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End User Profile

Property/Organisation	DM Jennings and Sons
Region	Cygnnet, Tasmania
Machine	Quantum Mist
Application	Strawberries

Sprayer smooths strawberry season

When you have a million strawberry plants under your care there's a need to ensure they remain in tip-top condition right through the season. Tasmanian growers D M Jennings and Sons, Cygnnet, just south of Hobart, deliver quality produce, courtesy of a Cropland Equipment Quantum Mist sprayer – a specially-designed unit that is making a name for itself by working in leafy ground crops such as strawberries, also certain vegetables.

Just recently Dave Jennings and his sons have been winding down their season which this year has been particularly challenging. "It's been a very ordinary, with some fruit losses," he said. "With another 120mm of rain last week, that will shorten the season by another month or so," he added.

Interestingly, the Tasmanian strawberry season gets into its stride in about October, winding down in May with the peak months of November, December and January requiring the farm's principal sprayer to perform without missing a beat.

Dave Jennings says their high-tech Quantum Mist sprayer has been instrumental in the venture being able to pare back from high to low volume applications. "That's good as far as chemical use goes," he explained. "We've come from about 800L/ha to about 250L/ha with this sprayer," Dave Jennings added. All this translates to more money in his hip pocket due to using less chemical – one of the most costly farm inputs in any farm spraying venture.

As well, he says the machine's air blast system is "more effective" in that it is easily adjustable in terms of varying wind speeds from the fans according to different crop growth stages. "New plantings don't need that much air through them but the bigger plants, with bigger foliage, do," Dave Jennings said. "In that respect, the machine's vary adaptable."

The Jennings family's sprayer is a linkage-mounted unit equipped with a 700L tank and a rear-mounted boom. Hydraulic power is used to fold/unfold the boom, also to adjust height and fan air speed. A total of five spray heads make up the business end of the sprayer. "A lot of our spray work is foliar fertiliser spray and it does a very effective job," Dave Jennings said. During the season the Quantum Mist sprayer is capable of covering 20ha (50 acres) a day, a task that is repeated almost on a continuous basis to ensure the crop maintains its correct nutrient levels.

"It's an on-going fertiliser programme throughout the whole season," Dave Jennings explained. With the family's Quantum Mist sprayer having earned its keep over the past 18 months, early feed-back is of the busy property being "very happy" with its performance to date.

The 90hp tractor used to operate the newcomer is needed to carry not only the sprayer but also its spray tank which can be in the order of 1 tonne when fully loaded. "You need a decent size tractor for the job," Dave Jennings said.

The family says their Quantum Mist sprayer forms a "very critical" part of the property's machinery inventory, being used right through the growing season. Most days, Dave's son, Brody, drives the tractor/sprayer combination, keeping a firm eye on the sprayer's control systems.

The property largely ensures each run is "pretty straight" and is made up of a combination of flat and hilly country.

At the end of the day, and with another season under its belt, the Quantum Mist sprayer has been labelled as "very good" by the Jennings family which is based at Cygnet, the centre of fruit growing in the Huon Valley which is noted for its vibrant apple, cherry and berry orchards.

Footnote: Southern Machinery, based in Kingston, supplied the Jennings family's Quantum Mist Sprayer with its principal, Robert Burrige, underscoring how the machine's new low-volume spray technology was steadily attracting interest throughout the district.

