


MacDon

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PERFORMANCE

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FEARLESS.
MACDON'S FLEXDRAPER®
HAS HELPED CURE MATT
BIRKY'S DISLIKE OF
HARVESTING SOYBEANS.

WE ARE FAMILY.
MACDON CELEBRATES
65 YEARS OF SUCCESS
WITH THE PEOPLE WHO
HELPED GET THEM THERE.

EARLY ADOPTER.

ONE OF THE FIRST CONTRACT WINDROWER
OPERATORS IN AUSTRALIA, WARREN ROBERTS WAS
EARLY TO DISCOVER THE CHARMS OF MACDON.

WARREN ROBERTS

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MacDon® PERFORMANCE

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ONE OF THE FIRST
CONTRACT WINDROWER
OPERATORS IN AUSTRALIA,
WARREN ROBERTS WAS
EARLY TO DISCOVER THE
CHARMS OF MACDON.



EARLY ADOPTER.



With almost 20 years in the business, not many custom harvesters in Australia can claim as much swathing experience as Warren Roberts. In fact, swathing itself only really started to become popular in Australia in the late 70s, so when Roberts decided to sell his farm to start his custom swathing business in the mid 90s, he was in on the ground floor of the new profession.

“I originally drove headers (*In Australia a header refers to a combine*) and things for blokes, but I got into windrowers not long after that,” recalled Roberts from homebase near Charlton, Victoria, about 155 miles (250 km) northwest of Melbourne. “Back then when I first started, there weren’t many of us contractors about, but we’re quite common now.”

Continued

EARLY ADOPTER.

“MACDONS JUST RUN BETTER
AND IF YOU ARE A CONTRACTOR
THAT RELIABILITY IS IMPORTANT.”



A fencing contractor in the off-season, Roberts says that demand for custom harvesting in his part of Australia varies depending on how heavy the crop is. In a good year, his three swather operation can account for up to 30,000 acres (12,140 ha) of canola, cereal hay, alfalfa, straw and vetch, a low-growing legume popular for livestock feed and birdseed. But in years of drought like this one, many farmers choose not to windrow at all because the crops are too light and that directly affects his business.

"In big years and big crops, farmers don't seem to hesitate to windrow. But when it's light, they'll just go back to the direct cutting with their combines. It looks like there's going to be a lot of that this year."

According to Roberts, the 2014 growing season in Southern Australia has been particularly challenging with farmers faced not only with drought conditions, but low temperatures as well.

"It's been dry and we've had a lot of frosts over the last three weeks. We've also had no rain in that time. A lot of the crops are turning yellow in front of your eyes. Some of the canola around here is only six inches (15.2 cm) high and looks like its going to die."

As bad as things look this year, Roberts says that harvests like this are not uncommon in Victoria and that when demand for his services pick up again, he'll be ready with his two M150 and brand new M205 MacDon windrowers.

"I've got a 16 ft (4.9 m) R85 disc, two 30 ft (9.1 m) D60's and one 35 ft (10.7 m) D65 for the three windrowers," says Roberts. "It has to be sixteen years now that I've been running MacDons and I've had maybe seven or eight of them in that time. I'm pretty loyal to MacDon."

Roberts says that his loyalty is due primarily to the robust build of the machines.

"They're just a better machine. The fronts especially are very tough and sturdy (*In Australia a front refers to a header*). We put them through

a fair bit of hard work and they seem to be able to handle the tougher going and more hours than other machines."

"In a lot of cases, especially in vetch, we're not cutting on solid ground, but instead in sandy risings or heavy flats. That kind of ground is pretty hard going and it's easy to gum things up. We also find ourselves cutting a lot of trash from the crop the year before such as a heavy weed stubble or clogs of straw from the sowing. Those kind of conditions can be hard on most windrowers, but whatever the challenge, these MacDon drapers always seem to handle it."

"DURING HARVEST WE LIKE TO RUN 24 HOURS A DAY, ESPECIALLY ON THE CANOLA."

In addition to their ability to handle tough conditions, Roberts also likes that his D Series draper headers give him the ability to adjust reel position and reel speed to crop conditions.

"In some fields you might have to have three different settings in one pass. Being able to have that kind of control of the header from the cab really saves us time."

With his children still a bit too young to join him, Roberts employs up to six people to help him with his operations year round.

"Usually I have one to two full-timers to help out with the fencing and hire another four men during windrowing season. During harvest we like to run 24 hours a day, especially on the canola. Having six operators allows us to run two shifts with the three machines."

