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ARGO Tractors is the tractor engineering and manufacturing division of **ARGO SpA**.
AgriArgo UK is the distributor of **McCormick** brand tractors in **Great Britain**.

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New McCormick scraper tractor handles field work too for Somerset dairy unit

- McCormick CX-L supplied to special order by dealer Read Agriservices
- Combines small tractor manoeuvrability with bigger tractor performance
- Small enough for cleaning cubicle housing, big enough for field work

With as many as 500 cattle housed over winter, and half of those usually remaining indoors year-round, keeping the animals fed and comfortable results in a pretty demanding daily workload for Somerset dairy farming brothers Ben and Nick Hutton and their staff.

The 300-cow herd is the main enterprise on the 600-acre farm at Witham Friary near Frome and when the long-serving two-wheel drive scraper tractor proved no longer up to the job, the brothers decided something more substantial and versatile was needed.

“We wanted four-wheel drive to cope with a slippery slurry ramp on a tractor that could easily make the 90deg turns at the end of our cubicle house passageways,” says Ben Hutton. “But we also wanted a tractor big enough and man enough to handle some field work.”

The tractor that meets those requirements – a 70hp McCormick CX-L – is an uncommon sight on UK farms.

In fact, despite buying a McCormick X60.40 tractor soon after local dealer Read Agriservices took on the franchise last year, Ben and Nick looked at other makes because the McCormick line did not appear to offer what they wanted.

“But the other tractor makes we looked at just didn’t have the combination of size and strength we were looking for,” says Ben Hutton. “Then Reads’ salesman Brian Yeates suggested we look at the CX-L.”

The McCormick CX-L is more commonly seen on upland farms in Italy, Austria and Germany where strength and stamina is required in combination with good stability and manoeuvrability.

Brian Yeates recalls: "We all realised it is just the sort of tractor the Huttons were looking for and since it's not a regular model in the McCormick line-up offered in Britain, distributor AgriArgo agreed to bring one in on special order."

According to Ben Hutton, everyone on the farm has taken to the machine: "It's a nice, easy tractor to drive," he says. "It's agile with good visibility and a nice cab, and despite being quite small it's built with the strength of a bigger tractor."

The CX70-L is one of three models available in a range that spans 70-80hp. A compact 3.3-litre four-cylinder Yanmar diesel engine helps keep the centre of gravity low, as well as the bonnet line, which results in good forward visibility.

Drive is through an ARGO Tractors Speed Five transmission, comprising three ranges, five gears, two-speed powershift and a creep ratio that give a total of 60 speeds forward and reverse. A power shuttle was chosen for the Witham Friary tractor over the standard synchro shuttle to make life easy when repeatedly shunting backwards and forwards on yard scraping duties.

"The tractor also has a special feature giving it the extra manoeuvrability that's needed when working in and around buildings," points out Brian Yeates. "When engaged using the 4wd selector dial, the Fast-Run mechanism makes the front wheels turn faster once steering angle exceeds 35deg, which pulls the front of the tractor round."

Combined with a tighter than usual 60deg steering angle, this can reduce the tractor's turning circle by 20-30%.

Ben Hutton says of the feature: "It works really well and makes a significant difference. We've several passages where you have to go through a tight right-angle turn and Fast-Run makes the tractor really manageable for its size."

When the new tractor is not busy in the cubicle housing and surrounding yard it takes on the role of a general purpose power unit for work such as chain harrowing and topping. It has also worked with a post driver on its 3.4 tonne capacity implement linkage.

Back in the cubicle house, Mr Hutton plans to use a sand bedding dispenser on the tractor, carrying it on a linkage 'A' frame so that it can quickly be swapped with the slurry scraper.

"At present we use a larger tractor with a loader on, which is awkward and also a nuisance when it's busy doing something else," he explains. "It will be handier having one tractor for scraping and bedding."

"For the outside work, it's more economical using the CX-L than one of the bigger, more powerful tractors we run," he adds. "Another plus is that it's not over-heavy – the standard tyres are quite big so the tractor has a light tread, and that's good on our heavy soils."

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McCormick CX-L – Ben Hutton 016a.jpg

Ben Hutton says the new McCormick CX-L at Manor Farm is small and manoeuvrable enough to work as a scraper tractor but also man enough to handle field work.



McCormick CX-L – Ben Hutton 019.jpg

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McCormick CX-L – Ben Hutton 011.jpg

The McCormick CX-L's heavy-duty front axle has built-in disc brakes, up to 60deg steering angle and Fast-Steer to pull the front of the tractor round for extra-tight turns.



McCormick CX-L – Ben Hutton 010a.jpg

The McCormick CX-L is pretty agile in the cubicle house so it handles both a manure scraper and a decent-sized sand dispenser for bedding cubicle.



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