



CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

AUTOPILOT™ AUTOMATED STEERING SYSTEM

FmX® INTEGRATED DISPLAY

RANGEPOINT™ RTX POSITIONING SERVICE

FIELD-IQ™ CROP INPUT CONTROL SYSTEM



Robert Todd (on the left) with his operator, David Mattocks.

About the Grower

- Robert J. Todd
- Low Ground Farm, Doncaster, Yorkshire, UK
- 200 hectares (500 acres)
- Grows wheat, sugar beets, and grass
- RJC Todd Ltd., contract spraying of 16,000 Ha (40,000 acres)
- One employee

» Problem

Todd wanted to reduce the stress for his operator, improve accuracy, and minimise overlaps

» Solution

He purchased the Trimble FmX display, Autopilot system, RangePoint RTX correction service, and Field-IQ system to reduce overlap and operator stress and increase accuracy

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TRIMBLE SOLUTIONS REDUCE OVERLAP AND STRESS FOR UK GROWER/SPRAYER

THE PROBLEM

Robert Todd is a third-generation farmer. He runs the farm with the assistance of his 80-year-old father ("he helps when he wants to," says Todd). Their principal crops are wheat, sugar beets, and grass. Todd also is the owner of RJC Todd, Ltd., a contract spraying operation, servicing some 16,000 hectares of land for clients in the general Yorkshire area. Most of the spraying is of suspension fertiliser, with maize being the principal crop sprayed, along with wheat, oilseed rape, potatoes, and sugar beets. The company also harvests 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) of beets.

Todd's business had been using an older sprayer equipped with a Trimble® EZ-Guide® 500 lightbar guidance system that provided steering indications to the operator. However, with his growing contract spraying business, clients are scattered farther around the Yorkshire area, some as far away as two hours. As a result, his rig and operator logged many road hours travelling to the various sites. Todd wanted a sprayer with greater onboard capacity for chemicals and fertilisers to cut down on the number of to/from trips for reloading and to allow for more time in the fields and less on the road. Although the previous EZ-Guide 500 system had worked well, he wanted an automatic steering system that would reduce the stress for his operator and improve positional accuracy to minimise overlaps. Todd says, "I wanted to transfer the responsibility for accurate spraying from the operator to the machine."

"I love the Autopilot system and so does my operator! He can spend much less time and effort guiding the machine and more time monitoring the spraying."

Robert J. Todd



THE SOLUTION

In late February 2015, Todd took delivery of an Agrifac Condor Endurance sprayer with 8,000-liter capacity and 36-meter boom width. He believes it is the first such model to be used in the UK. He ordered it equipped with a Trimble Autopilot automated steering system, an FmX integrated display and the Field-IQ crop input control system. Todd subscribes to the Trimble RangePoint RTX correction service, which provides broad accuracy corrections with less than six-inch (15-cm) pass-to-pass accuracy without the need for a dedicated base station. He knows that an RTK service would improve the accuracy still further, but he says the RTX service accuracy is sufficient for his primary business of spraying fertiliser and that his widespread client base would often put his system out of range of a specific RTK base station.

Upon taking delivery of the new rig, Todd and his operator, David Mattocks, spent about one day at the Agrifac facility to receive training on using the sprayer. A Trimble service rep also visited Todd's farm the next day to review the use of the Autopilot system. The system was then immediately plunged into full operation for the spring spraying season, seeing heavy use by the operator—800 hours in the first two months (March and April).

THE RESULTS

"I love the Autopilot system and so does my operator!" says Todd. "He has worked long days, yet feels less tired at the end of the day because the system steers itself. He can spend much less time and effort guiding the machine and more time monitoring the spraying. It has made both his life and mine much easier, and we get much better accuracy too."

Todd has used elements of the Field-IQ system and FmX display for field mapping and automatic shut-off control, and expects to fully utilise the variable rate application control for his spraying operations. "We got the new system and immediately put it to hard work," Todd says. "Now that the spring spraying season is slacking off, we will have more time to play with it and learn how to use even more of its capabilities. We're looking forward to discovering what it can really do."

"When we got our original EZ-Guide 500 system in 2008, we cut our over-application factor by five to eight percent. Now, with the Trimble solution, we've gone from a six-meter shut off down to three meters, which cuts the overlap even further. Installing the FmX display with the Autopilot system and RangePoint RTX correction service has met my goals very well, and we'll gain even more when we start fully using the Field-IQ system."

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