

“I can clear 20 acres a day between milkings using our 4 cylinder Massey 5470 to pull my new Super Vitesse I”

Says County Down dairy and beef farmer William Laffin who milks 85 cows and feeds a 50 head suckler herd on 180 acres of grassland.



“It’s as good an investment as I’ve ever made”

With 90 acres of silage ground harvested by contractor three times each season, William Laffin was becoming increasingly frustrated by the weather affecting silage quality. “You could never get the contractors when you needed them, so I decided to invest in a forage wagon and harvest when it’s dry. There’s only me available to harvest the crop between milkings so it had to be a one man one tractor field system.”

“Now I can mow the grass whenever it suits me – I’m not dependent on anybody and do all my fieldwork with only one tractor”

“The cows are milking better now; the quality has improved because there are more sugars retained in the longer grass – most of it is between 3 and 4 inches. They ruminate better – I’m not seeing any cud balls now. There has been no secondary fermentation – we load the clamps with a 4-tonne tractor and buckrake which consolidates the grass very well. I mow the night before and harvest the following day – that way the grass does not get too dry”

“The grass is not cut too short – the cows were not cudging right on the short stuff. The cows like the wagon silage better and there’s never any waste”

“I use a Taarup 10ft 6inch mower conditioner set to leave a swath to suit the width of the pick-up. The grass is well mixed-up by the conditioner so the chopping action is very even at 3 to 4 inches. I can load between eight and a half and nine tonnes on our flat land at mowing speed and only slow down a little on the last quarter of the load as the crop compresses in the body.

I can clear between 15 to 20 acres between milkings and reckon we could clear 30 acres in a full day. The wagon follows the tractor very neatly on full lock turns and in dry conditions there’s no damage to the turf when turning”

“She goes down the swath at mowing speed for threequarters of the 9 tonne load”

“She’s fast on the road too – the combination of the spring loaded tandem axle, drawbar suspension and hydraulic brakes make it safe at speed - which is good when harvesting the outlying land about 3 miles away.

At the silo, it takes only 2-3 minutes to unload and I can reverse the wagon up to the pit slope before emptying which helps with the buckraking.

“I average around 20 minutes from the field to clamp and back again for the round trip – father’s usually buckraking the last bit when I’m back with the next load. It’s a handy size for getting in and out of some of the tight gateways on the rented land”

I can do all my fieldwork with my 125hp MF5470 so we save the cost of an extra tractor and use less fuel. The system works well for us – we are satisfied clearing up to 20 acres per day – 5 good days and first cut is finished. If we didn’t have to stop for the milking, we could do the job in three days.

“It’s a whole lot more cost efficient than using a contractor”

“I never needed to sharpen the knives in the first season. They keep their edge very well and we have no stones to cause any damage. Sharpening the knives over the winter is all it needed which my dealer **G.A.Allen** handled for me. Otherwise the only thing I had to do was the lubrication.”

“She’s harvested 240 acres in 3 cuts in my first season with no trouble at all – I’m extremely happy with it.”

“We got 100 acres of heavy first cut silage in with our Super Vitesse 2H in just 3 days – the rain came the night we finished”

says Gerry Donnelly who farms 275 acres of grassland in County Clare



“The Strautmann has definitely been a good investment – we’re down from needing 4 men to 2 and down from using 4 tractors to only 1 – and have doubled our daily output”

“We have 90 suckler cows in our two herds and rear the beef calves to 12 to 18 months. The pedigree Charolais heifer calves are retained for replacements.

We take one large cut of silage in June on our very heavy land from 100 acres. We also do another 50 acres for our neighbours. We used to harvest with a single chop forager and moved to a Strautmann Super Vitesse 2H two seasons ago as we had difficulty getting enough labour. I looked at other makes but chose the Strautmann because of the extra steel in it.”

“We chose the Strautmann because it has more steel than the others – stronger built. Other farmers told us it also takes less power to drive. We went for the H model because the axles and tyres were right for our very heavy land”

We have very heavy land and a lot of rain so we needed the H model with the right axles and larger diameter tyres for our heavy going. We cut the grass at mid day with a 10ft mower conditioner and lift the swaths direct the next morning at 7 to 8 kmh – similar to our mowing speed. We use a New Holland TS115 130hp tractor which maintains the speed right up to the last few yards to full.

There's no damage to the field when turning at the headland even in soft corners.”

“We lift the swaths at 7-8kmh – almost to the fully loaded point”

“We have minimal help and only take one very heavy cut in the Summer so it is crucial to do the work on the few dry days available. I can clear around 30 acres in a day. We take out one set of knives now as we find the longer material is more suitable for our cows. It was chopping to between 2 and 2.5 inches with all the knives in – a bit too short for us. We find the longer grass gives a better shape to the pit and holds together better on the forks”.

“We clear around 30 acres of heavy first cut per day”

“Most journeys to the pit are within a quarter of a mile so the round trip from field to clamp and back is within 10 to 15 minutes.

