



NINE-TO-ONE FAVOURITE

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That is the experience of AB Cornford, which, between its livestock and arable farming and contracting operations, farms 1200 acres from its base at Ripe, East Sussex. On the contracting side the emphasis is more on conserved forage production. Here they are involved in clamped grass and maize silage with a full forage harvesting service, and round bale silage. But the majority of the work is now big bale grass silage and haylage, both wrapped, and hay and straw.

"We make 10,000 – 12,000 big bales a season, for ourselves and for our customers," says Paul Cornford, "haylage from 500 – 600 acres, the balance in hay and straw." For the past two seasons the work has been done with a Krone BigPack 1270 Multibale tandem axle large square baler. Supplied by dealers Haynes Bros, Uckfield, the running gear is rated to 50kph and it is fitted with a steering axle to minimise damage on grassland when turning.

The first BigPack Multibale in AB Cornford's area it was bought initially for hay and straw baling but is now used to bale haylage. "We were baling with a

Krone conventional baler, which was getting old and needed replacing," Paul explains.

"A lot of our customers are horse owners who want conventional small bales as they are easier to move for feeding and bedding and we were making 50,000 – 60,000 bales a year of hay and straw for that market and for our own use. But we needed a large square baler as we'd picked up a lot of work from dairy and beef farmers who wanted both standard 2.4m-long big bales for bedding and small bales for feeding; a 1.2m bale fits a ring feeder nicely."

The Krone BigPack 1270 Multibale, uniquely, can be programmed through the Comfort control terminal to make big bales up to 2.4m long or a single pack comprising up to 9 conventional bales. Small bales can be set continuously from 30cm to 135cm long and are bound by two strings, the entire bale by six strings from the double knotters on the 120cm high x 70cm wide bale chamber.

This feature has had a significant beneficial impact on AB Cornford's business. "The BigPack 1270 Multibale suits us ideally," Paul says. "Its versatility, the ability to make big bales or small bales in a single pack with a high output large square baler, enables us to serve both our horse and livestock customers with one machine. In Multibale format the equine sector generally wants straw and haylage in the smallest cross-section bales the baler produces. Some livestock farmers tend towards a 1.2m-long

haylage and silage bale, but the most common length is 1.7m as this is the maximum to fit comfortably into a ring feeder.

"It's simple to convert from a single to multiple bales, you just enter the configuration into the computer. We currently make 3000 multipacks a season, 25% of production. Output is 100 acres a day behind our John Deere 6210R tractor so we can keep the quality up. The BigPack 1270 Multibale has enabled us to reduce costs and time in the field and, as there are fewer bales to collect and transport, handling."

Other than a few teething troubles in the beginning – "when the back-up from Krone was fabulous," Paul comments – the baler has been extremely reliable, which is critical to the business.

"There is nothing else on the market like the BigPack Multibale," Paul concludes. "Our baler wasn't that much more expensive than a standard BigPack model but for a relatively small additional outlay I now have the option of offering customers another service."