

Investing in the sustainability of research and development

CLAAS opens new validation centre

Harsewinkel, 28 March 2019. CLAAS has opened its new validation centre for the development of new agricultural machinery at the Harsewinkel site. Shareholders, group management, employees and guests from regional politics celebrated the inauguration of the building, in which EUR 15 million has been invested, including EUR 3.2 million of which is in pure testing technology.

“We stood here together in May 2017 to lay the foundation stone for the new validation centre,” said Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser, recalling the start of construction. “Twenty-two months later, everything is now ready and functional. We would like to thank all those involved from CLAAS and our service providers for this.”

CLAAS aims to achieve shorter development times for its combine harvesters, forage harvesters and tractors with the new building. Thirteen test cells can be used to simulate various forces encountered during harvests around the world. The tests on the electrically driven test rigs run 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“The technical specifications of the building are quite impressive,” says Dr Thomas Barreilmeyer, responsible for the engineering of all grain harvesting machinery. “For example, it has an installed cooling capacity of 1200 kW. This corresponds to the installed heating capacity of 120 single-family houses. But it is not only the technology that is important to us. A modern workplace should also be established for our employees.” As a result, modern offices for around 200 employees with attractive communication areas have also been created on the more than 7,000 m² of total floor space.

The largest test rig is superlative in terms of structural engineering, on which combine cutterbars up to 12 metres in length are tested for durability, among other things. “The foundation alone weighs 600 tons, was cast in one piece on site and is supported by air suspension. This is probably pretty unique in Europe,” Oliver Westphal, who is responsible for CLAAS validation centre in Harsewinkel, believes.

The electronics lab is no less impressive: the electronics of complete machines are assembled in cabinet-sized computer systems so that, for example, driver assistance systems can be tested in interaction with the other components. One combine harvester has 30 control units, so that up to 50,000 test cases per machine can be run fully automatically.

It is only when the laboratory tests have been successfully concluded that we are ready for the field, which even the best laboratory cannot yet replace entirely. This is where further tests are carried out with the aim of finally testing the reliability of the machines.

About CLAAS

CLAAS (www.claas-gruppe.com) is a family business founded in 1913 and one of the world's leading manufacturers of agricultural machinery. The company, with corporate headquarters in Harsewinkel, Germany, is the European market leader in combine harvesters. CLAAS is the world leader in another large product group, autonomously-driven forage harvesters. CLAAS is also a top performer in agricultural technology worldwide, with its tractors, agricultural balers and green harvesting machinery. The CLAAS product portfolio also includes state-of-the-art agricultural information technology. CLAAS employs around 11,000 workers worldwide and reported a turnover of EUR 3.8 billion in the 2018 financial year.