

Simple, solid and manoeuvrable



"We used it to load grain lorries on a neighbour's farm and were pleasantly surprised by its performance."

THOMAS REEVE

Having tried out multiple machines while looking to upgrade, a north Suffolk family turned to Case IH when purchasing a new telehandler, mostly based on the firm's tractor performance. *CPM* shares their story.

By Martin Rickatson

During the past couple of decades, almost every mainstream tractor manufacturer with ambitions to offer a full line of farm equipment has entered the telehandler sector. While some have chosen to buy up existing firms, others have opted to commission material handler specialists to build machines on their behalf.

Others still, though, have gone down a third route and chosen to manufacture their own design from scratch. Back

in the late 1990s, the 'sourcing from a specialist' route was the one selected by the business that would later form one part of today's CNH. Some years later, though, it was to develop its own side-engined machines, latterly offering them through both its brands.

This is how in 2014, the colours of Case IH came to be seen for the first time on a telehandler. The range of Farmlift models comes from the CNH plant in Lecce, Italy – one of

the Case IH parent's largest global factories, on a site of almost 60ha.

Here the Farmlift handlers are assembled alongside backhoe loaders, wheel loaders, construction telehandlers, compact wheel loaders and graders. Key components are manufactured in-house, including chassis and booms.

FAMILIARITY

An agricultural telehandler market dominated by three big brands, with a couple of others not far behind, meant breaking into the sector was likely to be a challenge, but with the Farmlift line offered alongside a tractor brand with a prominent position in the market, Case IH telehandlers have often found homes with buyers who

already operate the brand's tractors.

One such buyer was Suffolk-based family business HP, ME and TJ Reeve, which runs a 200ha all-arable unit and provides contracting and contract farming services from its base at Walsham-le-Willows, near Bury St Edmunds. Last year, the family purchased its first Case IH telehandler, a Farmlift 742, but they're keen to stress they're no strangers to Case IH tractors or their local dealer.

"After we moved from running a tractor-loader, we operated Matbro telehandlers, and then John Deere machines when Deere bought Matbro and moved to making its own models in Germany," explains Thomas Reeve, who oversees the day-to-day management of the business with his father, Hugh.

"The first was a Matbro Telestar followed by a TS280, and following the John Deere acquisition, we later purchased our first JD telehandler, a 3420.

"We worked very well with it, and that was the first of three similar machines in a row. But when John Deere pulled out of manufacturing telehandlers, we had to look at other options."

TIPPING POINT

Thomas says the business kept its last JD machine on for a while longer than planned, supplementing it with a Massey Ferguson 9407. "By last year though, the John Deere required a lot of money spending on it to renew the boom hydraulic pipework and we thought this could be the start of something more expensive, so decided to make a replacement decision.

"At the same time, the MF wasn't great on the road or for towing and was 12 years old, so while we considered retaining it for back-up, ultimately the decision was made to sell both, and replace them with a single new machine," he explains.

In addition to covering their own ground, the family works for 11 regular customers, spraying around 800ha with a Sands self-propelled, drilling 1000ha with a Vaderstad Rapid, and covering complete stubble-to-stubble work on 400ha, combining with a Claas Lexion 760.

"Although the land is mostly neighbouring ground in a block, that means plenty of running around with a telehandler and trailer loads of seed or fertiliser. At these times it's nice to have a handler in the field and one



Two in one

The Farmlift 742 has taken on the workloads of two traded-in telehandlers of different makes.

Turbofarmer 50.8T HF

Muscle Meets Precision



Bringing serious muscle to your operation, the 50.8T HF, delivers high-output performance with a 5-tonne lift capacity and 7.8m lift height. Powered by a 170hp FPT engine, its high-flow hydraulics ensure smooth, multi-function operations. Boom suspension (T) keeps loads stable across uneven ground, while optional cab suspension absorbs shocks for greater comfort on rough ground. Whether you're handling bales, loading trailers, or tackling demanding yard work, this powerhouse delivers the strength and stamina required on today's larger farms.



5.0



7.8



170

MERLO

Dealer
Locator



MACHINERY Material handlers

► in the yard, but having two handlers is a luxury really, particularly since we stopped growing sugar beet.

“Part of me wanted to keep a second machine for lighter duties, but in the end we chose to trade in both against one new machine.”

The question was what to replace them with. With this in mind, the Reeves say they like to support a number of their local dealers, and also pick the ideal machine for each role on the farm.

“Most dealer depots are 30-40 minutes from here, and we’ve never had particular loyalty to makes of key machine, although we’ve always had Claas combines, currently running a 2016 Lexion 760.

“But alongside two high-hp

crawlers – a John Deere 8370RT and an Agco Challenger MT765C – we run two Case IH wheeled tractors, a Puma 175 and a Puma 240, for the main parts of our workload.

“We have a long history of operating Case IH tractors, going back to the 1990s and before then with its predecessor brands. We also get on well with our local Case IH dealer, Ernest Doe at Framlingham, so that gave it a foot in the door,” explains Thomas.

REALISM

Having demoed yellow and green/silver alternatives but finding they couldn’t offer anything extra, he believes the cost to change – once taking into account the two proposed



Powered up

Having sufficient power on tap means virtually no right foot is required when driving into grain heaps, says Thomas Reeve.

trade-ins – was too much.

“Being an arable farm that mainly has to move grain, seed and fertiliser, we don’t require all of the bells and whistles, and performance and manoeuvrability when loading lorries is probably most important.

“So we looked at other options outside the mainstream, and spoke to our Case IH dealer about demoing a Farmlift. The quoted price was considerably cheaper than for the others we’d considered, and while it was perhaps a slightly lesser-known quantity, we knew the machines had been on the market for 10 years and that our dealer had sold a good few.”

