

## **Quadtrac helps to overcome the challenges of poor autumn weather**

*The recent addition of a 580 Quadtrac has played a large part in enabling Hertfordshire based farmer, Ian Watson, to finish autumn cultivations despite challenging weather and difficult ground conditions...*

Ian and his brother Michael own Greens Farm, in Buntingford, where they manage 2,500 acres of arable crops, incorporating 1,500 acres of milling wheat, beans, barley and a small acreage of oats. This year, the brothers have moved over to a controlled traffic system on the farm, with the objective of reducing soil compaction and improving machinery fuel efficiencies.

“We now have all the dedicated tram lines set up across the farm and mapped on our computer guidance systems,” explains Ian. “These tram lines are based on the 10.3-metre width of our combine headers and work in combination with the width of our other bits of kit, such as our drill, subsoiler, mole drainer and cultivator.

“The system seems to be working well and has helped us manage our cultivation schedule despite difficult ground conditions caused by the wet weather. By having a controlled traffic system in place, we have been able to get out on ground that we normally wouldn’t have been able to and we have minimized any soil damage. Having the 580 Quadtrac at our disposal has also been a great help.”

Ian and Michael used to run a contracting business alongside their home farm and had two John Deere’s which did most of their contracting and farm work.

“When we moved away from the contracting side of things last year, we decided to ‘start again’ and now have a couple of Puma 200 CVX’s on farm, which are also rented out for contract work, as well as the Quadtrac,” says Ian. “The Quadtrac is a 2016 model and came onto the farm in April 2019 and we have been really pleased with how it has performed; it is our main machine on the farm and now does the bulk of our field work.

“In the past, we found that wheeled tractors churned up the ground quite badly, especially when pulling heavy kit and doing tight turns out in the field. In combination with our controlled traffic system, we just don’t get this type of damage now with the Quadtrac and soil compaction isn’t a concern. Thanks to the tracks, we have been able to get out on ground this autumn that we wouldn’t have been able to with a wheeled machine, and we actually managed to get all our drilling done and dusted by 28<sup>th</sup> October this year, which was a great result considering the conditions.”

The 580 has also proven to be a powerful, reliable and efficient machine to have on farm.

“We work across a lot of heavier, clay soil, so maintaining drainage is a big thing for us, and the 580 easily tows along our twinlegged mole drainer,” continues Ian. “The seed drill we use has been converted down to 10.5 metres wide but is still a big bit of kit to handle. This autumn, even though ground conditions were slippy and wet, the Quadtrac just kept on going and could maintain good traction when pulling the drill.

“Since using the 580 I have also noticed a significant reduction in our overall fuel consumption. It has done the vast majority of the work on farm this year and only used 30,000 litres of previously fuel usage would have been much more than this.

Overall, Ian is pleased with the Quadtrac’s performance and thinks it is a good fit on his farm.

“By getting those winter wheat, barley and oat crops in by the end of October we have ensured good crop establishment and got on the front foot of our workload, despite the problems that the weather caused,” concludes Ian. “We wouldn’t have been able to achieve this with a wheeled machine and I think the Quadtrac has earned its place as our ‘go to’ farm vehicle.”