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A New Era

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A Strong Advocate

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Estate Planning

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Contents

- 3** MacDon President Gary Giesbrecht on the acquisition by Linamar.
- 8** Alberta farmer Albert Jensen looks toward the future as a steward of the land.
- 12** Jake Freestone uses the LEAF approach on the Overbury Estate farm.
- 16** Custom cutter Bobby Craig stays ahead of the pack with MacDon Windrowers.



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A New Era

MacDon President Gary Giesbrecht on the acquisition by Linamar

Gary Giesbrecht, Linda Hasenfratz, and Jim Jarrell

On February 1st, 2018, Linamar Corporation—the international manufacturing conglomerate based in Guelph, Ontario, Canada—completed its purchase of MacDon Industries Ltd. The transfer of ownership marks another significant milestone in MacDon's continued growth and expansion, an upward trajectory that began in 1949 when Tom and Bill Killbery started producing North America's first self-propelled grain swather in a quonset building beside Winnipeg's airport. To understand more about the acquisition and its significance for MacDon's future, Performance Magazine sat down with MacDon President Gary Giesbrecht.

Performance: Your tenure with MacDon goes back to the 1970s. Back then, did you have any idea of the company MacDon would become?

Giesbrecht: Not really. When I joined in 1976 we were a company of about 300 employees selling our self-propelled windrower and some pull-type swathers to six or seven OEM customers. We just started to sell overseas to a couple of customers under the MacDon brand. Even though the company already had a track record of producing quality harvesting equipment, I don't think anyone could have foreseen MacDon taking on the leadership role it has in harvesting today.

Performance: Was there anything about the MacDon you joined back then that you still see in the company today?

Giesbrecht: I recall being really struck by how passionate everyone was about the AG business.

Joe MacDonald referred to it as MacDon's "Three Ps of Excellence"—the people, the passion and the product—and he believed that all three were integral to the company's success. It was sort of MacDon's mantra back then. That philosophy of dedicated people, a passion to excel and leading-edge products remains the centre of our culture.

Performance: Let's turn to the recent purchase by Linamar. We understand that MacDon had many suitors. What was it about Linamar that made it the right choice?

Giesbrecht: One of the things we drove for in our search for someone to acquire MacDon was a company that would respect the legacy left by the MacDonald and Killbery families. Equally important, there had to be an understanding of how a continuation of that legacy is integral to the brand's success going forward. Linamar understood that. They shared that they have a lot of trust in the people at MacDon. Basically the message was, MacDon's management team would continue to drive the company and employ the same approach and principles that made MacDon successful.

Beyond that, we were also looking for a company that shared similar values. Now anyone who has spent any time with MacDon knows how family oriented the company is, and that approach came directly from the leadership of Joe MacDonald and his sons. At MacDon family means respecting and looking out for one another—not just our employees, but our dealers, our suppliers and our customers as well. No one succeeds unless we all succeed. Well, one of the things that drew us to Linamar is that they are very much a family oriented company as well with similar values to MacDon's. Linamar was started by Mr. Frank Hasenfratz, who began by machining parts in his basement. He then brought family members into the company, very much like MacDon. In fact, even though Linamar is a public company, the Hasenfratz family still maintains a strong leadership role within the company. Mr. Hasenfratz remains the Board's chairman and his daughter Linda is the company's CEO. The acquisition of MacDon by Linamar was one that just made sense.

Performance: How will the new relationship with Linamar affect business day to day at MacDon?

Nothing that our customers or dealers should see. With the sale of the company now behind us, there is now continued stability for the long-term. This will allow us to focus on more long-term product planning, investments, and growth strategy.

Performance: Are there any synergies between the two companies that MacDon can take advantage of?

