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End User Profile

Property/Organisation	Trevor and Haydn Walters
Region	Manangatang, VIC
Machine	RoGator 1386
Application	Cereal and Canola

Rogator purchase translates to paddock efficiencies

In such “an extreme season,” one that has seen north west Victoria receive its annual rainfall in the space of a month, the Walters family, Manangatang, says the operating efficiencies of its new 1386 Cropland Equipment Rogator have proved their worth. “With a bit of share farming we put in about 12,500 acres of cereal and canola,” Trevor Walters said. Despite the tough start to a year that has seen more than 12in of rain falling on the district’s Mallee-type country, crop yields, described as “quite good,” were offset by their winter crop harvest being downgraded to feed status. Interestingly, both Trevor and son Haydn have racked up plenty of experience using Rogator technology having previously purchased a 1274C unit. “We just knew the way to go (forward) was with specialist spraying machines – a decision we made some three years ago,” he added.

With some 1700 hours on the 1274C, and with “excellent service and warranty” attributes, the Walters say they found Croplands to be “a good company to deal with,” quickly making their replacement decision. It looks to have been an opportune time to change over, also a good time to increase efficiency by 20 percent, aided by a wider boom.

Today, the property operates with a 120ft boom, plus enjoys a tank capacity that has been lifted from about 5000L to a fraction over 6000L, giving the Walters a further lift in operational capacity.

“It all adds up to getting more done with less fills,” Trevor said. “Our spraying window is reasonably small and we like to keep the Delta-T levels right for ideal spraying,” he added. “You need to either spray at night – and we have found the machine very good from the perspective of its lights – or start very early in the morning and try and get two or three tanks out before it warms up,” Trevor Walters said.

The family says the 2011 season has been “a dream for spraying” because all the rain has translated into much higher humidity levels, resulting in a lot more work being carried out in day light hours. The Walters say it is difficult to pinpoint hourly outputs turned in by their 1386 newcomer. However, they can cover 1500-plus acres in daylight hours by which time the 1386’s tank usually has been re-filled six times.

“They (Croplands) have a very good filling system,” Trevor explained. The hydrostatic drive system is said to be “very smooth” and the Caterpillar engine has proved to be a reliable part of the overall sprayer package. The lift in engine rating from 295hp to 311hp is plainly evident when tackling any rises the machine encounters, according to Trevor. “You can feel the increase in power of the motor even though the machine is a bit bigger and heavier,” he said.

“Being hydrostatic, we know we can push it quite hard to achieve high work rates, and if you’ve had a bit of rain, and when the conditions aren’t dusty, you can spray pretty quickly – up around 30kph,” Trevor added. The ride afforded by the 1386 is said to be “pretty smooth,” courtesy of its air-bag suspension system. “You can spend all day in the cab, so it’s got to be comfortable, or it ends up being a tiring exercise,” Trevor said.

Factoring in the season’s predominately muddy conditions, the Walters say the machine’s 4WD system looks to have come into its own. “The 4WD helps keep the machine ‘on top’ which has been especially beneficial in these totally abnormal conditions,” Trevor said. Turning to the booms, the Walters say they have yet to fit an automatic height control system. Interim the report is of the boom being “very stable,” also robust. “If you do happen to hit something, it folds back extremely well and doesn’t knock jets off, getting back into position reasonably quickly,” Trevor said.

Meanwhile, the folding mechanism delivers a better operational outcome, according to the Walters who say it offers much greater visibility when travelling down the road. As well, the view from the cab is said to

be considerably enhanced over a tractor or truck. “You are higher up and if you are patching-out weeds, you can see them a lot better,” Trevor said.

“The height of the machine is also good for late season spraying because you are not knocking the top of the crop around and you can actually spray in canola which can be quite tall.” Access to the cab via front-mounted steps is singled out for special mention by the Walters who prefer this arrangement to the previous side-mounted configuration, requiring operators to duck under the boom.

Finally, Trevor drew attention to the 1386 being very “health and safety compliant,” offering a chemical and dust-free cab environment through proven filtration systems, also drawing attention to its efficient water and chemical transfer. “Safety and overall handling of chemicals is so important when we are handling such large amounts,” he said. The family expects Rogators like its new 1386 model to cover between 500 to 600 hours a year, thereby quickly earning its keep.

