increase in wheat yields compared to a conventional plough-based establishment system, helping boost crop returns by £333/ha at current crop values .

The development of the Claydon System was the brainchild of farmer/inventor Jeff Claydon as a means of reducing costs, whilst achieving improved timeliness and crop performance from his heavy clay soils at Wickambrook near Newmarket.

Whilst the Claydon drill forms a central part of the system and is key to creating drainage, eliminating compaction whilst retaining moisture and soil structure, the new Claydon Straw Harrow also has an important role to play in ensuring optimum results.

Claydon Straw Harrow

For direct drilling to work properly, effective weed control is essential if the weed burden is to be controlled and crop competition eliminated to ensure optimum germination levels.

Whilst creating a stale seedbed in order to encourage weed seed germination ahead of spraying off is nothing new, this has tended to rely on light cultivations, which can result in uneven weed germination if done too deeply.

The new Claydon Straw Harrow has a working width of 7.50m and is designed to be both quick, and so cheap to operate, and to only stir the top 1.0-2.5cm in order to encourage chitting for more effective herbicide control.



The Straw Harrow consists of five banks of hard-wearing double-coil spring tines, the angle of which can be hydraulically altered in order to achieve a more 'aggressive' action, and can typically be used at a high operating speed of up to 25 kph, so allowing outputs of around 12ha/hour to be achieved.

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Patented 2-tine strip tilling system

Central to all Claydon drills and key to providing the optimum growing environment for seeds is the patented 2-tine strip tilling system.

In developing the Claydon Strip Till System and recognising what would be needed to achieve the best results on both his heavy clay and other soil types, a key component for Jeff Claydon was the need to eliminate compaction below the seed, both for soil drainage but also to provide a free soil structure for root development.



In order to achieve this, the first element in the patented 2-tine system are staggered front-raked tungsten breaker tines that can be set to work at up to 18cm. Following directly in line with each breaker tine is a winged 'A' blade, which is designed to lift the soil to allow the seeding boot to inject a band of seed directly under the lifted soil. Depending on conditions, typically a 17cm blade is used for most conditions and seed types, but 12cm and 7.5cm wide 'A' blades are also available for smaller seeds and wetter conditions. A special knife is also available for drilling beans.



One of the greatest strengths of the Claydon Strip Tilling System is the reduction in establishment costs. A considerable saving is achieved due to the fact that routine cultivations are eliminated, with the result that the time taken to establish the crop is about a quarter of a plough based system.

In addition, by only moving the soil immediately surrounding the seed, draught requirement is reduced, so enabling the Claydon drill to be run on a less powerful tractor. Finally an additional bonus is the fact that both on-farm and in trials, there has been a positive increase in overall yields in both oilseed rape and wheat, so providing an additional bonus from increased crop return.

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