Giesbrecht: That's perhaps the most exciting aspect of the acquisition. With 60 manufacturing facilities worldwide, Linamar is a very large successful company and can draw on financial resources that will assist MacDon in its continued growth. Linamar also owns Skyjack, an OEM brand of aerial work platform equipment that services the industrial and construction industries. Skyjack's manufacturing processes and approach to doing business is quite similar to MacDon. Additionally, Linamar has a manufacturing presence in just about every major international market that we want to expand into, providing us with opportunities that were not there before. For example, Western Europe has been a challenging market for us to sell into because of the costs related to the shipping of assembled products, servicing equipment from North America, marketing conditions, and a few other issues. But that market now





Linda Hasenfratz the Chief Executive Officer of Linamar Corporation talking to MacDon employees





becomes much more viable thanks to Linamar's significant business and manufacturing capabilities and experience in Europe.

Performance: Are there any other opportunities for both companies worth noting?

Giesbrecht: On our side we see some great opportunities for MacDon to take advantage of when you see Linamar's capabilities with regards to their HR programs, Lean Manufacturing concepts, new technologies and their overall approach to markets around the world. They have told us that there are things that MacDon does extremely well that they can benefit from, such as our service parts, product support and new product development. There are some real synergies to be explored.

Performance: Is there anything else you would like to leave our readers with concerning Linamar's acquisition?

Giesbrecht: I would just like to stress how hard we looked for the right fit for our employees, our dealers and our customers in searching for the best company to acquire MacDon. As we transition from the ownership and guidance of the MacDonald family, all of the things that helped make MacDon be the company it is today will remain in place. We will continue to invest heavily in R&D and take the risks necessary to develop the ground breaking technologies that pushed the company forward. Equally important, we will continue to employ people that take pride in delivering leading-edge quality products, and truly care about the farmers that rely on those products for their livelihoods. It just continues to be a great story. **M**

Linamar Fast Facts

Founded: 1966

CEO: Linda Hasenfratz

Employees: 28,600 (2017)

Industries: precision parts and products for the automotive, commercial vehicle, off highway, marine & recreational, industrial, energy and agricultural industries

Manufacturing Capabilities: 60 facilities located in 17 countries

Website: linamar.com

Ownership: Public (TSX: LNR. TO)

Headquarters: Guelph, Ontario, Canada

2016 Sales: \$6.5 Billion CAD



A Strong Advocate

Alberta farmer Albert Jensen looks toward the future as a steward of the land



Cindy and Albert Jensen

Black gold, Texas tea – as with the Beverly Hillbillies, having oil discovered on their land is a ticket to the good life for many farmers, but according to Alberta farmer Albert Jensen, oil can also bring complications along with the cash.

“We have oil and gas on our land here. In the United States the land owner automatically has the oil rights, but here in Canada that’s not the case,” said Jensen from his grain farm south of Drumheller, Alberta.

Jensen’s 16,000 acres (6475 ha) lie within the province’s large oil and gas field known as the Palliser Block. On the day he was reached for interview by Performance, he had just returned from an ongoing discussion with the company that owns his land’s mineral rights over where, when and how they will drill his property.

“As a family we team up with our equipment and will work together. It has been good that my sons have been able to be on their own as a partnership. It has taught them a lot and brought them a lot of pride.”

“A new company just bought this area and they plan to just drill it out. However, I’m not a guy to just let them drill wherever they want to; I’m a keeper of the land and I told them that yesterday.”

While Jensen admits that he’s not exactly sure how many wells there are on his property (“a lot”), he estimates that every well removes between 6 and 10 acres (2.4 and 4.0 ha) of arable land out of production, causing significant disruption to his business, both operationally and economically. Worse, the land is never fully restored to its previous state once the well goes dry.

“Having an oil company coming in to take a big beautiful piece of land out of production brings us additional challenges. It costs us extra time and money for our large equipment to go around all these drill sites and roads. The power lines that they put in also cause problems for our big sprayers because the lines are not all mapped out.”

