

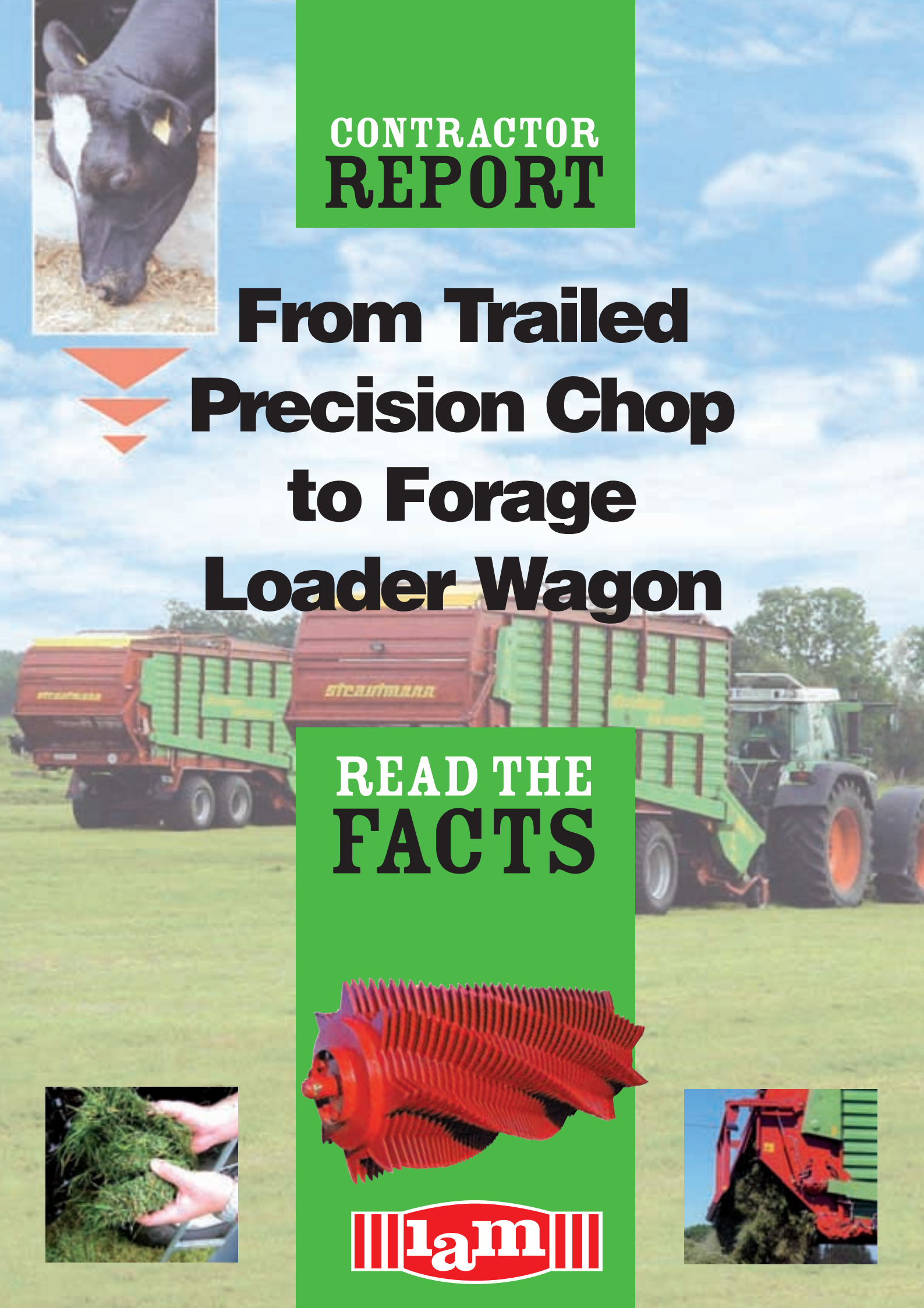


# CONTRACTOR REPORT



## From Trailed Precision Chop to Forage Loader Wagon

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FACTS



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September 2006

**“We moved to a Strautmann Giga Vitesse 2 Plus forage wagon for our silage contacting – and still manage to clear 40 acres a day”**

says Norman Taylor Jnr., Norman Taylor & Son Agricultural Contractors Urlingford, Co. Kilkenny

In 2004, the Taylors changed from a 3-man trailed flywheel precision chopper - supported by 2 or sometimes 3 trailers and tractors - to a 1-man system using a Strautmann Giga Vitesse Plus high speed, short chopping forage wagon. Now completing their third season with the Strautmann, here's why the Taylors are pleased they made the change.

