

Article from:

## K-Line Trash Cutter

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### **STUBBLE is no match for the K-Line Trash Cutter, reports MARK SAUNDERS**

The advent of minimum and no-tillage cropping systems has led to farmers seeking better ways of handling stubble.

Traditional methods such as burning stubble are now far less popular while other management techniques include baling it just after harvest or working it into the ground where it breaks down gradually over time.

One method being used by the Trewick family of Elmore uses a K-Line Industries Trash Cutter which knocks stubble to the ground and cuts it up.

The 12m Trash Cutter was in use at the Trewick's property last week as part of their winter cereal cropping program, which includes growing oaten hay.

David Trewick said reducing the stubble load in the paddock with the K-Line will enable them to go straight from a cereal grain crop stubble to an oaten hay crop.

"I've heard several theories on stubble management but I reckon the best for our system is to cut the stubble, which will allow it to break down quicker and get the carbon cycling in the soil more efficiently," David said.

"We like to maintain stubble in the paddocks and this year we did not think the price of straw and the amount of straw in some paddocks lent itself to baling.

"The Trash Cutter knocks most of the stubble down and cuts it up, which leaves a nice even spread or mat of cover on the paddock so we get to conserve moisture and add organic matter to the soil at the same time."

The even cover of the stubble "mulch" makes it easier on the sowing equipment, according to David.

"A disc seeder is used for planting and it will be able to handle the trash load easily, especially if the trash is spread evenly across the ground," David said.

The Trewicks will look at using the Trash Cutter sooner after harvest this season, as David believes the longer the stubble is lying on the ground, the more chance there is of it breaking down.

"Having the straw down on the ground a little sooner, combined with any summer rain we may get will undoubtedly help it break down quicker," David said.

"We might even also look at using stubble digesters if the crop is heavy enough."

Stubble digesters are liquid chemicals which can be applied to straw to help break down fibrous plant material.

The Trewicks have been practicing minimum tillage cropping for about 15 years.

David said about 80 per cent of the crops grown were cereals for grain or hay production and paddocks were only worked when starting a crop phase from a fallow year.

"We may work the ground lightly a couple of times to establish a crop from fallow but it will only be worked again with the disc seeder at planting," David said.

This year they will sow about 1800ha on their property and contract plant another 600ha.

"We'll also be looking to hire out the K-Line to anyone who wants to give it a try," David said.

He said operating the Trash Cutter was easy. "It's quite a simple principle."

The 12m-wide machine has a row of steel tubes bent in a curved shape which are used to lie stubble down on the ground.

The steel tubes, or "lay flatters", are followed by a row of 100 flute-edged discs, spaced 130mm apart.

The discs and lay flatters are set up on two wings, which fold up to a transport width of 3.5m.

The fluted edge of the discs cuts the straw and the aggressiveness of the cut can be varied by changing the angle of the wings, which run at right angles to the direction of travel.

By moving two drop pins on the K-Line's frame, the angle of the wings can be changed in 2.5 degree increments to a maximum of 7.5 degrees from their neutral position.

The Trewicks were towing the K-Line with a 110kW tractor, which David said was plenty of horsepower.

"Obviously the more aggressive the cut, the more horsepower is needed," David said. "We have been running it at zero and 2.5 degrees at about 18km/h ground speed and it's been fine."

The down force on the discs can be adjusted via hydraulics on the go to suit the soil conditions.

K-Line Trash Cutters are available in widths from 10m to 24m.

For more details, phone K-Line Industries on 1800 194 131.

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Close shave: the K-Line Trash Cutter left an even spread of stubble on David's farm, cut to lengths of 150-250mm.



Nice job: David's K-Line is towed with a 112kW John Deere tractor.



A cutter above: David said the K-Line Trash Cutter will be an important tool in his oaten hay crop preparation this autumn. It has a 12m working width with 100 discs spaced 130mm apart.

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