Jensen says he is not one to rely on revenue from his oil wells for his livelihood. Instead, he defines his success according to the fortunes of his third generation grain farm, which has grown

steadily since the 1970's when the family managed about four and a half sections (1165 ha). Since taking over full management of the operation 15 years ago, Jensen has aggressively expanded the farm's acreage, primarily so that the farm can stay large enough to survive.

"It's taken a long time to build this, and a lot of it is due to consolidation in agriculture. Back in the 80's there were probably 40 active farms in this area, but now there's just five.

From end to end, Jensen's land runs about 20 miles (32 km), with a good chunk of it concentrated in one large block where he lives, plus many smaller plots scattered around it. Here he grows an equal mix of wheat and canola, with some barley and a few thousand acres of peas thrown in for good measure.

"It's a big operation, but I've created a monster. Growing the operation is what I was put on this earth to do and I feel very strongly that it is mine to protect."

Jensen's three oldest sons manage another 7,000 acres (2833 ha) independent of him, bringing the total land the family is responsible for to just under 23,000 acres (9308 ha).

"As a family we team up with our equipment and will work together. It has been good that my sons have been able to be on their own as a partnership. It has taught them a lot and brought them a lot of pride."

To harvest their land the family relies on a fleet of nine FlexDraper® mounted Case IH 9230 combines, six owned by Jensen and three by the sons. A 10th combine is not mounted with a FlexDraper. Jensen admits that the decision to first mount the MacDon product on the front of his Case combines was not an easy one for him to make due to his affinity for a certain shade of red.



"I'm an International loyalist. In fact, one of the things this farm is known for is that we collect antique International Harvester equipment. We currently have over 100 pieces, so we're kind of like an International museum, whatever you want to call it."

Jensen says that his loyalty to red paint was cause for more than a few arguments between himself and his sons about ten years ago when they tried to convince him that the MacDon FlexDraper could outperform the rigid headers Jensen was using.

"I always felt that Case made a pretty good rigid header, so when my sons started pushing

these FlexDrapers I was totally against them. There was a little friction over it for sure; I was determined in my way and they were determined in theirs."

What eventually got Jensen to change his mind was the increased size of his operation and the need to deploy even larger combines due to changing economics and labor costs.

"The FlexDraper let us get into the largest class combines as they are the only way to get capacity out of a big machine. There's really no other choice."

Initially, increased capacity was the only virtue Jensen could find in his FlexDrapers, so he continued to run a mix of both rigid and FlexDrapers in his operation. In 2011 the first of three disastrous canola harvests opened his eyes to the true value of the FlexDraper, changing his opinion of the product forever.

"We lost a million dollars three years in a row due to some horrendous winds that blew away our swaths, leaving us with school bus sized gobs of crop. We barely survived that actually."

"The FlexDraper let us get into the largest class combines as they are the only way to get capacity out of a big machine. There's really no other choice."



The Jensen Family

"After that we decided to switch to direct cutting our canola and our FlexDrapers made that possible.

Now, four years after that decision, Jensen reports that he has been completely converted to the MacDon product as his FlexDrapers have become an essential tool for his operation.

"I've gone from being pretty skeptical to completely jumping ship. Not only did our FlexDrapers allow us to eliminate the stress of having to swath, they have let us expand the business more because there are less things to do by eliminating that operation."

As for performance, Jensen says that the headers have given him and his operators increased confidence harvesting under all conditions.

"With our FlexDrapers we're not scared of any crop that we go into, and we know that somehow we are going to battle through it."

Surprisingly, now that he has been converted to MacDon, Jensen reports that he still argues with his sons over their FlexDrapers. While his

sons remain happy running 35 footers (10.7m), Jensen traded up to 40' (12.2m) FDIs this fall and is anxious to put them to the test this upcoming harvest.

to 45' (13.7m) headers the next time that we trade combines. I'm hoping that will let us go from six to four combines. I don't think we can, but we can probably go to five."


"With our FlexDrapers we're not scared of any crop that we go into, and we know that somehow we are going to battle through it."