**“The wagon system is very flexible - we can still get 40 acres of first cut silage a day - the same as what we were doing with the 10X and two trailers. Instead of having three men and three tractors tied-up chopping and drawing silage, we now have one man and one tractor doing the same job.”**

The Taylor's Giga Vitesse Plus - called “Plus” because it has an extra 4 blades and an advanced crop feed system - was one of the first of a



“8 rows of feeder tines with weld-on hard wearing plates inter-react with the scrapers to provide an exceptionally short chop when contacting the 45 cutting knives”



Norman Taylor Jnr. and senior

new series of high speed short chopping forage loader wagons imported into Ireland. The wagon features a new feed rotor and 45 knife chopping mechanism which sets new standards in loader wagon chopping performance. Norman Taylor & Sons have been very pleased with the performance. Three models are available with either 33.5, 38 or 42 cu. metre (DIN) capacity - all have a 1.9m wide pick-up, two speed unloading floor, automatic load sensing, hydraulic lift drawbar and spring-loaded steering tandem axles rated at 20 tonne gross capacity.

**“The hydraulic articulated drawbar helps provide a smooth high speed ride to and from the clamp “It also speeds-up the unloading as you can use it to slope the floor downwards. It unloads quicker than a silage trailer - you can switch to fast unload about halfway through unloading”** says Norman Taylor.

**“The pick-up is uniquely driven via an angled gearbox with drive shaft “It is more robust than the standard drive chain system and saves a lot of time no longer having to oil drive chains”** Norman adds.



“An angled gearbox on the “Plus” models replaces twin drive chains and incorporates a safety clutch with friction linings in the drive line - substantially reducing maintenance time and wear rates”.

The step change is on the new feed rotor. The eight rows of triangular shaped feeding tines are increased from 41 to 45 and are arranged in the normal helix pattern. This results in the knife gap reducing to 35mm - (about one and three eighth inches).

The leading edge of each tine has a welded-on 'Hardox' hard-wearing plate - which is wider than the tine - to provide cleaner, more precise cutting via close interaction with the scraper plates. This system reduces friction, increases cutting consistency and avoids mashing sappy young crops.

Norman Taylor's experience confirms the claim.

**"Our 40 acres a day are achieved in heavy, young first-cut grass with a 24 hour wilt. We weighed one load at 24tonnes - about 16 tonnes of grass - it was well compacted in the body and most of the crop was chopped down to between one and a half and two inches - almost as good as my previous precision chop harvester. We were driving down good swaths left by a ten foot cut Taarup mower conditioner at speeds up to 12mph with our 170hp Deutz Fahr tractor and only slowed down as the wagon filled-up."**



"The long triangular shaped knives have two cutting edges and are easily turned without tools"



The cutting system uses Strautmann's unique, well-proven double-edged knife arrangement. The 45 long, triangular shaped serrated edge knives are quick detach and arranged in one bank. When one side is dulled or damaged, the knife bank lowers hydraulically to provide easy access for turning the knives without tools.

The drop down feature is also used to quickly free any blockages in the feed system. As the knife tips wear shorter after several grindings, the carrying frame can be adjusted outwards to maintain the original knife length.

**"They are great knives"** says Norman

**"The double edge means there's no waste at all. They keep a good edge - we only needed to sharpen them after 300 or so acres. They are quickly dropped down to check for stone damage and you can soon turn one around to use the other side."**

The tandem steering axles are fitted with 700/50-26.5 (12PR) tyres which spread the weight over a wide area and enable the wagon to work in soft ground conditions.

The automatic steering system prevents the wide tyres from scrubbing the ground - preventing fields from cutting-up and minimising wear when manoeuvring around yards. Norman's view on the high spec tyres confirms the benefits:



"The high road speed "Plus" wagon has reinforced sprung axles and high speed tyres to provide a safe smooth ride on the road at high speed. An optional hydro-pneumatic suspension is also available with automatic adjustment during the loading process and integrated level sensors for an even smoother ride."



