



“There's so much more time to get through the workload.”

Sprayer upgrade designed to last

Machinery On Farm Opinion

Productivity's stepped up for an Essex arable farmer following the purchase of a self-propelled Interceptor. *CPM* finds out.

By Rob Jones

Extra spraying capacity offered by a new Chafer Interceptor self-propelled sprayer has opened up a range of possibilities for Essex arable farmer John Metson, and he hopes that it'll be a long and fruitful partnership with the machine.

“The Interceptor replaces a 21-year-old 2500-litre Gem Sapphire, and I hope to keep it for a similar length of time. It's the last piece of the jigsaw in a programme to update the farm equipment,” John comments.

He purchased the 4000-litre, 24m boom sprayer sight unseen, as he explains.

“Chafer has a very good reputation, so I knew it would retain its value and while the sprayer is used for chemicals only at the moment, the stainless-steel tank and powder-coated booms mean that it would be suitable for liquid fertiliser if I decide to go down that route.”

Cropping 300ha on mainly heavy land, John has switched to all winter cereals for 2018/19 taking advantage of the good autumn conditions, and says that spring can be tricky to travel on the soils.

“We keep the same tramlines each year which helps, but you do have to be patient

in the spring, so the extra capacity will help get over the land and maintain timeliness.”

He comments that the latest technology available on the sprayer was another attraction, with air-activated GPS auto-section shut-off helping to increase accuracy.

Extremely precise

“It's extremely precise, which not only avoids wasting chemical through overlaps, but also means that I can accurately calculate exactly how much chemical is required for each field, and in future years, order only that amount. This would also be especially beneficial if I decide to go with liquid fertiliser.”

MJ Metson and Son has a 6m Horsch drill, so a 30m boom was one option to consider, but John chose to stick with 24m double-fold F series booms.

“We sometimes spray for neighbours, who are all 24m. But if they go to 30m in the future, additional sections can easily be fitted to make the boom 30m,” he explains.

It's the extra tank capacity that's making the real difference, he points out. “Our fields are mainly 16-20ha, so the 4000-litre tank means we can really get over the ground, covering 40ha in one load. There's so much more time to get through the workload.”

Chafer's manual plumbing system was chosen for simplicity, and John comments that the logical layout and powerful induction hopper means that it's possible to get even complex chemical mixes in while the water fills up

He adds that the sprayer is easy to drive in the field, and while the land is mainly fairly

flat, auto boom-levelling is very effective where it's needed.

“It's a bigger machine than its predecessor, but you soon get used to it and it's very manoeuvrable.”

He also praises the all-round visibility from the spacious cab, and its logical, user-friendly layout.

“The Teejet Aeros controller is very straightforward to use. I simply put the application rate and chosen nozzle in on the touch screen and it sets up from there. We work at 100 l/ha for fungicide and 200 l/ha for pre-em's and it has proved very accurate. I'm looking to go to RTK guidance in the future to enable the tramlines to be put in with the sprayer rather than the drill, which will help with travelling, and the extra repeatability will be useful.”

He adds that the stable boom is especially useful for increasing accuracy on pre-em's, a feature seen on his visit to Sprays and Sprayers at the Cereals event — post purchase — to check it out against the competition. ▶



The Interceptor replaces a 21-year-old sprayer, and John Metson hopes to keep it for a similar length of time.

Interceptor steps in with high specification

First seen at Cereals 2016, Chafer's self-propelled Interceptor is designed for the medium to large-scale arable farm. It can be fitted with a 4000 or 5000-litre tank and booms ranging in size from 24m to 36m.

The machine's 215hp six-cylinder Deutz TCD tier 4 engine puts power to a Bosch Rexroth hydrostatic drive. Automatic dynamic traction force distribution compensates for changes in terrain, adjusting wheel motor displacement to give better traction.

A dynamic braking system uses a combination of hydrostatic deceleration and independent mechanical braking operated by a foot pedal. This is claimed to reduce stopping distances while preventing over revving of the engine.

The cab boasts good all-round visibility, with clear and unobstructed views of the spray booms through the full wide rear windscreen. All controls including a multifunction joystick are logically laid out in the operator console, and you can move these to suit. Along with full climate control and multi stage air filtration, the cab offers a large buddy seat complete with a

refrigerated compartment.

If you're familiar with the Chafer Guardian and Sentry trailed sprayer range you'll recognise the spray pack — the signature stainless steel tanks incorporate a deep sump for complete tank emptying, aggressive tank agitation and internal baffles.

The 24-30m F Series booms can be upgraded to the 30-36m G Series, supplied with a high capacity centrifugal pump. All booms can be specified with Chafer Contour automatic boom leveling which can now offer "Sub Zero" inclination for hilly terrain. For liquid fertiliser users all booms can be specified with duo react air-controlled nozzles which can accommodate Chafer Streambars.

Also available on the Interceptor is the ePlumbing control systems, which is controlled via external and in-cab 7in colour terminals. All plumbing modes can be activated by the push of a button, rather than having to move manual taps. ePlumbing includes the eFill automatic filling software that allows you to preselect desired filling volumes of both the main spray and rinse water tanks, so you can concentrate on chemical



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induction without the fear of overfilling.

Automated cleaning of the full liquid system is handled by eClean. You select the type of washout required, with the amount of rinse water and duration taken to clean each plumbing loop on the sprayer being fully programmable. Once you start the cycle running there's no further input required — just spray out the washings at the end.

Automatic boom section control is fitted as standard to all machines in the range, and hydraulically operated auto steer can also be fitted as an option.



Simply put the application rate and chosen nozzle in on the touch screen of the controller and it sets up from there.

► "The boom rides on a mast rather than a parallelogram, the same as on the Gem, and I always found that to be very stable, so it

was another plus for me."

Access to the tank and engine for inspection and maintenance is another area picked out for praise, with large platforms boosting safety.

John admits that his purchase of a sprayer which apart from Chafer's proven spray pack was largely untested raised some eyebrows locally, but says that the back-up has been good.

"We haven't had any problems, but one of the Chafer team is local to here, plus they're always at the end of the phone if you need them. Setting up the sprayer when it was delivered was also very straightforward, with two fitters on hand to talk me through it.

"All in all, I'm very pleased with the sprayer and look forward to using it for many years." ■



It's extremely precise, avoiding wasting chemical through overlaps.

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