"They said that 40 footers (12.2m) wouldn't work on our hilly ground, but I said that if you are going to put that much more power on these combines then you need the bigger head. Even if you have to go a little slower, having the wider head will make harvesting a lot less stressful."

But Jensen doesn't want to stop there as he has his eyes on the 45' (13.7m) FD1 and the possibilities it holds for his business.

"MacDon FlexDrapers have become a no brainer for us. Our next step is to go

One hopes that such future opportunities not only bring more success to Jensen and his sons, but also help to offset some of his frustrations brought on by the continuing wrangles with the oil companies.

"When it comes to MacDon I've gone from being a complete skeptic to being a strong advocate. I'm allowed to change my mind right?" 



Estate Planning

Jake Freestone uses the LEAF approach on the Overbury Estate Farm

Officially designated by the British Government as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the well toured Cotswolds are renowned for being home to scenic pastoral landscapes, storybook villages and the quintessential English Charm that rural Britain is famous for. The region has always been linked to sheep production and it was prosperity from the wool trade that gave rise to large, privately owned estates where tenant farmers and laborers worked on behalf of the land's owner. With the waning of the Industrial Revolution, many of these estates were broken up and sold off, but some still remain. One such estate is Overbury, a sprawling mixed farm that is located on the western edge of the Cotswolds.

Now, one might be forgiven for anticipating Overbury to be a place locked in time and beholden to traditional practices, especially given that the estate has been owned by the same family since 1722. Instead, Overbury

is likely one of Britain's most progressive operations as it is just one of 40 LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Demonstration Farms in the UK. As the leading organization for sustainable agriculture in Britain, LEAF and its member farms are working hard on figuring out how to continue supplying the planet's growing population with quality food, all the while protecting the environment, human health and the profitability of farmers.

"The LEAF approach is basically looking at your business holistically to try to reduce the impact on the environment, while also making a bit more money," said Jake Freestone, Overbury's Farm Manager. "In addition to being environmentally responsible, it is quite a good guide for planning your business and making day to day decisions."

Over and above managing the farm according to LEAF principals, being a LEAF Demonstration Farm carries with it additional responsibilities for Freestone and his team of five.



Jake Freestone

"We're not only trying to demonstrate best agricultural practice to the industry, but we are also working to help educate consumers as well. We host lots of farm walk-arounds for farmers wanting to look at what we are doing as well as open days for the general public."

Last year Overbury's annual "lambing day" attracted upwards of 800 people to the farm alone, one of two big open days that the farm holds each year. In addition to working with his team to host hundreds of visitors a year, Freestone helps spread the word about sustainable farming through the farm's website (overburyfarms.co.uk), his personal blog (farmerjakef.blogspot.ca), Facebook (facebook.com/overburyenterprises) and YouTube where you will find more than 400 of his videos covering all aspects of Overbury's operation.

Freestone says that although estates like Overbury were once common in the UK, it is quite unique today.

"We are now just under 5000 acres (2023 ha) total, with the in-house farming a bit just under 4000 acres (1619 ha), and the rest designated woodland or tenetted out to other farmers including a stud farm. Overbury also has a farm contracting business and about 130 or so residential properties in two small villages with about 300 people living here. All but three houses are owned by the estate."

Overbury's mixed farm is comprised of grazing land for the farm's 1,200 sheep and about 950 hectares (2348 acres) of combinable crops such as winter wheat, canola, winter and spring barley (grown under contract for Molson Coors), linseed flax, soybeans and peas. Vegetables are also grown on the estate, but these are managed by a third party.

"Being a LEAF designated farm boils down to three elements: economic, social and environmental, and what can we do to try to improve each of those three aspects on our farm through an integrated



FD1 FlexDraper harvesting wheat on the Overbury Estate Farm

farming approach. If you look on the LEAF website there are nine different sections to integrated farming including soil management and fertility, crop health and protection, pollution control, energy efficiency and nature and landscape conservation.”

