

Belts And Braces

A major player in the round baler market, Krone extends its range to include two belt chamber models.

At Krone France, the company unveiled two new round baler models, extending its range to more than 30 machines. What's unique about these VariPack balers when compared to the rest of Krone's units is that these utilise four 275mm wide belts to form and compress the bale instead of the slat system used on the Bellima, Fortima, Comprima and Comprima X-treme series.

Due to launch at Agritechnica, the VariPack V 165 XC Plus will produce bales from 0.8m up to 1.65m diameter, increasing to 1.9m on the V 190 XC Plus. Customers baling dry crops, such as hay, haylage and straw, and wanting to maximise throughput and density have driven this development from the company, which further states that the quality and technology of belt chambers has improved significantly over the last few years.

The use of belts eliminates the mashing effect that can occur in dryer crops, not to mention simplifies machine assembly and reduces the overall weight.

Both models feature the EasyFlow camless pick-up, which has a 2.15m working width to handle large swathes and tines are laid in a helical pattern to feed material evenly to the centre, reducing peak loads. Pick-up height can be adjusted without tools, complementing the pivoting design which provides 70mm total travel to follow ground contours and pick up the crop.

This feeds the new integral rotor, which has a diameter of 530mm to maximise throughput. It's driven by two belts, powered by a 1000rpm PTO and has been designed to have the minimum of moving parts to extend the working life.

A 26 knife cutting system is standard. Knives can be fully disengaged, half engaged (13 knives spaced at 84mm) or fully engaged (42mm spacing), with individual spring protection. Importantly, if a blockage occurs, the knife cassette can be lowered from the cab. Instead of dropping the crop to the ground however, this allows it into

the chamber – keeping things moving.

Much of the operation is done automatically and both machines are fully ISOBUS compatible so the operator can set-up and monitor the baler from the cab. Once the desired size and density have been set, baling pressure is produced and maintained by clamping cylinders on the left and right side. When the bale reaches the preset diameter, netwrap is automatically applied and the rear door activates. Opening and closing takes less than five seconds, with end of stroke cushioning, for minimum downtime.

For contractors with a heavy work load, maintenance has been addressed; with automatic lubrication and tensioning on the three drive chains. The electric system is fed by an oil reservoir, which Krone states will last a full day. Both the driveshaft and easy-access rams require manual greasing, however bearings throughout the baler are fed from a central lubrication system.

The belts have lacings for quick and easy repairs when required and slackening can be done by operating one handle when the rear door is open. Knife changes are just as stress-free, with a dog clutch to disengage the intake system so that the rotor can be freewheeled for operator access. This also means a bale can be completed in the case of a serious blockage.

Netwrap can be changed over quickly from the ground, from either the left or right side. The holder swings out allowing the net to be pushed into place without lifting. There is also space for two spare rolls of net

and the VariPack can operate with any size or brand, according to the company.

Cleaning the machine has also been simplified, with sloped sides to avoid residue build up. There are two cleaning rollers in the chamber, a driven one at the front and a passive one at the rear, to clean the guide rollers and stop crop lodging.

As you'd expect, the VariPack machines are sensor driven, alerting the operator that the netwrap is running, speed and wrap counters, as well as bale size and pressure measurements. To monitor this information, customers can choose between Krone's own DS 100 or DS 500 control units, the new CCI 800 screen or the larger CCI 1200. These balers are also Tractor Implement Mangement (TIM) ready, allowing the baler to control the forward speed of compatible tractors for optimum throughput.

The options list is a case of quality over quantity, with 500.60 R 22.5 and 600/50 R 22.5 tyre choices over the standard 500/50 R 20. LED lights and a camera system are also available, as is a moisture monitor. Furthermore, the VariPack can be linked to Krone's SmartConnect telematics package.

In the field, the machine worked well, albeit operating in a light crop of straw, the VariPack V 190 XC Plus moved quickly

and efficiently. The bales produced were consistent, with netwrap reaching over the edge to maintain a firm shape. Most impressively, despite the very dry conditions, the straw was not smashed, with hardly any dust or residue. ■

This lever disengages the intake for quick changeovers of knives and the clearance of blockages.



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