

"The output of Rapid gives us the confidence to wait"

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Following our 25 year-celebration of Rapid, here is just one of those good stories about efficiency, quality and endurance of Rapid.

A Lincolnshire farm's policy of running two drills enables it to maintain a high level of blackgrass control through leaving seedbeds stale for longer and achieve timeliness of establishment.

B Bush and Sons does not like to rush the establishment of its winter-sown cereal crops. "We hold back from early drilling as part of our blackgrass control programme and timeliness is critical; our objective is to drill when seedbed conditions are right," says Jeff Bush, a partner in the firm, which farms 2000ha from its base at Revesby. The land typically down to winter wheat, oilseed rape, sugar beet, and winter and spring barley. Peas, beans, potatoes and maize are also grown. Some contract work is carried out if required.

The company philosophy is to prepare the best seedbed possible before drilling. This means getting the cereal and rape straw baled behind the combine so the cultivations equipment has to deal with minimal trash, although Jeff admits that he is "not a fan of taking nutrients off the field", which they counter by chopping and incorporating straw every third year and fertilising accordingly.

Some 90% of the ground, which runs from light through to heavy soil types, is then ploughed and treated with two to three passes using a 10m and two 6.5m Väderstad RexusTwin presses to establish a rough seedbed. As soon as there is a flush of weeds and volunteers the ground is treated with glyphosate before it is consolidated with a 6.5m Carrier in front of the drills.

"We like to keep the land as clean as we can and with the system, or variations on that theme, we can get two flushes and hold back from drilling for two to three weeks," Jeff says. "And we like to be traditional and stay in our comfort zone, especially with the contract work. Also, we need to be certain that we know what we can do; if, for instance, there is a heavy downpour just before drilling, we know we can go back later."

Drilling starts in early October, the operation carried out with an 8m Väderstad Rapid drill and a 6m model. It is a make B Bush and Sons have been running for the past 14 years. "We liked the way we could rely on the Rapid and we slowly realised that with its output if seedbed conditions weren't right we could sit back and wait," Jeff comments.

Running two drills enable him to extend stale seedbed length and to drill when the conditions are as right as is practically possible.

"The second drill has eased the hassle and the combined output is terrific," he says.

The 8m Rapid runs behind an 845 Challenger, the 6m is on a 765 Challenger. "We like drilling at speed without being reckless and try for 12 – 15kph as the Rapid works better at speed," Jeff explains. "We can't fault the drill and we know what we're working with."

He makes the point that the two significant factors influencing good crop production are an effective break and timeliness of establishment. "The output of the Rapids gives us the confidence to wait," Jeff says. "And the additional cost of running two drills is outweighed by the ability to leave the seedbeds stale for longer, which means that there is less risk of yield reduction from blackgrass as we can maintain a high level of control. Yields are also more than acceptable. Wheat yields, over a wide range of situations, average 9t/ha; we've lost nothing by holding back."

Source: Väderstad