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MEDIA RELEASE

Kuhn Mixer Wagon Helps Make It Happen

Waikato dairy farmers Trevor and Mike Simpson like doing things once and doing it right, so they bought a Kuhn SPW Intense 22 CL mixer wagon, one of the first self-propelled Kuhn mixer wagons of its type in the country.

The father and son team and their staff milk about 1100 cows. They were putting in a single shed to replace two old ones, so their Kuhn dealership rep, James Hanson from Roger Gill Ag, showed them feeding systems on four local farms.

Right from the start the Simpsons hated the idea of having to separately buy a loader tractor/telehandler, a mixer wagon, and a tractor to power it. James saw a Kuhn SPW Intense 22 on a trip with Kuhn to Europe a couple of years ago.

You could count the number of Kuhn SPW Intense 22 CL mixer wagons in New Zealand on one hand. Scarcity didn't deter the Simpsons: after James showed them a video of one in action, the pair were determined to have one.

The machine is quickly proving its worth, operations manager Mike says. "We decided that buying separate machines would only mean three machines that could break down, three machines that had to be serviced and three machines that had to be replaced. We looked at all the different options and we just felt it was a lot of machinery to do the job."

Simpson Farms is based at Rangiriri in north Waikato. The low-lying farm borders Waikato River and is surrounded by stop-banks. For two months of the year you can't even walk through some paddocks: it's basically a swamp, out of reach by bike or tractor.

Last year they installed a 6100m² 1200 cow covered feed pad alongside a new 64-bail rotary with a covered yard. Now operating a DairyNZ System 5, the family's three-year goal was to produce 600kg MS/cow up from 380kg MS/cow under their grass system. They are now confident to hit that production in year two.

Mike says the Kuhn SPW Intense 22 CL fits nicely into their new feed pad based farm system. "We're surrounded by water, so we were going to be under the pump to change the way we farmed, including how we dealt with managing winters to protect waterways. And one of the old cow sheds needed an upgrade so we combined two sheds into one and built a rotary." He says a System 5 farm has always been his goal, so now he has the infrastructure to make it happen.

Kuhn's two-auger, vertical self-propelled mixing wagons have been developed to save time when feeding large herds. Using the feed pad and their new machine, the Simpsons are feeding their cows nearly twice as fast as previously. Mike says the benefit was obvious within a week of the machine arriving on farm, a few days before the Covid-19 lockdown in mid-March.

Mike likes the ease of driver control, which is mainly based on a single joystick, and the camera vision. A decent investment in training is needed to get the knack of the machine but it's easy once you get into the swing of it, Mike says. "We've gone from running two machines -a tractor and a loader for an hour each load- to this machine doing that in half an hour. The feed face is left rock hard now, so we're preserving any feed that we're not using. There's very little wastage."

While the machine is priced in the high \$300,000s, Mike is confident about his value for money. A new mixer wagon might cost \$140,000 and a tractor, \$60,000, plus a \$140,000 tele-handler to load it, so if you add that up, the retail price is similar.

"Because we were starting up the farm development from scratch, the investment wasn't a lot dearer than having three machines: a mixer wagon, a tractor and a loader. And I think people will look at this when they're getting to the stage of having to replace their gear. They might have had their other equipment for five years and it's worth nothing because it's all worn out. They'll think 'what's the next step; I'm not doing this again every five years.'"

The SP models perform several functions including loading and mixing different ingredients and distributing rations accurately using a built-in weighing system.

Built on Kuhn's many years' experience in self-propelled mixer wagons, the SP driving position integrates Kuhn's new, colour touch CCI terminal, which manages machine maintenance data such as periodical service schedules and diagnostic assistance. The CCI can also adjust the speed of the milling head, mixing augers and feed conveyor instantly. The CCI manages information on up to 80 rations with 15 different constituents and memorises up to ten feed batches by name.

The design offers excellent traction and weight distribution on the rear axle, offering speed and comfort. Fuel savings are guaranteed through the combination of the new 225 hp Tier 4F engine and the "milling head/mixing auger" hydraulics management system, which distributes machine force to where it's most needed.

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Rangiriri, Waikato dairy farmer Mike Simpson with his Kuhn 22.2 self-propelled feed mixer wagon.