**"The big tyres are worth the money - on long draws on a good road, we can travel at 50kmh with a full load. The wagon is well-sprung and sits well on the road and round the yards, there's no tyre creaking when turning and the steering axle also works when reversing. When we moved from a precision chop and three trailers to one big wagon, a lot of customers were worried that we would take far longer to bring in the crop on 3 to 4 mile draws."**



"Standard controls are via the electro-hydraulic comfort system using handy switches on a robust console - designed to stay on the tractor after disconnecting. ISOBUS terminals are also optionally available.

**" Our experience was that we lost no time and substantially reduced our operating costs. That was essential because we were getting into a situation with the chopper and trailers where we could no longer recover our costs. We either had to stop silage work - or change to a more cost efficient system. So we invested in the wagon and now we are making a reasonable return. On really long draws - we have one 10 mile job - we use a second wagon to avoid delays."**

How did the wagon perform in lighter second cut crops and how does second cut fit in with the Taylors grain harvesting service? The Taylors usually charge on an hourly basis in light crops - how does this work out for their customers?

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## Giga-Vitesse<sup>plus</sup>



**“The flexibility of the system is perhaps the single best selling point. When the grain harvest starts, we don't have to abandon corn cutting to tackle second cut silage - one man and a tractor can do the job and we don't have to spend half a day changing tailboards on trailers and rounding up extra drivers. Now we can mow in the morning, then pick up with the wagon in the afternoon. Meanwhile, the combine stays going and our trailers stay drawing grain.”**

**“In 2006 first cut, we generally charged 90 Euros per acre for the complete job - including the mower conditioner, rake, wagon and an industrial loader on the clamp. In light second cut, we charge by the hour which means we are still covering our costs and time but the farmer is not penalised for taking a light cut.”**

How about silage quality? Three seasons on, have the Taylor's dairy farmer customers been satisfied with the quality?

**“Silage quality has been good - all our customers are pleased with the results from the Giga” says Norman “We do the clamp work ourselves with an 8 tonne JCB industrial loader which compacts the grass very well.**

**We did try a smaller wagon with a longer chop, but that was more difficult and time consuming to consolidate - particularly in dry crops”**

How about reliability? After 2000 acres of silage, what failures were experienced?

**“The running costs are low. In the first two seasons, we've just replaced one knife and two more in 2006 all from stone damage. Nothing else has needed changing.”**



“The 1.9m wide pick-up has 6 rows of close-spaced tines for maximum efficiency in short grass. Maximum support and a smooth ride is provided by twin caster wheels with pneumatic tyres on either side of the pick-up. A galvanised crop guide plate incorporates a roller at the leading edge to facilitate high speed collection on big swaths. The hydraulic drawbar has double acting cylinders enabling the wagon to be reversed onto the clamp face. It also provides a smoother ride on roads and tracks.”

We asked Norman Taylor what he liked the most and the least about the Giga. “The chop length is the winner” says Norman. “The dairy men do like the chop length - its nearly the same as my old Ten X. It's hard to find a fault though - probably the main disadvantage is the height - at 4 metres to the roof bars, you have to watch out for low tree branches on the smaller roads.”

**“The Giga Vitesse wagon provides a very flexible one-man forage harvesting system - it saved us from having to stop our silage harvesting service”**

### September 2006 Update

“Our Strautmann wagon has harvested around 2,500 acres over three seasons. 2006 has been a dry year, so silage quality has been very good. The main difference this year has been the use of a 24ft. twin rotor rake to make larger swaths. We spread the grass behind the 10ft. mower conditioner to provide a more even wilt - then rake up to form a large, even swath. The grass dries more evenly and the tractor and wagon run easier at a steady pace. We get more crop in the wagon and we are still clearing around 40 acres per day. We now give some farmers the option to save money by mowing their own grass as a lot have bought 8ft. disc mowers for topping”

**“We're very happy with the wagon. It continues to be very reliable - over the three years we have only broken three knives - when working in stony conditions.”**

To find out more about the Giga Plus call I.A.M  
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