



Davies Bros offers a complete grassland service, including reseedling with an Opico Grass Master harrow.

Where grass is your business, offering a quick, fuss-free establishment method can pay dividends, reports **Jane Carley**.

Fuss-free grass establishment

With a base in a predominantly grassland area, Davies Brothers Agricultural Contractors of Saint Clears, Carmarthen, has developed a package of specialist services tailored to the market.

This includes grass and maize

harvesting with John Deere 9800i and Claas 970 foragers, round and square baling, slurry application, hedgecutting, maize drilling and grass establishment.

Founded in 1972, the business is run by Lyn and Huw Davies. And with staff numbers growing to as many as 27 in peak season, Lyn

explains where the Opico grass harrow fits in.

"It is important to offer a full range of services. I have been in the business for 50 years and we have been reseeding for much of that. We started with another make, fitted with an electrically driven seeder, and subsequently had two more of those.



The harrow bed flexes to follow ground contours on undulating land.

"There were a few issues over the years with the harrow frame cracking, and when I came across the Opico harrow, it looked a lot stronger."

The six-metre Opico Grass Master hydraulic folding grass harrow is part of a range which extends from 1.5 to 12.4m, with three 2m sections linked by a frame which can be hydraulically pressurised to even the tine pressure across the working width.

Adjustable

Angle and pressure of the triple coil spring tines is adjustable through 10 positions to match ground conditions.

It is fitted with Opico's Hatzembichler Air 16E seeder with electric drive to the metering system and a hydraulic fan to distribute seed through its 16 outlets.

"It is extremely accurate, with the 16 outlets making closer rows than a traditional seeder. We find it easy to

Opico Grass Master harrow with seeder

- Tines: 192 8mm-diameter tines
- Weight: 860kg
- Transport width: 2.8 metres
- Transport height: 3m
- Power requirement: 100hp
- Harrow sections: Four x 1.5m
- Seeder: Air 16E with hydraulic fan and electronic

control, seed rates up to 80kg/hectare

■ Price: A 6m Grass Master with Air 16E costs £21,144. Prices for a 6m four-bed grass harrow fitted with Air 8 mechanical seeder with twin electric fans and 180-litre hopper start at £11,844

adjust for different seed rates although we are mainly working at 33-37kg/hectare, mainly for total reseed into ploughed and cultivated land. It is also used for a small amount of oilseed rape, which involves changing the feed rollers. We do very little overseeding; the harrow is of more value to us for reseeding than 'scratching'."

Some 500-600ha per year of grassland is established in this way, with the Davies Brothers team also taking care of the ploughing and power harrowing to prepare the seedbeds.

"The harrow does a tidy job and we get good results. Some of the land is very sloping but the floating sections mean the tines follow the ground contours well. We work at

around 10kph and it has proved very durable - you do get the odd bit of tine damage but that is usually driver error. We have not had to weld the frame at all and we are still on the original set of tines."

Upgrade

The harrow is coming into its seventh season and Mr Davies says he is looking to upgrade it to the latest version.

"We set the tine depth to alter the aggressiveness according to the soil conditions; a marker for the selected depth would be useful."

He suggests the harrow is the simplest and most versatile way to reseed for a busy grass-focused business, saying it will go on any available tractor as it is not power-hungry.



It is extremely accurate, with the 16 outlets



The hydraulically driven fan distributes seeds across 16 outlets for improved accuracy.