“Water management is also very important and one of the earliest and easiest things we did was buffering all of our streams with a six meter (20') grass strip which acts as a physical barrier to any sort of runoff. These buffering strips hold the soil plus also stop nutrients, fertilizer and spray drift from impacting a water course.”

Freestone reports that one of the most economically important –and environmentally impactful– changes that they’ve made to their farming under LEAF was moving to no-till farming in 2015.

“With no-till our crop establishment costs have gone from about £130 (\$180 USD) per hectare to about £60 (\$83 USD). Our fuel use

is also down significantly. With our traditional cultivating system we were using 52 litres a hectare (5.6 gallons per acre) and we are now down to 17 or 18 liters a hectare (1.8 or 1.9 gallons per acre), depending on the soil type. That’s a huge saving not only in terms of money but also in terms of releasing carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere.”

“We currently have a PHD student working here monitoring the effect of no-till practices in terms of water infiltration, chemical leaching from the fields and organic matter availability throughout the year. We’re hopeful in a few years to have some proper scientific numbers to back up some of the benefits we are seeing in no-till, benefits some farmers are quite skeptical of.”

Testing new integrated farming concepts and coming up with empirical evidence to prove or disprove their validity is common at Overbury and an essential part of being a LEAF farm says Freestone.

“LEAF runs lots of projects themselves and we are sort of the first to put our hand up and say ‘we’ll try that.’ Things like companion cropping; LEAF is really interested in that as a concept, not just for environmental reasons but also to get more diversity in the field. So we’ve been companion cropping for the last three years and we’ve reduced our costs by about £30 pounds (\$42 USD) a hectare because we find that we’re applying a little less nitrogen on as well as not putting insecticide on in the autumn.”

“We’re also trying to integrate our livestock into our arable farming more and more. Where we have cover crops we are trying to graze them off with our sheep. That not only means that our grass gets a longer resting period, but that our cover crop gets transformed into a more readily available nutrient source in the form of manure. It’s a no brainer really, because the practice helps stimulate bacteria and fungi growth in the soil, plus helps us feed the sheep through the winter. This is not new, if you turn



headers their combines come with. I also spoke with another LEAF grower back here in the UK who had imported a MacDon header four or five years ago. The way they all talked about the smoothness of the FlexDraper's crop flow, its ease of maintenance and the way it flexes over the ground was just ticking a lot of my boxes."

sea level, and is quite rolling and with stones the size of car tires. But the FDI just rides over all of that sort of stuff; the way it hugs our rolling banks is just fantastic. We've got some fields where if you drive along with a traditional rigid header you'll have one end up in the air and the other digging in the ground. Our FlexDraper has alleviated that problem."

"At Overbury we are always looking at the next bit of technology that can make us more efficient and sustainable and the FDI just seemed to be the next step along that line."

Testimonials like that led Freestone to purchase a FlexDraper himself for Overbury's John Deere S685 combine.

"At Overbury we are always looking at the next bit of technology that can make us more efficient and sustainable and the FDI just seemed to be the next step along that line."

One of the benefits of the FDI FlexDraper that Freestone really liked was its ability to increase their harvesting productivity without having to buy a new combine.

"If we can get 10% or 15% better output by just changing the header and not the combine, then we want to do that. Our MacDon FDI is certainly achieving those numbers based on what we have seen so far."

More than just increased productivity, Freestone says that their FlexDraper has proven to be the right tool for their no-till farming practices.

"We need a header that can leave a nice tall, even straw, plus help us spread our residue uniformly so that our zero tillage equipment can get in there and get the next crop evenly. The FlexDraper is addressing both needs for us."

Freestone has also been impressed by the FDI's ability to maintain an even cut on Overbury's undulating fields.

"Our topography ranges from about 100 feet (30.5 m) to about 1000 feet (305 m) above

"Also something I'm very pleased with is that we're finding virtually no volunteer peas in our wheat crop, which to me indicates that they are all being combined with no header loss. With our old header we used to find volunteer peas everywhere you walked."

