

Success is for success

Taege has a reputation for building simple, strong and effective agricultural machinery and by popular demand, it has taken the back bone of the seed drills' success and developed a range of cultivators.

The Taege Engineering cultivator may seem familiar to some, and it should be. When you've found a winning formula, why change it? In this case, Taege's seed drill tyne geometry has proven very successful in the past by mounting the heavy-duty 'S' tyne on an angle to give greater contour following, trash clearance and penetration. So, cleverly, Taege has incorporated this feature into its new range of cultivators.

Taege 3.0m

The first driving force behind this concept would have to be John Jebson, or 'Jebo' as he is known by the locals. Jebo previously owned 'Flockton', the family farm, lasting through five generations, where he ran 6000 stock units of sheep and beef on hard, dry land, so knew what was required to get a good crop from dry, pugged paddocks. Part of the farm boarded on the property of Taege Engineering's workshop in Sheffield, Canterbury, so he's seen the growth

and development of the Taege seed drills, even owning one himself for many years. It was from his many successes with the seed drill that the idea of using it as a grubber/cultivator was sparked.

"I've wanted to try one as a grubber/cultivator ever since I watched my drill being used to demonstrate (for some potential dealership operators from Australia) how well the Taege seed drills penetrate into rock-hard dry ground," says Jebo. "As a result I'm now a proud owner of a Taege 3.0m trailing big tyne drill frame, with the tynes and tips set up exactly as they are on a Taege drill, without the boots and hoses etc. It's the best grubber/cultivator I've ever used."

"Previously I'd always used a very common brand of grubber, with about 15" row spacings, and I had to go over the ground three times more than I do with the Taege to get the same results. The Taege only has four ¾" row spacings set over three and a half

rows of tynes. I always had to wait for the right conditions before my previous machine would go into the ground, but my Taege just bites in and does the job, no matter how hard it is.

"As any beef farmer knows, a very wet spring often results in a lot of pugging and residual straw in the mix, resulting in pretty rough paddocks and unfavourable conditions for re-sowing. I take out all the ram spacers and tear into it and, about three passes and a roll later, I have good drilling conditions instead of very rough, hard-packed pugged areas.

"My Taege drill would handle drilling straight into the pugged areas because of the amazing contour following but I would still have rough areas afterwards. With the same tyne set up and fine tungsten tip as the drill, the grubber/cultivator also has the great benefits experienced by the Taege drill owners, such as good trash clearance, penetration, and long lasting points."



Andy Stokes and sons: 200ha of hard cultivator testing with no signs of damage



Jebo is very pleased with his Taege 3.0m trailing cultivator



'Crumpy' Deans is impressed with the way the Taege cultivator works the ground after dinking



Moving dirt is what it's all about and the different tip options insures this happens

Taege 6.0m

With the 3.0m being so successful, it was time to meet other requests from customers and go wider. Thus, the 6.0m version was developed. There are 49 tynes set at approximately 122mm on four-and-a-half tool bars, helping to shift a lot of soil. With two prototypes working in the area, the feedback is very positive. By listening to customers and Taege staff with a lot of experience in driving tractors and using different brands of cultivators, Taege has come up with a product able to be tailored to suit the many different requirements of such a machine. Currently there are three types of points used in different layouts to give the best results.

With input from Joel Parris and Selwyn Shadbolt (CAD designer) of Taege Engineering,

with their mechanical and farming backgrounds, and including local farmers around the district with vastly different requirements, Taege Engineering has taken the information and created a cultivator able to handle various conditions easily. One of the key requirements farmers were looking for was a cultivator with less than a three-metre transport width, which this cultivator delivers.

The new six-metre cultivator has been designed in the typical Taege way: simple, solid construction with a galvanised frame and a minimum number of moving parts, meaning it is built to last with very little maintenance required. To satisfy the many different requirements for a cultivator, there is an array of tips provided to suit your cultivation needs. The three current

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options able to be set in any configuration are fine six-millimetre Taege tungsten tips, 50mm chisel tips and 125mm spade tips.

Complementing the 'S' tynes are Taege tyne harrows, which on the cultivator have heavier fingers for breaking down clods and levelling the surface. The Taege tyne harrows have a simple adjustment to increase or decrease the load or harshness needed on the job.

Well-respected farmers are worth listening to, so a visit to local father and son cropping farmers Stu and Martin Skurr, who were trialling the six-metre cultivator, was on the agenda. "The reason we cultivate is to achieve a good seed bed, as our drill isn't a direct drill," Martin says. The Skurrs own their own folding cultivator, a home-built machine, set up with the big square coil tynes and Milsons nihard points. "It works well," says Martin, "but we do struggle to get it to penetrate in a controlled manner when the ground is hard. It either won't penetrate, or goes too deep resulting in big clods which take a lot more work to break down. We also have to have the wings folded up when it's hard to achieve an even cultivation depth."