Roberts says that because he cuts fields in roughly a three hour radius around Charlton, the extra hands are also helpful when it comes time to move from contract to contract. For

shorter journeys they typically load the header onto a flatbed and drive the swather to the job. However, for longer commutes they drive the swather up onto the flatbed and tow the header behind in a carrier.

"We can move pretty quick. The boy's average is about 100 hours a week in the machines, not all of that sitting though, as that includes moving time. I think these new 5 Series models with their cab suspension should be more comfortable for them, both in the field and on the road and that's good."

But Roberts says he doesn't want his guys getting too comfortable behind the wheel, as a couple of years ago one of his hires fell asleep and drove the swather into a tree plantation.

"The collision shoved him out of the seat and into the windscreen; that woke him up. Luckily he was OK, but the front was a write-off. Still, the tractor survived great. Like I said, they're pretty tough machines."

It's that toughness that helps keep MacDon the swather of choice for custom harvesters in Victoria, says Roberts.

"I think other machines tend to wear out after about 2000 hours, at least that's what other contractors are telling me. In the last few years, they've all seemed to convert to MacDon. They say they're making the change because MacDons just run better and if you are a contractor that reliability is important."

Roberts, of course, isn't surprised by MacDon's increased popularity with others in his profession.

"They're just catching up to something I found out quite a few years ago."

A man in denim overalls and a grey long-sleeved shirt stands with his hands in his pockets next to a large piece of agricultural machinery. The machinery is dark grey with a prominent yellow stripe. The brand name 'MacDon' and model 'FD75-D FLEXDRAPER' are printed in white on the side. Safety warning icons are visible on a panel above the man. The background shows a clear blue sky and a wooden structure.

MacDon
FD75-D FLEXDRAPER

FEARLESS.

MACDON'S FLEXDRAPER® HAS HELPED CURE MATT BIRKY'S DISLIKE OF HARVESTING SOYBEANS.



“I USED TO JUST DREAD BEANS.”

It's not an admission you would expect from someone who makes their living cutting soybeans for other farmers, but it's one that Illinois based custom cutter Matt Birky freely makes.

“You always knew you were going to have to stop, I don't know how many times,” said Birky from his home near Champaign-Urbana. “With soybeans you're always dragging in the dirt, hitting a rock or breaking a section.”

Birky, who runs On Track Farming with his father Don, says that his feelings about cutting beans have changed significantly since they started using MacDon FlexDrapers about seven years ago.

“We used to run traditional flex heads on our Lexion Combines, but this one year the dealer happened to have a FlexDraper® left on his lot that was set up for a Lexion and we thought we'd give it a try. Our plan was to run one of our Lexion Combines with a traditional flexhead and the other with the MacDon.”

“My dad was the first to start with that MacDon and even before I got to the field he was calling me to see if we could get another one. He was that impressed with what he was seeing.”

Fortunately, more units were available and the Birky's currently have three 45 ft (13.7 m) FlexDrapers running on Lexion Combines.

“MY DAD WAS THE FIRST TO START WITH THAT MACDON AND EVEN BEFORE I GOT TO THE FIELD HE WAS CALLING ME TO SEE IF WE COULD GET ANOTHER ONE. HE WAS THAT IMPRESSED WITH WHAT HE WAS SEEING.”

“We were just so impressed with the FlexDraper® over what we were using at the time. The biggest difference between those two heads that first year was that we could always run a mile an hour faster with that MacDon than we could with the traditional flex head.

Continued

FEARLESS.

Birky says that this difference in speed was due primarily to the smooth and even feeding of the draper.

"It just lays the crop straight back and gentle onto the draper and delivers a nice even ribbon into the feeder house. The combine runs smoother and quieter because it's not surging. As such we're able to run it right there at the 99% of max at all times."

Birky says that each year On Track Farming is responsible for cutting about 23,000 acres (9,308 ha) of corn and soybeans a year, so the increase in capacity alone warrants the switch to FlexDrapers. He also says that MacDon FlexDrapers have other benefits for his operation, including an ability to adapt on the fly to changing field conditions.

"WE SEE IT ALL, 30 INCH BEANS, FIFTEENS AND DRILLED. EVERY PLANTING HAS ITS CHALLENGES BUT THE FLEXDRAPER® CAN TAKE IT ALL. EVEN IN MUDDY CONDITIONS AND STANDING WATER THOSE HEADS WILL JUST FLOAT RIGHT OVER."

"We really like being able to adjust the header pitch on the go to different conditions, like if the beans are podded to the ground or if it's a little bit rocky. Now I'm sure maybe some people will just set the pitch and leave it, but we find we probably adjust the head maybe fifteen times in 80 acres (32 ha). I've run other heads since then that don't have this feature and you feel like 'oh, man you need to pitch it back in here,' but you can't do it. I just couldn't imagine not having that capability now."

