



John Deere & Orthman: Working together to find solutions

Two years ago, George Wheeler of the GWK-branch at Douglas in the Northern Cape and some of the prominent farmers in the district gathered around a kitchen table to discuss solutions to tillage problems.

"We realized that we cannot do things the same way our fathers did 15 years ago and maintain profitability and sustainability; we have to save on input costs and protect our soil," says George.

They decided to curb costs by utilizing whatever means they had to their disposal, therefore their starting point was John Deere's tried and trusted 1750-planter as almost every farmer in the area had one. The idea was not to replace what they had, but to add to it.

The local John Deere representatives took up the crusade and found the answer in America's High Plains region in East-Colorado and West-Nebraska.

As in the Northern Cape, the farmers there are also subject to water issues, windy conditions, sandy soil and the need for conservation tillage and labour saving technology.

The solution they found, was the XDR Combo planter. John Deere's trusted tractor and planter technology and Orthman's strip tillage solutions are used together to prepare the soil and plant in one smooth operation.

South African farmers can now also enjoy the benefits of this winning combination.

At a farmers' day on the farm of the Cilliers brothers between Douglas and Prieska, the XDR Combo was demonstrated. The combination of the Orthman

1tRIPr and a John Deere 1750 planter with an adjusted frame was put to the test. HF Cilliers made sure it was properly demonstrated in a land covered with slightly moist barley residues.

The conditions were similar to those typically experienced by farmers of the area, he said. "Immediately after cutting and baling our barley or harvesting wheat, we have to get our maize into the soil through the thick and half wet plant material. There is just too much plant material left to work it all into the soil as part of a no-till system; and if left on the ground, the wind blows most of it away and the soil dries out. Also, we want to

move away from the need to burn the residues."

Strip-tillage offers the logical solution. The 1tRIPr removes the material to create a seedbed for every row, but between the rows the residue remains on the soil for conserving moisture.

Lafras Cronjé, Strategic Marketing Manager of John Deere SA, asked farmers for their input. He made it clear that the farmers' day was not just a product launch, but a final step in the process of finding the perfect solution through co-operation.

"The time when engineers developed products on their own and expected



Strip tillage makes it possible to plant directly into thick plant residues.

farmers to simply accept them, is past. We follow a client solution approach to perfectly fit the needs of farmers in an area."

The proof is in the planting

Farmers followed the demonstration machine, carefully opening the neat, straight rows with their fingers to look at the placement of the seed and fertilizer. They were pleased with what they saw.

Lafras says it is clear that the concept was well received by farmers and that it suits local conditions. "We will be ready to receive orders in January."

Rod Haarberg, Vice-President of Orthman, explained that Orthman adheres to three basic principles for precision tillage.

The first principle is the placement of fertilizer at exactly the desired depth. This is made possible by the parallel linkage wraparound design of the tiller keeping it steady and level in all conditions. The ideal depth is determined by the type of plant and soil.

The second principle is creating the perfect root zone environment by shattering the soil to encourage root development using waffle shaped coulters to perform vertical tillage.

Third, the seedbed should be prepared in such a way that no soil voids are left and so that the planter can move smoothly and evenly.

HF is impressed with the results. He has been using an Orthman 1tRipr for a while, but had to follow with the planter in a separate action. He says the saving in fuel and time alone makes the combination worthwhile, and there is the added benefit of less tractor movement and resulting soil compaction in the land.

He says: "It is ideal for our type of soil and our type of irrigation farming, but I think it will be just as useful in dry land conditions." 



Rod Haarberg from Orthman and Lafras Cronjé from John Deere introduced a winning combination to farmers. Note the wraparound parallel linkage structure to the right, enabling the 1tRipr to maintain fertilizer placement at exactly the right depth throughout the planting process.

Jaco and HF Cilliers from Douglas agree that the XDR Combo will save on fuel, labour, time and solve their residues problem.



Showing its commitment to South African farmers, Orthman has recently opened an assembly plant in Johannesburg, which will ensure better and faster service countrywide.



For more information on these and other John Deere solutions, contact Lafras Cronjé at 082-807-9720 or CronjeLafras@JohnDeere.com or Carel Theron at 082-802-2209 or TheronCarelJ@JohnDeere.com. Read more about the value of strip tillage at <http://www.orthmanag.com/strip-till>.

Just checking! Farmers at the John Deere & Orthman demo agreed that the proof was indeed in the planting.