"After hearing about the Taege cultivator we decided to give it a go, to compare it to our



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machine, and we were suitably impressed. We were able to do a shallow first pass, breaking up the top crust layer and resulting in smaller clods. This meant we could achieve the desired amount of cultivation with less tractor work. I feel that due to the tip and tyne set up and better contour following, the Taege gave us a far superior finish.”

Hard on gear

Another well-respected farmer is Andy Stokes, owner of a dry, barren and stoney farm, aptly named ‘Sinai’. He is always a good test for machinery as he’s always on the go at speed and admits he is hard on gear. No machinery survives on his farm unless it is built like the proverbial outhouse, so his was a definite trial ground for a Taege prototype cultivator. Andy’s response was: “I’ve done about 200ha with the Taege prototype cultivator and it sure has passed the test. I have a few different tractor drivers with



Taege 6.0m folding cultivator showing the ability to contour follow off the horizontal

Taege 6.0m cultivator with travelling width under 3.1m



varying skill levels and there hasn’t been any cracks or breakages, which is a good testament to the product as we go about 13km/h and there are plenty of rocks to contend with.

“I have a Taege seed drill so there may be some questions as to why I’m cultivating because the Taege drills are renowned for being one of the best direct drills on the market, but for me it’s all about timing. I need a very quick turnaround between crops and to do direct drilling properly, you need to follow a good spray program which means waiting about six weeks — too long for some of my crops,” he says.

“By cultivating I can have a five-day turnaround from grass to kale. We do two

passes of deep ripping with a Plucks chisel plough, then two to three passes with the cultivator, with possibly some rolling in the process depending on conditions. I’m comparing the Taege cultivator, equipped with Taege finger harrows, with our maxitill and crumbler, and the Taege is a definite winner.

“The Taege also handles the trash a lot better as it clears itself, where the maxitill would block up. One of the areas I’ve put it into is a seven-year-old pasture with about a 300mm tag on it, and it handled it no problem. I put this down to the angle the tynes are set at, which is the same as my Taege drill. Horsepower-wise, I have a 100hp tractor which worked a bit, but the 140hp tractor didn’t even know it was behind. It was set up

The wing wheels are hydraulically operated in the latest cultivator being built at present

“Taege drills are renowned for being one of the best direct drills on the market...”



Penetration into 70-year pasture isn’t a problem with the Taege fine tungsten tips fitted to the cultivator

with Taege drill tips on the front half and the wide spade tips on the last two rows and I’m surprised at how long the tips have lasted as our farm is renowned for eating steel. It’s good to see Taege has taken note of the things I could see would be an improvement and are incorporating them into their latest machine. I’m convinced it’s a good machine and I’m keen to purchase one of the prototypes.”

Disking over ploughing

Brian Deans, or ‘Crumpy’ due to his uncanny resemblance to the late Barry Crump, is also a farmer with first-hand experience with the 6.0m Taege cultivator. Crumpy’s turf is Tara Farms, 482ha of rolling/steep hill country in the picturesque Malvem Hills of Canterbury. He is a firm believer of simplicity and a low quantity of moving parts when it comes to farm machinery,

so the Taege cultivator appealed to him. “I’m breaking in a lot of new ground and renewing a lot of my old pasture, and I get better results from disking than ploughing. I use the cultivator to finish off after disking and the aim is to shift as much dirt as possible with the least amount of moving parts. The Taege cultivator meets my needs,” says Crumpy.

“Last season we disked an area and then got a lot of rain and it was too wet to keep using the disks, so we went in with the cultivator and it was brilliant — simply brilliant. After two passes we had a beautiful seed bed. It was set up with the 125mm spade tips all round and I was amazed at how easy it was to pull. I have 133hp and thought it would struggle on the hills, but it was no problem. We direct drill the steeper stuff with our Taege drill but where I’m tidying up damaged paddocks from ruts etc., I like to cultivate.”

The final word

Geoff Proud at Taege Engineering gives the final word: “It’s exciting to have a brand new product to market and, even though it is still early days, it isn’t as if it’s unknown territory as the main principles of the cultivator are built on the success of our seed drills: tip and tyne set-up giving excellent penetration, contour following and trash clearance. It will be a work in progress, which is the Taege way, and because we are a small company and like to build what our customers want, there will be changes in the future to suit the requirements of you, our customers.” ■



The Taege cultivator copes with trash very well due to the tyne set up