Another thing that has really impressed them is the ability of the FlexDraper® to cut low and still avoid damage from rocks and debris.

"With our old headers we used to get out of the machine four or five times a day to repair the sickle and guards, whereas now we only get out maybe once. We've run just about

every brand there is and it just seems that these guards hold up a lot better."

"But it's the flotation on these headers that's really amazing," adds Birky. You can go to the end of the head and lift it with your pinky, really. When you hit a rock with this header you barely catch it. Even with a small rock the header just jumps over it and right back down. You'd think it was electronic or something."

According to Birky, flotation like this has come in handy tackling the wide range of conditions that they harvest in.

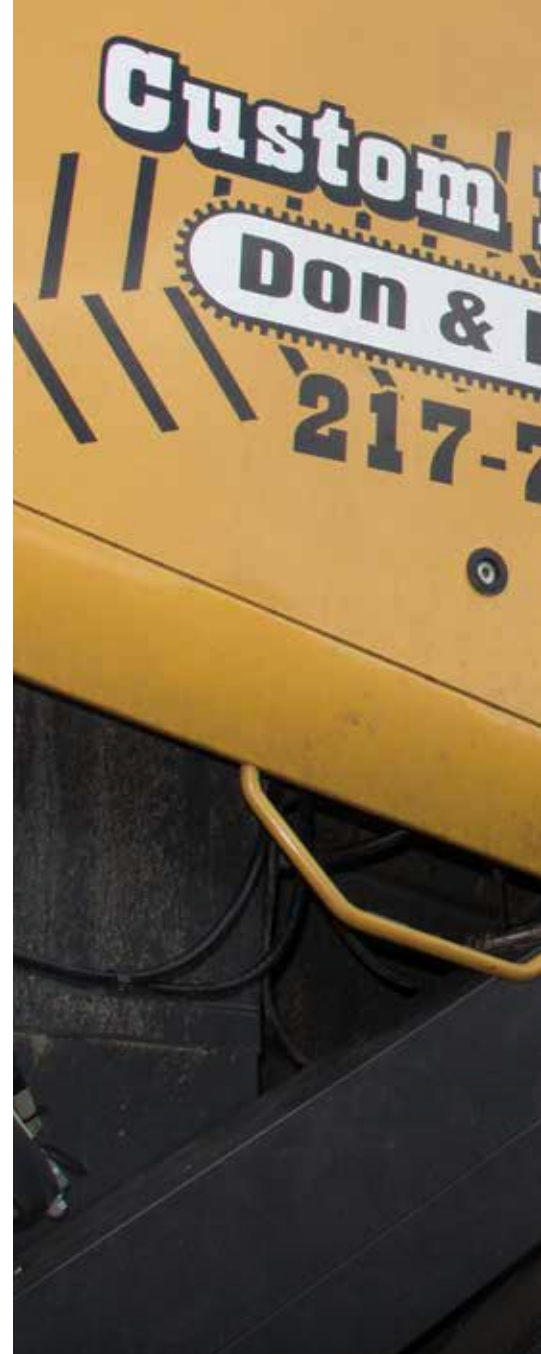
"We see it all, 30 inch beans, fifteens and drilled. Every planting has its challenges but the FlexDraper® can take it all. Even in muddy conditions and standing water those heads will just float right over; you don't even realize

how bad the conditions are. It's definitely the most universal head for beans."

"Another big thing is when we're in double crop beans behind the wheat. We used to have a terrible time cutting those with a traditional head because they would just kind of pile-up on the sickle. However with these FlexDrapers we just go in and scoop them up."

But where that flotation shines, says Birky, is when the moisture gets high, early in the morning and late in the evening.

"As soon as that sun goes down, you're dragging. I know that's everywhere, but our dirt is very black and rich and that means that we're usually dragging real bad with a regular flex head. Now with these FlexDrapers we can usually start earlier and cut an hour or two later just because they pull across the ground so easily."



Birky says that the mechanics of the FlexDraper® concept usually "blows peoples' minds" when they first see it and that many of his customers want to ride along for a few passes just to see them working.

"Anytime they get in with you they're carefully watching behind the head to see what's coming out or what it's missing. And they're always impressed with the job it's doing and the speed you're running."

But he says what impresses his customers most is how the FlexDrapers typically recover more beans than they usually get with their own equipment and those are dollars right back in the farmer's pocket.



Matt Birky

"In the best conditions, I say that we're probably getting 2 to 2.5 bushels an acre more. Even at today's low prices that can mean maybe 20 dollars more an acre and that's a lot. If you factor in the fuel costs if they did it themselves, that can be enough to pay for the harvest."

