

Contractor goes the extra mile

Oliver and Hannah Arnold have extended their contracting business to offer even more services.

as required. These include straights – sugar-beet, high protein soya, rape meal, flaked maize.

To compliment the mill and mixing business, the couple are the East Anglia distributors for the Vitfoss range of vitamins, minerals and additives for horses as well as farm livestock and poultry.

The Arnolds are now looking at extending their services to deliver home milled mix in bulk as a whole feed. This means farmers do not need to grow or source their own cereals but still get the fantastic home mix blend that livestock do so well on. Furthermore, they will always have access to feed milled on the floor for any of those - 'help, we have ran out' situations.

But there is more to the contracting business than feed. The couple employ 10 full-time staff and offer a host of services including haulage, muck-spreading, silaging and baling. They also run their own suckler herd.

"Everything we do as a contracting business we use ourselves," says Oliver. "We don't claim to know it all but it means we have good first-hand knowledge of what we do. It's a massive strength."

Muck-spreading is carried out using two Terragators which can carry up to 20t of muck at a time. Soil compaction is minimized by the use of four 1,050mm Michelin tyres on each vehicle.

A Norfolk agricultural contractor has been offering a mobile mill and mix service using a modern machine and it has exceeded expectations this year.

Oliver and Hannah Arnold, who trade as the Spring Farm Partnership, use a 'Buschhoff' mill plant attached to a lorry. It enables them to visit local farmers so they can utilise their own home grown produce and create individual blends.

Home-grown cereals are sucked in, then ground or rolled. Blended molasses or oil can be sprayed into the mix giving it a highly palatable dust free ration. "Home-milled feed is honest feed," explains Oliver. "Our Buschhoff does a fantastic job in keeping the service quick, clean and consistent"

The lorry travels all over East Anglian. It can mix 'batches' up to seven tonnes at once to create consistent blends. Customers can also request simply to roll barley, beans or grind maize and if this can be done on a continuous flow discounted rates apply as the

machine's throughput is very quick.

"We can produce a blend to the farmers exacting standards for dairy, sucklers, beef finishers, growers, calf creep, traditional sows, pig growers and free-range layers, but we also offer nutritional advice from Vitfoss, based in Holt."

Rations are kept simple and economical, using as much as possible of the home produced feed on the farm. Vitfoss technical staff from Denmark visit the area regularly to meet customers on-farm to optimise stock production and feed composition.

Finished feed can be blown into bulk bins, augered onto floor or trailers or into one-tonne tote bags, explains Oliver. "Our aim is to do quality honest feed using the minimum number of bags bringing the benefit of bulk prices to customers."

A range of complementary products to mix with home-grown crops is offered in 25kg bags, one-tonne tote bags or bulk



Services include:

- Maize (with fertiliser placement) drilling
- Cereal & sugar beet drilling
- Ploughing and cultivations
- Foraging grass and maize
- Square baling and wrapping
- Hesston & mini Hesston straw & hay baling
- Mill & Mix
- 15t trailer hire (over harvest)
- Muck & lime spreading
- Muck available & muck analysis
- 44t Haulage work with low loader

"Even working fully-loaded on arable land, the tyres don't plough up the ground like trailed spreaders. It is also very accurate, and the weigh cells are checked annually to make sure they stay that way."

The Terragators are filled using a large flotation tyred loading shovel. "We operate throughout East Anglia, using an articulated lorry and low loader for the bigger moves to keep downtime to a minimum."

Computerised maps are printed out showing exactly where muck has been spread and how much has been applied providing a useful record for managing NVZs. "Our

machines that can weigh, map, vari-rate and download in one."

Recent machinery purchases include an 6-metre 8-row Kuhn Moduliner seed and maize combination drill, believed to be the only one in the country, a new Claas 960 forage harvester and another 936 Fendt tractor. An 824 Fendt will also arrive shortly on farm as an additional tractor.

"The service we get from Randell NFM is fantastic," says Oliver. "They are a good local company with good local values. I can't say enough about them." Special praise must also go to service we have got recently from Manns, Thursford & Ernest Dow Power, Fakenham, he adds.

The couple have a strong relationship too with Clydesdale Bank, and their agribusiness partner, Nicholas Hunt, who said: "It is rewarding to know we have been able to assist Oliver and Hannah successfully build up their business."

"It is exciting working with people who are always looking to expand and never content to rest on their laurels. People talk about farmers needing to diversify and the Arnolds are a great example for others looking to take that approach."

