

Schütz IBC wins seal of approval

THE Ecobulk SX-D by Schütz is specially fitted with a steel hull to provide extensive protection against fire and to withstand extreme conditions. In the event of a fire, the steel containment basin prevents flammable contents from leaking and significantly reduces the fire's spread. The Schütz IBC thus makes a significant contribution to risk minimisation by providing double leakage protection. This Schütz container is the first – and so far the only composite IBC – to be awarded the 'FM approved' certification seal by the FM Global Group.

Risk minimisation reduces costs and saves time

The specialised US insurance company believes that most damage can be avoided, and this is why FM engineers subject the policyholder's business operations to a rigorous advance scrutiny and evaluation process. It meets the highest safety standards thanks to its special design: As an extension of the conventional steel grid, the IBC has a closed, fireproof outer hull made of steel. Welded to the integrated containment basin, this shell forms its own sealed container around the inner bottle of the IBC.

Furthermore, all three filling and/or discharge openings are located on the top of the container. The openings are protected by steel caps. The front bung is equipped with a dip tube system and a pump system can also be connected to discharge the contents.

By using this IBC, customers actively contribute to risk minimisation and save costs within the supply chain thanks to more efficient processes in handling, storage and transport compared to alternative forms of packaging.



Ideally suited for flammable liquids and sensitive hazardous goods – the Ecobulk SX-D by Schütz. (PHOTO: Schütz)

Swift and strategic planting

WITH a promising rainfall outlook raising grower morale ahead of the summer season, farmers are being urged to consider best practise planting techniques.

After battling difficult conditions over the past few summers, growers are itching to take advantage of the projected wet season ahead, and experts in the industry are eager to ensure that the opportunity is met carefully.

Pacific Seeds Summer Grains Agronomist, Trevor Philp is advising growers to make the most of their planting prospects as they enter a critical phase ahead of the summer cropping season.

"The importance of the planting operation is sometimes undervalued due to time pressure growers are under at this time of year, but good establishment is the cornerstone to a successful crop," said Trevor.

"To start, you'd look to meter the seed as accurately as possible so that the seed is consistently spaced. Most modern seed meters achieve high 90 per cent singulation, and growers should be targeting that.

"It's a pretty key element that will help farmers get off on the right foot. Some might not be seeing this level of singulation due to older equipment, incorrect equipment settings, or lack of maintenance.

"Yield loss due to poor singulation represents a significant potential profit drain for growers, and measures like basic upgrades and regular maintenance will help mitigate that risk.

"The seed then needs to be consistently planted at the right depth. The goal is to make sure the seed is in good moisture and is well pressed as issues that arise from shallow planting are often worse than deep planting.

"We want to conduct the planting operation without causing too much damage to the soil or over-compacting the seed. If we overpack that soil then it becomes really hard to get good soil and seed contact.

"You just have to plant what you can really well until the moisture runs out and then you stop. If you keep going and do a mediocre job of it, it then becomes a problem for every decision from then on whether it's irrigating, applying the herbicide, or applying insecticide.

Pacific Seeds recently launched a Best Practices for Planting Grain Sorghum Guide.



Trevor Philp, Pacific Seeds.

RoGators keep improving

TODD and Brooke Orrock bought their first RoGator self-propelled sprayer after an accident that involved an insurance company and the need for a quick changeover. There was a RoGator on a dealer's lot, 40 km away and Todd was always keen on the brand, so the deal was done.

When the family bought their second RoGator, it was no accident. In February they bought a RoGator 1300C for their 2400 hectare cropping farm near Murray Town, South Australia.

It is a family farm owned by Todd, his mum, Karen, and his wife, Brooke. Todd and Brooke's children, Sophie and Mitchell, also work in the business.

They grow wheat, barley, canola, beans, export hay and some lentils. The past three years have been tough with drought and late season frost, but even so they have managed to get crops. This season is looking better.

New technology

Todd says the things he liked about the first RoGator are still there, but the new model had enough new technology that it was worth updating. The Orrocks specified their RoGator 1300C with a 36 metre steel boom. Todd says he would have liked to go wider, but 36 metres fits with their tramlines, where the urea spreader is the limiting factor.

Along with looking after the family farm, Todd sprays for neighbouring farmers on contract. The contracting gives him an income, and it means he has newer gear for his own farm.

"We specialise in desiccation and fungicides in canola and beans."

He can do that because he invested in crop dividers and sprays tall crops without damage.

A lot to like

There are many things he likes about RoGators.

"I like the simplicity of the drive system and the stability of the booms. RoGators carry the boom really close to the axle, so they don't get a waggle up.

Stability also matters for accuracy. The Orrocks farm in undulating country, and keeping the nozzles at the right height mitigates the risk of drift.

Stability also minimises stress on the machine and the operator. The boom wings go back and reset during cornering, controlled by a ram that works as a big shock absorber.

Todd has to work in small paddocks, and the ability to spray folded up at 18.3 metres is another advantage.

The boom is divided into 35 sections. Every four nozzles have their own section. The nozzles are 250 mm apart.

The RoGator also has the ability to apply variable rates as prescribed by a map, but Todd does not use this feature.

Boom recirculation a must

Then there is the continuous boom recirculation.

"I am in love with it and it should be standard on every boom sprayer, especially for contractors changing brews every day."

He used to either park in a corner and prime up the boom, or else he did laps.

"It took 300 litres of product to ensure it was primed. Now I can prime on my way to the paddock and start as soon as I am in the gate. It cuts down the boom sprayer's hours."

Another advantage of boom recirculation is that left-over



Todd Orrock says the product recovery and boom recirculation of the new RoGator 1300C are amazing features.

product goes back into the tank. It keeps the boom clean with water, which minimises contamination and makes decontamination easy.

Todd describes the RoGator's suspension as like driving a big bean bag. "It has air suspension on the cab and boom. I have had major back surgery with discs removed. At the end of a day spraying, I get out and I am still able to walk. I couldn't do that with our old trailed sprayer. Comfort is good."

He usually drives at 25 km per hour and says it is smoother than going slower.

The RoGator 1300C has a 6300-litre tank. It does make for a heavy load, but Todd says for a self-propelled it is not overly weighty. He can carry less product if traction is an issue.

Its tank has automatic agitation. Agitation reduces as it empties to limit foaming.

The RoGator has a 60 km per hour road speed, which appeals to the contracting side of the business. Unfolding from transport mode is done with the push of one button.

Todd does not want to cart a trailer, so he uses the RoGator as its own batching plant and gets water where he is working.

He says his RoGator 1300C is more fuel-efficient than his previous one. Traction is also better with power to all four wheels. "It has a smarter drive that doesn't have to run at full revs all day. It matches the engine speed to the load.

"We had a wet block this year and the old one would have spun a hole. This one moved the drive between wheels and drove through it."

Easy operation is another benefit of the RoGator. Todd often sprays at night when the temperature has dropped, so this is a huge advantage.

"Maintenance is also easy. There are only two filters on the spraying side, so cleaning out is a breeze."

Todd bought his RoGator 1300C directly from Croplands. He says they are good to deal with and he is lucky to have an agent just 40 km away.