We have one long draw and the wagon rides very well on the road – at 30mph it's a smooth ride with the spring suspension and hydraulic drawbar and the hydraulic brakes are good too. We used my brother's tractor once; it has a sprung front axle – that was a really smooth ride.

“The suspension provides a smooth ride on the road at 30mph”

“At the clamp, we start unloading at the lower speed – then go on the faster speed after the first quarter is out. Unloading takes between 2 and 2 and a half minutes. We use a tracked excavator to consolidate the clamp – the 13 tonne weight puts it in nice and tight. The silage quality is brilliant – we don't have it analysed – all the proof we need is in the finished results.

Over the winter, the cows have done very well on it – they get no extra rations and look very healthy - and there is very little waste.”

“The silage quality is brilliant – the cows get no extra rations and have done very well on it”

“The more work we have done with it, the more confident we have become at pushing the performance. It's a very strong machine and has been very reliable. There is very little maintenance needed as the main chains are automatically greased. We broke one hidden chain – which was probably my fault for not greasing it and the back door needed adjusting – otherwise it has been very reliable. We just sharpen the knives once at the end of the season – they do hold their edge well.

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“My Giga Vitesse picks-up 20ft of first cut grass at 10 to 11kmh”

says County Cork contractor Mike Daly



“The Strautmann Giga Vitesse has been a good investment and has never let me down”

In addition to running a busy agricultural contracting business, Mike Daly also farms 180 acres of mainly grassland at Union hall, Skibereen, County Cork including 100 acres of silage ground from which 2 or 3 cuts are taken for his 50 suckler cows and 130 beef cattle. “I’ve been contracting for 20 years” says Mike. “I provide a complete silage service, ploughing, one-pass sowing and slurry spreading for local farmers. I had to stop the silage work 7 years ago as I could not get the labour for the precision chop system. Five years ago, following pressure from customers, I invested in a Strautmann forage loader wagon – a SuperVitesse 2 – as I had always liked the idea of a simple system which I could harvest single handed and booked 300 acres in the first season. After 3 years, the demand doubled, so I exchanged the Super Vitesse for the higher output Giga Vitesse. Five years on, I’m now harvesting grass from over 800 acres on contract plus 100 acres on the home farm. Most of my original customers are still with me and are pleased with the results from the forage wagon.”

“I tried some competitor machines on demo, but found the Strautmann easier to drive and able to carry more grass”

“What has impressed me most about the Strautmann forage wagons is the strength of the construction. It looked right for the job, and after two seasons, the Giga still looks as good as the day it came so it has held its value and has been a good investment. It is very easy to service and has never let me down.

“The Giga is a strong machine that has never let me down and still looks as good as the day it came”

“I mow with a 10ft cut Taarup mower conditioner with auto swather and set it to place one swath on top of the other – that’s 20ft of first cut grass matching the pick-up width. If the weather permits, it’s left to wilt for 24 hours – no more as you don’t want it too dry. I have a 180hp John Deere which powers the Giga down the swath at between 10 and 11 kmh. On flat land, the tractor maintains the speed until the last 10 % of the 12 tonne load – then the speed has to be gradually reduced. On hills, the slow down starts at half full as the tractor is pulling a lot of weight – over 25 tonne including its own weight. On the hilly ground you’re always under pressure and need every bit of power.”

“The Giga picks up 20 ft of grass at 11kmh and packs 12 tonnes into the body”

“The 41 knives chop the grass nice and short to around 3 inches on average making it easy to handle in the pit. The customers like this length too as it is the right length for the cows. The pick-up and feed rotor handle the volume easy so the rotor rarely blocks. When it does, I’ve never had to leave the cab – I just ease back the floor and drop the knives and it’s soon cleared. I can clear between 30 and 40 acres per day depending on the draw. The rear steering wheels make headland turning very easy and do not damage the field – no scrubbing at all and I’ve never got stuck with it – but you have to

remember to set the axles to fixed position for the draw on the road.”

“The grass is chopped to around 3 inches on average and I can clear up to 40 acres per day”

“It’s a smooth wagon to pull on the road so I can drive at top speed (40kph). With hydraulic braking on all 4 hubs, it is a very safe drive. I chose the shorter Giga 1 because of the tight yards – combined with the rear wheel steering, it has excellent manoeuvrability. The two-speed floor takes only 45 seconds to empty – it’s the quickest I’ve seen. I drop the grass at the front of the clamp and we use a 160hp JCB 414F articulated loader. On the close draws, he’s very busy to keep up with me. We cut the fields nearer the clamp first to make it easier for the man on the loader.

“It takes only 45 seconds to unload – it’s the quickest I’ve seen”

“The reliability on both wagons has been 100% - I’ve never had to stop yet in five years. I’ve done 1800 acres with the Giga now – the gearbox drive to the feed rotor is very strong and needs no maintenance. The knives have two edges so I only need to sharpen them twice a year. They do keep their edge well and have very good spring breakaway protection, so I’ve only cracked and replaced 2 knives. I do drop the knife bank every day and clean between the blades – apart from that, all it needs is a routine greasing.”

