

Cultivations demonstrations: the practical approach to machinery buying

Ever since 1946, the Norfolk Farm Machinery Club (Normac) has organised a series of practical demonstrations covering the operation of all types of farm machinery.

From sugar beet hoeing in the early days, straw handling, spraying, muck spreading, and more recently all aspects of autumn cultivations and seed establishment.

Because of the wide range of cultivation machinery, from ploughs to the most sophisticated tillage train, and now of course with min till and direct drills, the biennial Normac demo has become focused on cultivation and establishment techniques.

Working demonstrations are now the accepted way of promoting many types of farm machinery, and none more so than with cultivation kit. The Normac event is the ideal place to evaluate different machines on the same type of land, with up to 40 different machines working sensibly-sized plots at any one time.

All the major manufacturers and dealers will be there with their most experienced demonstrators on hand, so there will never be a better opportunity to talk to them about their machines and learn the finer points of operation.

The friendly and informal atmosphere that Normac has always enjoyed adds to the occasion.

As well as the busy working plots, there are other manufacturers and retailers offering ideas and advice form a large number of static stands situated near the car parking area.

Normac is the oldest and largest club of its type in the country, and this year it celebrates its diamond jubilee. Those 60 years have seen the most dramatic transformation of Norfolk agriculture, from a post-war mechanisation boom to profitability problems of the agri-environmental age in which we live today.

Throughout all this time, Normac has maintained its relevance, attracting speakers on up-to-date subjects at winter

meetings at all of its 11 centres throughout the county. At present, meetings take place at: Dereham, Diss, Downham Market, Docking, Fakenham, Flegg (Martham), Holt, Loddon, North Walsham, Swaffham and Wymondham. Each centre organises its own programme of speakers and events right through the year, with social occasions, BBQs, farm walks and factory visits during the summer months and interesting speakers at the winter meetings. More than 100 events were organised for members last year.

A quarterly magazine called Top Link is produced with machinery articles, workshop hints and tips, a club diary and a vintage machinery page, and this keeps every member informed of activities throughout the county and beyond.

Normac is especially pleased to have the support of its local machinery dealers, who always go out of their way to help. It is also supported by the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association to whom it is most grateful for financial assistance.

This year, the Normac demo is being held by kind invitation of William Edwards and his family at Hardingham Farms, a large well-run estate situated between Wymondham and Hingham, just south-west of Norwich. Nearly 300 acres of land in a block will be available, and a tractor bus will be covering the site to get everyone around with the minimum of effort.

The land is a typical Norfolk mixed soil, which should be workable in all but the most severe conditions. The demonstration will be well signposted from both the A11 and the A47, and access is good right into the site.

All types of cultivation equipment will be there, as well as tools, spares and services. A couple of refreshment kiosks will also be on hand to keep the hunger pangs at bay.

The event takes place on Thursday, September 14th, starting at 10.00am. Admission and car parking is free.

Experts on every crop-growing issue

Norfolk sprayer specialists Acares Services Ltd will be at this year's Normac demo, offering an information centre related to the latest legislation on disposal, crop spraying, training, NSTS testing, maintenance, spare parts, related safety issues, entry level advice, crop protection management plans, crop assurance and much more.

Experts will be at hand to assist

with any questions you have or advice you need on these matters.

In addition, Acares will have a working plot allowing customers to view and try a range of self-propelled sprayers as well as a static display of trailed and mounted Sprayers.

And don't forget that if you visit Acares' stand, you can claim your Norso points. FG



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