

Seed quality and combine performance high

Tough straw? No problem.

As a seed grower, Gordon Cresswell's business requires clean, top quality, undamaged kernels. His New Holland CR970 Twin Rotor® combine provides just that.

The Cresswell family operates a 4,500 acre grain farm in Tisdale, Saskatchewan on land homesteaded by his grandfather in 1904. Flax is an important crop for them, as it is for the thousands of other grain growers in the province.

The seedcoat of flax is fragile, and cracked seed can easily result from mechanical damage or seed that is harvested when it is too dry. Even though seed may appear whole to the naked eye, microscopic cracks can provide entry for infection by microorganisms found in the soil. And seedlings produced from damaged seed tend to germinate more slowly or have abnormalities.

"The CR combine is gentle on grain and it does a good job," says Gordon. "I don't think anybody will argue that. The rotary just gives you a better sample."

When it's time to switch to a different seed crop, Gordon thoroughly cleans out the combine. "It's relatively easy to clean," he says. "They have pans that you can pull out and reinstall real easily."

Straw management

Flax straw management can sometimes be problematic because the straw has long, tough stems that are difficult to incorporate into the soil. As a zero-till operator, Gordon likes the way the New Holland CR combine handles straw. He has equipped his CR combine with both a straw chopper and chaff spreader.

"We grow lots of straw, an abundance of straw. Good straw management is really important for a zero-till operation here," he says. "It would be the exception if we'd have to go back



"Sometimes we have straw that's challenging, and the CR combine meets the challenge."

—Gordon Cresswell

Gordon Cresswell and his sons, Mark and Bryan.

and use a heavy harrow to spread straw. That's another reason I like the New Holland."

The family has taken off grain as tough as 22% moisture, and he's known others to harvest cereals at 25% moisture with the CR Series.

"The monitors will tell whether you've got excess going over the rotors simply because of tough straw, so you slow up. It's not running

out of power. You may see a loss on the rotor when you get into very extreme, tough conditions, but you slow down and it looks after itself. Those long, big rotors work really well. Sometimes we have straw that's challenging, and the CR combine meets the challenge without any problem. It's a tough, rugged harvesting machine," he said.

Wet harvest

A frequent challenge for the Cresswell's century-old farm is wet weather during a short harvest window. Gordon reports putting his New Holland CR970 combine to an unusual cold weather test in 2006 after they had been dealt the "double whammy" of a heavy rain during harvest, followed by snow.

By mid-September, he recalls, they had taken off 80% to 90% of the crop. Then, pouring rain blanketed the region for four days. Fields had to absorb three to four inches of water. They watched and waited and in early October, had enough flotation to enable their New Holland CR970 combine to collect the oats.

The flax field, however, still wasn't fit to travel on. "Then we got a freaky snowstorm in October that covered up just about all the flax," he says.

Most of the mix of about two inches of snow and rain melted and began soaking in again during mild October days, but the ground stayed too soft for travel. Then it began freezing, and it looked like they'd face a spring harvest of flax.



Good straw management is an important benefit of the CR970.

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Seed quality *continued*

On November 10, Gordon decided to make one last attempt at taking off the flax. The ground was rock hard but the snow was nearly gone. A few places were white in the standing flax, where snow had drifted and stayed. Most of the field was icy. The morning temperature was a crisp -14.2° C (6° F). The day's high temperature reached only -8.4° C (17° F) with a bit of wind chill.

The CR970 was parked in unheated storage, but its block heater was plugged in overnight. Gordon could open the shed door, but wasn't sure what the combine would do. He tried, and it started. Then he waited.

"The belts and the hydraulic fluids don't work well at that temperature," he says. "It took about a half an hour before you could make them work, but by then the cab was nice and warm."

The combine rolled out of the shed, down the drive and off to the flax field, about two miles away. Inside the cab, Gordon basked in the warmth of the heated cab.

"The ground was frozen, the flax was frozen, but it performed almost like it would on a regular day," he says. "It combined really well."

Daylight is gone by 4:30 p.m. at that time of year around Tisdale, but Gordon kept going. He finished the field around 8 p.m.

"The toughest part of that job was dealing with the cold," Gordon says. "You hate starting

the machine; you're wondering if the hoses will leak or if the belts are bad, things like that. Well, there were no ill effects from it.

"If you happened to scoop a little deep and get a little bit of snow, you had

to watch that it didn't build up on the sieves, but mostly, we didn't have any trouble," he says. "Anyways, I was able to finish harvesting. It's a credit to the combine and a credit to today's engineering."



The Cresswell Family: (Back row) Gordon, Lynn, Cathy, Mark, Bryan (holding Luke), Crystal. (Middle row) Allison, Mattheew. (Front row) Ryan, Heather, Brock, Aimiley, Baylee.