

X-PRESS 3m & 4m mounted



Farmers on medium acreage farms now have a genuine 'one-pass cultivation' option thanks to Simba's 3m and 4m mounted X-Presses and the ST Bar. Here four users - spread right across Britain - explain the contribution the machine is making on their farms.





X-PRESS 3m & 4m mounted



3m Mounted X-Press working on ploughed ground

Mounted X-Presses are the first machines Simba has offered for use behind tractors of less than 100hp, and extend the concept of single pass soil restructuring and cultivation to virtually every arable farmer.

They are a competitively priced modern 'short' disc harrow with an integral DD-Lite roller so they cultivate, incorporate trash and stubble, and consolidate in one pass. Both sets of discs are mounted on Pro-Active leaves that enable them to contour follow very effectively.

These leaves also ensure complete protection against stone damage as they allow the discs to lift clear of the soil if they meet a stone or other obstruction, and then automatically re-set at the desired working depth. A certain degree of lateral flexing provides further protection.

The discs working angle can be adjusted using a track rod system operated by a simple handle to match soil type and conditions, a feature not available on many competitor machines.

Narrow angles are typically used to work down ploughing or in good soil conditions. Working angles can be increased to help maintain penetration and enhance incorporation where appropriate. It is therefore possible to move the entire soil profile even at very shallow working depths.



3m X-Press & ST Bar working on stubble

As an option, an ST bar carrying deeper working tines can be inserted ahead of the discs to perform a complete 'one pass' cultivation, with deeper loosening at up to 10 inches. A range of points can be supplied for these legs so the nature of the cultivation can be matched to soil type/condition. The tines are auto reset as opposed to shearbolt protected, making them suitable for stoney conditions. The tines are also independently adjustable for depth.

Both ST Bar and X-Press can still be run independently if required from an agronomic point of view, or if a suitably sized tractor to pull the complete unit is not available.

The rear roller features DD-Lite press rings that achieve excellent consolidation to the full seed-bed depth, without making the roller too heavy. The resultant corrugated finish is also very weatherproof.

Fitting the toolbar moves the X-Press 80cms further behind the tractor, but with no compromise to manoeuvrability or performance, and the whole unit is still usable behind a 140hp tractor.



The Complete X-Press ST – for TOTAL TILLAGE



The ST Bar – giving you an initial breakdown of the surface and residues. Use on its own or with the added mixing and cultivation of the X-Press

The proven X-Press – for fast, effective cultivations. Use on its own or combined with the ST Bar.

CHARLIE McCRIRICK

BRYCE McCRIRICK & SONS



BRYCE McCRIRICK & SONS
Whitmuirhaugh,
Sprouston, nr KELSO

- 614 Acres
- Milling Wheat
- Oilseeds
- Winter Barley
- Oats
- Triticale

Parentage proves persuasive

A quick glance at the implement's "family tree" was enough to convince the McCririck family that Simba's mounted X-Press cultivator and ST bar was worth investigating.

Bryce McCririck & Sons farms 614 acres at Whitmuirhaugh, Sprouston, near Kelso in the Scottish Borders, will 220 acres of milling wheat being grown alongside smaller acreages of oilseeds, winter barley, oats and triticale, together with some additional contracting work.

They needed a flexible cultivator that could work in both ploughed and reduced tillage systems, which was also at home on stony land, as Charlie McCririck explains:

"We were looking for a cultivator to complete our 'arable armoury'. There are quite a few companies making this kind of machine, but none of them looked beefy enough. We chose the X-Press because combines several well-proven elements, and we felt it was best suited to our needs. It is well designed, strongly built, versatile and competitively priced".

Flexibility is crucial, says Charlie, as is the fact that it runs very easily at six or seven mph behind a 140hp tractor, which bosses it even on slopes. It is now the primary cultivator for their growing acreage of reduced tillage, but is equally good at working down ploughing:



Ploughed ground



Consolidated level seedbed after the 3m mounted X-Press

"Two years ago we ploughed pretty well everything, but that is changing. We use the X-Press throughout the rotation, either as the primary cultivator or to work land down. Output is excellent. Where we need to conserve moisture we try to run just ahead of the drill, and it stays ahead of a 4m drill with comfort". The ST legs are well-proven from their use with the Solo ST, and have proved very good when lifting out compaction and tramlines: "We like the idea of adjustable depth legs so we can set them to lift out compaction. The discs are strong and do a really good mixing job if used as a primary cultivator.