Birky says that his FlexDrapers even give him the confidence to take on jobs that have defeated his customers.

"We once helped out this hog farmer who put a lot of manure on one of his fields. The result was some of the tallest, toughest cutting beans we've ever seen. The stems were still green and

tough as all get out. He tried to do it himself but he only got 50 yards (45.7 m) into the field before he had to give up. So he had us come in and even though we had to drive slower, we never had a problem; we were able to get that crop for him. That was definitely one situation where those heads were what got us there."

Stories like that not only show how much Birky's attitude towards cutting beans has changed, but also how Birky's FlexDrapers are helping change attitudes about custom cutters in the area. Apparently, some people are a bit skeptical that a custom harvester can care as much about doing a good job as the farmer that hires him.

"Around here whenever anybody used to think of a custom harvester they'd think it was about quantity over quality," says Birky. "But we've always tried to do the best job we can because we want to do the same customers year after year. These heads have helped us prove that we can not only do as good a job, but often a better job. Thanks to them we've got a pretty good reputation that follows us now."

WE ARE FAMILY.



MACDON CELEBRATES 65 YEARS OF SUCCESS WITH THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED GET THEM THERE.

This year marks the 65th Anniversary of MacDon, a significant achievement for any company. But when you consider how fierce the competition has been in the agricultural industry over those 65 years and how many once dominant brands are no longer with us, it makes the achievement that much more remarkable.

So what has been MacDon's secret? How has it survived and grown when so many others haven't? For anyone familiar with MacDon's history one might point to the many harvesting innovations it has helped usher in. After all, MacDon was at the forefront of the swathing revolution in the early 1950s when it introduced one of the world's first self-propelled windrowers. It was also the first to advance the use of draper heads on combines, as well as the first to reinvent the flexible header when it introduced the

"At MacDon we've always known that our products have to be measurably better if we are to compete with the larger brands out there," said Giesbrecht. "But it is our process in how we get to making better products that is the real secret to MacDon's longevity and that process is fueled by the family culture that permeates everything that we do at MacDon."

Giesbrecht says that the concept of family at MacDon goes much deeper than the fact that the Company has always been family owned, first by the Killbery Family during the 1950s and 1960s and then the MacDonald Family thereafter.

"When we think of MacDon's family, we not only think of it including all of our employees and their families, we also think of it including our suppliers, dealers and our customers as well. And like any family, we are at our best

"WHEN WE THINK OF MACDON'S FAMILY, WE NOT ONLY THINK OF IT INCLUDING ALL OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES, WE ALSO THINK OF IT INCLUDING OUR SUPPLIERS, DEALERS AND OUR CUSTOMERS AS WELL."

FlexDraper®. But for Gary Giesbrecht, President and CEO of MacDon, innovative technologies like these are too easy an answer.

when we're listening to each other, learning from each other and working together to common goals."

Giesbrecht points to a product like the FlexDraper® as an example of how MacDon is constantly listening and learning from its customers and dealers.

"The FlexDraper® is the direct result of us responding to one of our customers who believed that a flexible draper could be superior to anything then available for harvesting soybeans. We listened to him, made the investment in R&D and now this product is revolutionizing harvesting worldwide."

"Stories like that have been the key to MacDon's success; how we work hard to give our customers what they tell us they need, and not what we think they need. A lot of companies find that approach difficult, but it is something that everyone at MacDon takes a lot of pride in."

To celebrate MacDon is holding a number of events large and small to help celebrate its 65th Anniversary. One such occasion was the 65th Anniversary and Dealer Meeting held May 8th and 9th for MacDon Australia. Another was MacDon Family Day held September 13th for all employees and their families from MacDon's Winnipeg facility. There is also an event planned in November for the MacDon Dealer Family and our Owners Circle Group in Nashville, TN.

"Events like these are an opportunity to say thank you to people who've played an important part in our success and show how much we appreciate them being part of our family."



MacDon's Family Day held September 13, 2014 at Tinkertown in Winnipeg, MB, was filled with fun, food and music.

THANK YOU!



How do you say Thank You for 65 years of Harvesting Performance?
...By rewarding all the hard working folks who helped get you there, that's how.

Hurry, this is a limited time offer. See your local MacDon Dealer for details.

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\$1650 OFF 2015
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\$1650 OFF ANY NEW
PULL-TYPE
MOWER*

On New MacDon A Series or R Series
Pull-Type Mower Conditioners.



*These offers are only available in North America until December 31, 2014. Orders must be Paid in Full by December 31, 2014 to qualify. Some products may be subject to availability.
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