

April 2014

Eight new Landini tractors in one go for major south-east England fruit grower

A move by fruit machinery specialist Horsepower UK to more spacious and better equipped premises coincided with the hand-over of eight new Landini tractors to one of the country's leading top- and soft-fruit growers.

It's the fifth order in seven years that F W Mansfield & Son has placed with Horsepower as it has expanded operations in Kent. Landini Mistral and Rex models now make up a quarter of the fruit grower's 100-strong tractor fleet.

"We're growing top-quality fruit on 3500 acres across 17 sites from Ash to Rainham and need reliable tractors to the right specification," notes Craig Rook, farms manager. "The Landini Rex and Mistral tractors match the power requirements of the machinery we operate, and they fit our growing structures and systems in terms of height and width.

"We also need good service back-up to maintain them," he adds. "Our association with Landini and Horsepower ensures we get that in a way that helps us manage the fleet effectively."

Fruit is a major enterprise for Mansfields – the company grows apples, pears, plums, cherries and strawberries, and recently established a new apricot orchard.

"It will be interesting to see how we get on growing apricots, because they flower in February/March, when it can be frosty here, of course," says Craig Rook. "But the prospects look good for high yields of good quality fruit, which will give us another line to supply our supermarket customers."

The new Landini tractors that joined the existing fleet this spring will play a major role: the 92hp Rex 100F and 110hp 120F cab tractors will handle spraying work to protect fruit crops from pest and disease attacks, while the half dozen 47hp Mistral tractors will join the harvesting teams.

They will haul 'fruit trains' through the orchards from September to November before being put to lighter duties such as mowing and spraying for weed control.

The Rex and Mistral tractors are worked hard, clocking up more than 1200 hours a year, so they have to be durable and capable of putting down their power effectively.

“Four-wheel drive is essential for pulling the four-trailer fruit trains without causing any damage but the tractors must also be comfortable and easy to drive,” notes Craig Rook. “I don’t get any complaints or adverse comments from drivers about either the Rex or the Mistral, just compliments really.”

Mansfields mainly operate the Rex ‘F’ orchard version – including the 110hp Rex 120F which is the most powerful mechanical transmission fruit tractor available. But the extra-narrow Rex ‘V’ also has a place because at just 1m wide it can work in table-top strawberry polytunnels without coming into contact with the overhanging fruit.

All running costs, including repairs and routine servicing, are recorded individually to ensure the fleet as a whole operates cost-effectively, and the Landini tractors come with an extended three-year warranty and fixed price servicing package.

That allows accurate cost forecasting, with Horsepower providing emailed reports on any additional work needed plus updates on service schedules to help Craig Rook keep his finger on the pulse.

“The regular communication and attention to detail we get from Horsepower is a big help in managing the fleet, which is widely dispersed across our units,” he says. “Together with the response we get to a call for urgent repairs, that level of service is essential for a large-scale operation like ours.

“We’re delighted with the Landini product,” Mr Rook adds. “It’s a well-built tractor that’s tough for its size, and we’re delighted with the people at Horsepower who look after them.”

Ends



Landini Rex + Mistral - Phil Stanford + Craig Rook 01

Landini Rex + Mistral – Phil Stanford + Craig Rook 01.jpg

Mansfields farms manager Craig Rook (right) receives the keys to his latest crop of Landini Rex and Mistral tractors from Horsepower UK partner Phil Stanford.



Landini Rex + Mistral - Stanford+ Cann+ Rook 01

Landini Rex + Mistral – Stanford + Cann + Rook 01.jpg

Mansfields farms manager Craig Rook (right) receives the keys to his latest crop of Landini Rex and Mistral tractors from Phil Stanford of Horsepower UK (left) and Steve Cann, southern area sales manager at Landini distributor AgriArgo UK.



Landini Rex + Mistral - Horsepower UK 02

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The Mansfield order comprises six 45hp Mistral 50 compact tractors; a 92hp Rex 100F (nearest camera) and a Rex 120F, which at 110hp is the most powerful mechanical transmission orchard tractor available.



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