"Equally, we can set them at a narrower angle, in which format they do a really good job of working down ploughing. Each disc is mounted on an individual leaf that gives significant vertical movement and some sideways flex as well, which protects them against stone damage very effectively".

The DD Lite roller has proven itself in really difficult conditions on our trickiest field this spring: "The field was a boggy marsh until recent years. Even now, if you plough it in the wrong conditions it turns to glue and the soil sticks to the mouldboards. But in dry conditions it can turn over in huge 'horse heads'.

"The X-Press coped with it very well. The ST legs ripped it up; the discs worked the seedbed down well and the DD Lite roller left a finish that the drill could work the next day. We really benefited from concentrating the cultivation in the top few inches of soil where we put the seed".

"...the ST legs ripped it up, the discs worked the seedbed down well and the DD Lite roller left a finish that the drill could work the next day..."



3m X-Press & ST Bar incorporating stubble

TOM WHITTAL-WILLIAMS

E R Whittal-Williams & Partners



E R Whittal-Williams & Part.
Upper Triley Farm,
Abergavenny, SOUTH WALES

- 350 Acres
- Winter Wheat
- Oilseed Rape
- Broiler Chickens

Quick progress in Wales

Reducing the time and cost of cultivations is crucial to all arable farmers, including Bernard and Tom Whittal-Williams, who have 350 acres of winter wheat and oilseed rape alongside 850,000 broiler chickens at their farms, based around the home unit at Upper Triley, Abergavenny, South Wales.

Cultivations previously started with the plough because they needed to incorporate up to three tonnes/acre of mixed chicken and pig manure, before crops were sown by a contractor using a combination drill.

They stopped keeping pigs recently, and so re-assessed their cultivation system, opting to move to reduced tillage to achieve greater output. This ensures they get drilled up in good time, and certainly before the weather breaks in the autumn, which it does with some finality in the Brecon Beacons National Park!



Auto reset tines fitted to the ST Bar

While conditions were kind last autumn, both were impressed with its work: "The crops all look very good. They all established well and we were actually worried that they were becoming too lush", says Tom, to which Bernard adds: "We might exploit that by reducing seed rates in future".

Their rotation is two wheats followed by oilseeds. They cultivate as tight behind oilseeds harvest as possible so they have a wide gap and can work the ground a second time if needed before the contractor arrives to drill wheat, which helps clear up a lot of weeds and volunteers:

"The X-Press did an excellent job both times and created plenty of tilth which the DD-Lite roller pressed very effectively", says Tom. Significantly it can cover 60 acres a day – which solves the output problem and means they can work on the same day as the drill and stay ahead of it with comfort.

“...the X-Press did an excellent job both times and created plenty of tilth which the DD-Lite roller pressed very effectively...”



DD Lite rear roller offering all the benefits of the DD roller without the weight penalty.

Bernard says he always thought their mainly sandy loam soils could be worked using reduced tillage, but had reservations about the machines available and how they might cope in the conditions presented on their farm:

"We had to work in a lot of muck and relied on the plough to do it. In reality we might have switched to reduced tillage earlier, because the X-Press has shown it can incorporate virtually anything. We have lost some of the steel covers that protect the bearings, but are working with Simba and our dealer to rectify this fault".



Manual adjustment of gang angles

EDDIE KYME

DEEPDALE FARM



DEEPDALE FARM

Leasingham, nr Sleaford,
LINCOLNSHIRE

- 360 Acres
- Winter Wheat
- Potatoes
- Sugar Beet
- Carrots
- Parsnips

“...the X-Press legs can be set to work as deep as we need, and the pitch of the discs can also be altered to cope with changing working conditions...”

Reducing cost and time

Lincolnshire farmer Eddie Kyme has reduced both the cost and time taken preparing seedbeds by replacing the subsoiler, plough, discs and spring tine cultivators he previously used with a mounted 3m X-Press with ST Bar.