As you might expect, Freestone has also paid close attention to the economics of the FDI for his operation, and he reports glowing results.

"The FlexDraper is certainly adding value to our precision farming practices. For instance we boosted our combine's productivity by 17% across the whole farm last year. Now, admittedly, some of that was because we went from a 30' (9.1 m) rigid header to a 35' (10.7 m) FlexDraper. But even with that our forward speed was increased and we were using less diesel per hectare. In total we saved three days harvesting time by having the FlexDraper, so it's making a huge difference to what we are doing."

"Here in the UK I've very much become an advocate for the MacDon header. I've posted videos to YouTube focusing on it harvesting, just because I think it deserves a wider audience over here. Whether you are farming in the west of the country or on one of the big farms in Cambridgeshire or Lincolnshire, there's savings to be had for any grower." **M**

the clock back 40 or 50 years that's what they were all doing."

In 2013 Freestone was awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship to study wheat production around the world, and see if practices deployed elsewhere could be used to break the wheat yield plateau in the UK. His travels took him to Canada, the US, Mexico and New Zealand.

"My findings confirmed that we are basically over cultivating our soils here in the UK and destroying their organic matter and structure. In order to improve our yields we need to employ no-till, have a wider rotation and improve the soil, where possible, with livestock grazing."

Freestone also returned home with another important observation that would have a big impact on his farming at Overbury.

"I noticed that all the best farmers were using MacDon headers, so I asked them why they had FlexDrapers as opposed to the standard



Staying Ahead

Custom cutter Bobby Craig stays ahead of the pack with MacDon Windrowers

Custom cutter Bobby Craig is constantly looking over his shoulder to check a windrow, a feeling many hay producers would understand.

"When our two swathers are running we not only have two silage choppers following us, but also maybe 10 to 20 semis, plus four packing tractors and the support teams," said Craig from his home base near Nunn, Colorado. "If just one of our machines goes down, we're shutting down 10 to 15 people from work. It's a lot of pressure on us just to keep running."

Currently running a two windrower business with ambitions to grow, Craig starts out at the beginning of April in Muleshoe, Texas and then follows the work wherever it takes him, usually shutting down operations near the end of October.

"It's a fairly long season. We've got our regular contracts but we'll also pick up anything else we can get just to stay busy. I'm pretty lucky though to be doing something that I enjoy; there's very few days ever that I get up and I am not excited about going to the field. During the winter I'm usually chomping at the bit to get going again in April."



Bobby Craig

Craig got his start in custom cutting working for Clayton Befort Harvesting out of Hays, Kansas, before moving out to Colorado to start his own business five years ago. While he does manage a few acres of his own with his wife Angela near Nunn, Craig says that 90% of his work is custom.

"I've been around agriculture and harvesting my whole life, but these days it's just so hard for a young guy to go out and start from scratch. Custom cutting was a good way for me to farm and be in agriculture without having to buy as much land."

Since going into business for himself, Craig says that he has been loyal to MacDon swathers for a number of reasons.

"I've run many of the competitive windrowers, but since I've owned my own business it's always been MacDon primarily because of the quality of their cutting and their reliability."

"All of the dairymen and farmers that we work for want to see their fields looking like a clean mowed yard. It doesn't matter if the crop's laying flat on the ground or standing up pretty, they always want to see everything picked up and a very clean cut. Thanks to our MacDon's we've been able to take pride in always being able to deliver that."

Beyond the quality of the cut, one of my biggest worries every day is to go down. It's really important that if you hit a rock or break a knife that your repairs can be done quickly."

Because they are always under pressure to be moving fast in the field, Craig says that they make themselves extra vulnerable to field obstacles.

"It's sometimes a little like a demolition derby for us. We can get into quite a few big rocks and chunks of concrete working for those dairies down in Texas. It's not uncommon for us to hit a one foot round piece of concrete running 10 or 11 mph (16 or 17.7 kmh), but I would say that the longest I've ever been down from hitting something like that, at that speed, is about an hour. I always carry a full stock of parts for our headers, and because MacDon machines are really simple to work on we can usually get going again pretty quickly."