This led to an on-farm demonstration with a Farmlift 742, Case IH’s largest 7m model, with a 4.2t lift capacity, 146hp (max) FPT engine, 6F/3R powershift transmission, and 140 l/min hydraulic system, with 160 l/min option.

“We used it to load grain lorries on a neighbour’s farm and were pleasantly surprised by its performance,” comments Thomas.

“In particular, it was especially nimble around the yard and buildings. We have one new grain building but our other sheds are fairly old and not especially big, so something that’d help to negotiate them quickly when entering and exiting while loading lorries was appealing.”

He believes the lift height of 7m is adequate for the business’ requirements. “We aren’t making large bale stacks or pushing up grain in a big store, so a lift capacity of 4.2 tonnes

The Solitair MR seed drill

A new generation.

Convince yourself of the **perfect quality** of the pneumatic seed drill, which, thanks to the **many equipment options** can be used in **various tilling processes**.



is therefore sufficient, easily handling a 2.25t bucket for grain loading.

“The Farmlift was also simple in its design and its controls, seemed well-built, and had good all-round vision, with a decent cab that has an interior look that’s a little similar to the Case IH Puma tractors we own.”

The demonstration was sufficiently impressive to agree a transaction, particularly as the dealer was happy to put a modest value on taking in the John Deere and Massey Ferguson handlers in part-exchange, further reducing the cost to upgrade.

“It has the features we want without the frills we don’t require because we’re in and out of the cab a lot, and not spending solid hours in it,” suggests Thomas.

“Aspects like the reversing fan are especially useful, for example, when loading many lorries in a day or working with our bucket brush. Being able to automatically or manually reverse the fan direction to blow out the radiator screens is much nicer and easier than stopping to clean by hand, and ensures



Familiarity

The Reeve family’s long history with Case IH wheeled tractors and their local dealer were key factors in the decision to purchase a Farmlift.

the engine always has access to sufficient cooling air so doesn’t get hot.”

The Farmlift’s main duties comprise loading grain lorries and the farm’s drill and fertiliser spreader, although it also works with an access platform, a dirt bucket and hydraulically-powered bucket brush.

“Changing telehandler makes can

be a pain if it’s necessary to also change attachments, because of the differing headstock types between manufacturers,” points out Thomas. “But with an adaptor we’ve been able to retain and continue to use all our existing attachments with their Matbro-style pin-and-cone fittings on the hook-type headstock of the Farmlift.”



E-Services for TopDown and Opus

Optimising the Future of Tillage



Learn more at vaderstad.com

Experience precision farming like never before with the introduction of E-Services for TopDown and Opus.

Now these machines can seamlessly utilise prescription maps for automatic, in field machine adjustments.

Alternatively, with a touch of a button the driver can dynamically adjust the working depth or intensity of the discs, tines, levellers or packer while in operation.

VÄDERSTAD

MACHINERY

SO FAR, SO GOOD

Delivered in August 2024, by May this year the Reeves had put just over 400 hours on the Farmlift. And so far, Thomas believes it's done everything asked of it without issue. "The power and fuel efficiency are especially good," he says.

"Having sufficient power on tap means the machine requires virtually no right foot when driving into a grain heap during lorry loading. It's rarely necessary to use a lot of revs to do anything with it really – the powershift works well and it's just a case of slotting it into gear and touching the throttle to take off smoothly."

It's also proved happy to take on haulage duties when drilling or fertilising, pulling an NC trailer with a full load of bags. "It's not hilly around here, but it



Improved manoeuvrability

While the Reeve family farm has one new grain shed, the yard and other buildings make manoeuvrability important.

Precise cultivation and consolidation

DISC ROLLER CONTOUR

Multi-purpose primary & secondary cultivator.

- **Hydraulic SAT system** - "contour" following system on folding models
- **DSD - depth synchronised disc system** ensures the whole soil profile is moved across the full working width
- **2 rows of opposing 510mm sabre discs**
- **Single or twin V-profile or twin U-profile roller rings** - optimum re-consolidation for weed germination

Precise depth control and contour following gives uniform soil movement across the full operational width - vital if employing reduced tillage or creating stale seedbeds for blackgrass control.



pulls a trailer well and on this sort of job or when loading out grain, the cab is a decent place to be, and quiet enough."

The Farmlift has settled in well and proven plenty capable in its first year on the farm, comments Thomas, the only issue being a suspected slight tyre defect with one of the front Trelleborgs that the dealer is striving to address.

"I'd like to think it'll do five or six years with us, clocking up around 2500 hours before we look to replace it. But the cost to change is always the biggest factor, and new machine prices seem to keep rising."

According to Thomas, the dealer makes a significant difference. "The good support for the tractors we've had from them during the years was a big factor in our decision to take on the same make of telehandler.

"Because we've gone from two handlers to one, we do now sometimes have to plan jobs a little more carefully if the Farmlift is in the field and we find we want something doing in the yard.

"There are times I wonder if we should have kept one of our previous machines, but both required money spending on them which convinces me this was the right decision. We could always hire a handler if we decided it was necessary, and some of the farms we work on have one of their own that we can use."

Although some manufacturers have left the telehandler sector, when those particular handlers were introduced, there likely wasn't as much competition in the market as there is now, believes Thomas.

"Today it seems there are more makes available, but we considered the Farmlift against most alternatives and it gave us the best blend of the features we wanted at the right price," he concludes. ●



Distributed by OPICO

OPICO Ltd.
01778 421111

ask@opico.co.uk
opico.co.uk