The new machine cuts several passes out of his cultivation system, with the added advantage that it is – as he describes it – “three machines in one”, and he can use it complete, or in different combinations.

He has 360 acres of arable land at Deepdale Farm, Leasingham, near Sleaford, where cropping includes winter wheat, potatoes and sugar beet, with some land being rented out for carrot and parsnip production.



3m X-Press and ST Bar working on stubble

Previously cultivations started with the plough – run after a subsoiler if required – with discs and tined cultivators being used to work the land down into a seedbed for a combination drill mounted on a tined cultivator and a Flexicoil.

But the X-Press has replaced all of those implements, completing one or two passes according to soil type and conditions, leaving a better quality seedbed as well.

“It does three jobs in one, which is far less time consuming and saves both fuel and labour. We have gone from four cultivation passes or more to just two. The resulting seedbed has fewer clods in it and a finer, more even finish”.

The time saving is particularly valuable, as he runs the farm on his own with some help from his father John. The quality of the seedbed is also better, he says, with the ST bar’s five legs being a significant improvement on the old subsoiler’s two legs:

“They move the entire soil profile to the depth we require, whereas the old model would move the area around the legs and tended to leave some areas of compaction undisturbed.

“Now we aim to get in as soon as the straw has been cleared and do the first cultivation pass, and go back again to clear the re-growth and volunteers before drilling”, he says.

Output can be as much as 40 acres/day behind a 140hp Renault tractor, with working speeds of five miles an hour being achieved: “Previously sub-soiling was much slower. We might only cover 25 acres/day. The X-Press legs can be set to work as deep as we need, and the pitch of the discs can also be altered to cope with changing working conditions”.



3m X-Press breaking down ploughing

He has split the machine into different combinations to complete specific jobs. This includes dropping the X-Press and rear roller off the back to use the ST legs as a subsoiler when working land in the autumn ahead of potato planting in the spring, and the using the legs and discs in combination without the roller to leave a more corrugated, weather-proof and “Cross Compliant” finish for over-wintering.

ROGER MOBBS

WHITEHOUSE FARM



WHITEHOUSE FARM
Cratfield, SUFFOLK

- 330 Acres
- Wheat
- Barley
- Oilseed Rape
- Spring Beans
- Oats

Achieving X-Press cultivations

With 12,000 laying hens and 100 calves – to which they add 5,000 turkeys being reared for Christmas – the Mobbs family is already busy enough during the autumn.

That is why they were looking to streamline the crop establishment system on their 330 acres at Whitehouse Farm, Cratfield, Suffolk. They grow wheat, barley and oilseed rape, alongside spring beans and some oats to feed the turkeys.

Livestock tasks take priority, so arable equipment that is simple to use, can reduce the number of passes and help improve overall output is a real benefit.



3m X-Press c/w ST Bar, 'a one pass machine' for 140hp

And their new 3m Simba X-Press does all those things, being simple to set up and run; doing an excellent cultivation and levelling job on ploughed land; and leaving the seedbed more level than its predecessor, so the drill can work faster.

In addition, it has removed the plough from oilseed rape establishment, where it is proving adept as the primary cultivator.

Cultivations for all crops used to start with a plough fitted with a furrow cracker, followed by another pass with a crumbler. But this did not create enough tilth for the drill, so they either had to do more passes with the cultivator or rely on the combination's power harrow to do the job.



Pro-Active disc units for improved contour following and stone protection

The X-Press was used last autumn for the first time with excellent results: "We plough/furrow crack before running it. The discs leave a good tilth that needs less weathering ahead of drilling, and leaves a more level finish, so the power harrow is not working as hard. That helps timeliness. All the crops look really good this year".

He also highlights the ability to vary the working angle of the discs, so they can match the aggressiveness of the cultivation to field and soil conditions: "All adjustments are simple which helps when you're squeezing cultivations between other jobs".

They used the X-Press as the primary cultivator ahead of oilseed rape last autumn with excellent results: "We did one or two passes according to the ground conditions and went straight in with the drill". Output is excellent, enabling them to complete field-work – "without resorting to silly, long hours", as Roger puts it.

“ ...the discs leave a good tilth that needs less weathering ahead of drilling, and leaves a more level finish, so the power harrow is not working as hard... ”



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