PRESS RELEASE

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MICHELIN ULTRAFLEX TECHNOLOGY TYRES CAN HELP 'FEED THE WORLD', CONCLUDES HARPER ADAMS RESEARCH

An in-depth study into the impact of traffic and tillage on soil compaction has found agricultural machinery running low pressure Michelin Ultraflex Technology tyres could boost farmers' yields by 4 per cent, helping to 'feed the world' for years to come.

Harper Adams University – a specialist provider of higher education for the agricultural and rural sector – has been leading the investigation, utilising one site at its campus in Newport and another site in the USA in conjunction with the University of Illinois.

Paula Misiewicz PhD AMIAgrE, Senior Lecturer in Soil and Water Management, Harper Adams University, says: "Agricultural vehicles have got heavier and heavier over recent years and the impact that has on the soil can be severe. The aim of our investigation has been to find ways of alleviating compaction."

The study in Illinois was conducted over three years, using 290 hp tractors with Michelin Ultraflex Technology low pressure tyres and standard pressure tyres running in two fields.
"The results we saw in Illinois showed quite clearly that Michelin Ultraflex Technology tyres can help farmers to significantly reduce compaction and, in the process, boost their yields by 4 per cent in comparison to standard tyres," says Misiewicz.

The nine-year experiment at the Harper Adams site in Newport also compared the two Michelin standard and Ultraflex tyre set ups combined with controlled traffic farming together with zero tillage, shallow tillage and deep tillage techniques.

"While there were some benefits of using low pressure Ultraflex Technology tyres in all three systems over the nine years, it was with the deep tillage techniques where it really stood out. Here again we recorded around a 4 per cent yield improvement in comparison to conventional farm tyres," says Misiewicz.

Prof. Richard Godwin, Visiting Professor, Harper Adams University, says: "Whilst that improvement might seem small, when you think of it globally, it goes a very long way to help feed the world. Many people are worried about the sustainability of the human race, and if we could get these results for many different crops, it would make a huge impact in sustainability."

The study also found that any increase in the initial outlay for farmers purchasing Michelin Ultraflex Technology tyres over a standard tyre would be paid off within 12 months.

"Our analysis found that the payback period is about a year. And so effectively, once you have paid for your tyres in year one, you've recovered your investment, and typically farmers would be running those tyres for another five years or more," adds Godwin.

Michelin's Ultraflex Technology allows farmers to run their agricultural machinery at lower than standard tyre pressures, protecting the health of the soil by reducing the incidence of rut formation and ground compaction. As a result, air and water can penetrate the earth more freely, leading to improved soil conditions for maximum crop response.

Designed to cover the entire crop growing cycle, the full line-up of Ultraflex Technology tyres available in the UK and Ireland includes AxioBib, AxioBib 2, EvoBib, XeoBib and YieldBib tyres for tractors, CereXBib and CereXBib 2 tyres for combines and forage harvesters, FloatXBib for self-propelled spreaders, SprayBib fitments for high-clearance sprayers, plus TrailXBib and CargoXBib High Flotation tyres for trailers.

For more information, visit business.michelin.co.uk.

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