While Craig has run MacDon M205s for the majority of his time in business, last September he took delivery of two brand new MacDon M1240 Windrowers mounted with D130XL draper headers (he also uses two R85 rotary headers in his operation). He promptly put the machines to work harvesting 3,000 acres (1214 ha) in New Mexico, an experience that has allowed him to fairly evaluate MacDon's new Windrower offering.

"We're very happy with our decision to go with MacDon again; MacDon's just got everything figured out with these new machines. One of the biggest differences that we noticed on the M1240 was the new cooling system. When we used to be in alfalfa that got a little bit too mature, the rotary screen could not keep up with the amount of fuzz that was coming off the alfalfa. We would have to stop every four or five hours to blow out our radiators to keep them from overheating. Now with the way these new machines pull the air in, and with their reversing fan, that problem has been eliminated."

Craig has also noticed a significant boost to their infield productivity with their new machines due to two factors; the M1240s larger power plant and MacDon's patented CrossFlex™ suspension system.

"The increased horsepower has definitely boosted our productivity, but the new suspension has been just as important because it lets us keep our speed up in some pretty rough conditions. We've got some ground that we work in where they'll pull corn off it in the fall and then they may rip the field up drilling in triticale right after.

It's tough going for the operator bouncing on those ruts every day, but the new suspension system has changed all that. I think it has cut the operator fatigue in half and I would even say that the wear on the machine will also be cut dramatically as well because it is not being jarred so much. It's impressive really."

The new suspension is helpful on the highway as well.

Craig is also very happy with the upgrades that have been made to the M1240's cab, including 360 degree night vision lighting.

"I really like the new harvest monitor and the ability it gives us to preset our floats and everything. I also just love the air conditioned and heated seats. I've got a really bad back and even though it's one of those things that I don't whine

"Even with their increased productivity our fuel consumption has been cut almost in half from what we were getting with our M205's."

"The machine feels much more stable for some reason, just because the swather no longer gives you that jolt where it just launches you when the front wheels catch a little hump in the road. For us, the CrossFlex suspension is daylight to dark different in the ride of the machine."

One thing that has really surprised Craig with his M1240's is their fuel efficiency.

"Even with their increased productivity our fuel consumption has been cut almost in half from what we were getting with our M205's. It's impressive that even with our D130XL headers and their increased capacity that we're only burning about three tenths of a gallon per acre (2.8 litres per ha). I think the boost in horsepower has meant that the machine doesn't have to work as hard, that's the only thing I can figure why we're burning way less now. We were really excited about that."

"The larger fuel tank on these machines also made a huge improvement. Before when we were running a rotary header if we started at 7:00 in the morning, then usually by 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon we were stopping to fuel up. Now we may be able to finish out the entire day without fueling up. That can save us an hour every day not needing to stop to fuel. Over a 30 day period that can really add up."


about, it's something that I do feel. But the new seat has really reduced the fatigue on my back. If I'm running a 20 hour day the seat's heating and air conditioning becomes something really important to have."

"The machine's night lighting is also a big improvement. At night it's really important that we are able to see in all directions, especially out the back to see the stubble we are leaving. With the new lighting package everything is lit up; there's not a dark spot around the machine at night."

Craig says that he is not the only one that has been impressed with his new M1240's.

"Everybody that I have cut for has been really impressed with the machines. I cut up against a competitive machine down in New Mexico and I was cutting a good 40% more a day than that other guy. Our new M1240's really made us shine on that job just because we never had to stop."

It's performance like that Craig believes will be instrumental in him growing his business.

"Every year we keep taking on more acres and eventually I wouldn't mind being up to four or five swathers. If we continue to put in the work and our machines help us look good, we're bound to grow." 





Bobby Craig in front of his M1240 Windrower



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