

Machinery and Technology

Big sprayer covers miles, acres fast

Key Points

- Truck sprayer has a 3,150-gallon tank and 150-foot boom.
- The operator can spray 600 acres in one fill; it takes four to five hours.
- There's no need for a water tender truck with large, speedy sprayer.

By LON TONNESON

RON and Curt Sylte have cut spraying down to size.

The Sylte brothers raise durum wheat near Williston, N.D. Last year, they had Sprayflex Sprayers, of Detroit Lakes, Minn., build them a sprayer from an International 7600 tandem axle truck. The sprayer has a 3,150-gallon stainless-steel tank and a 150-foot-wide boom.

Ron, who does most of the spraying while Curt plants, covers 600 acres in one fill with most of the products they apply. At operating speeds of 15 to 16 mph or more, he says he can easily spray 1,200 acres a day. If he goes for a third load, he can cover 1,800 acres.

The truck is a labor-saver, too. Ron fills the tank and mixes in the chemical at the farm headquarters and drives to fields spread out about 15 miles from the farm. He says he feels comfortable running the rig at about 45 mph on the road.

If the Syltes had a smaller sprayer, they'd probably have to hire someone to drive a tender truck to the field and keep moving to keep up with the sprayer. In northwest North Dakota, it's difficult to find someone to operate big farm equipment. Most qualified people are working in the oil fields and earning a lot more money than the farm could afford to pay, Ron says.

Due to all the oil truck traffic, Ron also tries to minimize the number of slow-moving sprayers, tender rigs and other equipment on the road.

Soil compaction isn't an issue with the big truck sprayer, Ron says. The sprayer weighs about 27,000 pounds empty, less than some high crop sprayers.

The ride in the field is comfortable, "like going down the highway," Ron says. He uses autosteer to stay on the right track and eliminate overlaps. Raven equipment controls application rates.

Sprayflex ordered the truck with a MaxxForce 13 engine, an Allison transmis-



A TRUCK WITH MUSCLE: This sprayer, built by Sprayflex Sprayers, bristles with power from its MaxxForce 13 engine.



BIG CAPACITY: The 3,150-gallon stainless tank holds enough burndown herbicide and water to cover 600 acres.

sion and a 2-to-1 drop box so that the truck can be operated efficiently at low speeds. They reprogrammed the cruise control to operate down to 5 mph.

The boom is light and strong. Sprayflex uses a patented aluminum box design. Boom bounce is minimal.

Clearance is adequate for the small grains, field peas and other crops common

in the western Dakotas. There are 24 inches between the ground and the bottom of the axle. Sprayflex replaced the truck's front axle with a high-rise axle and moved the rear axle back so they could mount larger tires and create the extra necessary clearance.

The sprayer is fuel efficient, using about 40 gallons of diesel fuel per 600 acres.

It cost about \$340,000, which is less than many other high-capacity sprayers.

The Syltes are on their second Sprayflex sprayer. They used to have a 2,000-gallon,



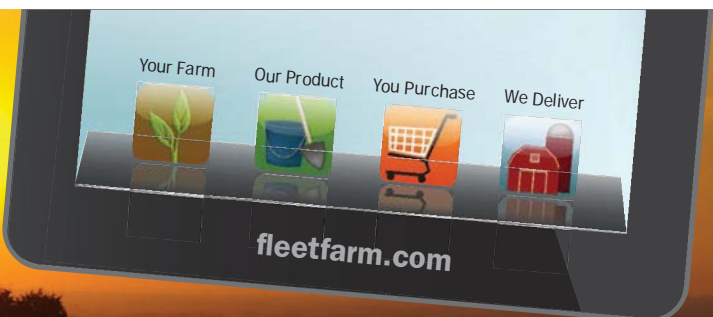
COMPACT FOLD: The 150-foot boom folds for transport.

120-foot model — the biggest Sprayflex made. The 3,150-gallon, 150-foot sprayer is said to be the biggest in the world. After one season, Ron can see that making the boom 15-feet longer would be a good idea. With a 165-foot boom, he could cover a width of 330 feet per round and spray a ½-mile-wide field (2,640 feet) in eight rounds and end up on the same side of the field where he started.

For more information, call Sprayflex Sprayers at 701-360-5544 or see www.sprayflexsprayers.com.

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