

Fendt Ideal 10T with Idealdrive:

# Bye bye steering wheel

Fendt's 10T combine tops the Bavarian range, rides on tracks and - along with 790hp - packs a novel option...

*What has tracks, big horsepower and no steering wheel? A Fendt 10T combine with Idealdrive.*



**T**he first four-wheeled motor vehicles took a logical approach to steering: they used a tiller. Since then we've preferred to steer with a wheel, and as vehicle weight and tyre contact patches bloomed, so power servo systems arrived. These did away with low gearing between the wheel and tyres, reducing arm-twirling and speeded steering response. Subsequently there have been variations on the servo theme, but the steering wheel has stayed resolutely planted in front of the driver.

Fendt has other ideas. In a combine the wheel and steering column are a particular pain; they limit view to the header intake, often encouraging the operator into a simian semi-crouch. So, AGCO engineers have simply - or rather not so simply - got rid of both. Instead there's a joystick for the driver's left hand. And as you might imagine, we were keen to see what it's like to use...

Settle into the 10T's seat and you can literally see the sense of deleting the wheel and column, as you can sit more upright and still monitor the



*Something's not quite right here...where's the steering wheel and column? And what's with the left-hand joystick?*

intake area. A new fold-up left armrest hosts the steering joystick while the right stick still handles travel direction, speed and the header. Otherwise the cab is unchanged. The new stick moves only side-side, with the rate of steering response proportional to both travel speed and steering angle. There's a left-right indicator rocker on top of it and at the front, buttons for dipped/main beam, the horn and field autosteer. Driving feels a little odd initially, but you soon discover that a light grip and controlled movements work best. It's simple to place the combine and then steer accurately along the crop edge, or as simple as you like to drive straight ahead: just let the joystick self-centre and the rear wheels do likewise. Autosteer is clicked in from a button on the front of the stick. And there's no need for frantic wheel-winding at headlands; Fendt reckons that Idealdrive (its moniker for the new system) cuts driver effort by 65%.

It also says that Idealdrive complies with all European legislation on the road. We did try roadwork briefly, finding that the stick's speed-



proportional response allowed safe travel at 40km/hr. We didn't get the chance to try emergency avoidance or maximum braking.

### MANly stuff

Power for the 10T comes from a 16.2 litre, six-cylinder D42 MAN diesel, knocking out 581kW/790hp (ECE R120) on PowerBoost. Rated speed is 1,790rpm and it's Stage V emission-compliant. Intake air streams in through two filters while the cooling fan reverses direction automatically every 10mins. Keeping the beast watered is a 1,250 litre diesel tank, with smaller and larger versions offered.

### Threshing changes

Although it tops the model range, the 10T uses the same 1.4m-wide chassis as its smaller siblings. Also like these, threshing is based on Fendt's established and direction-reversible Dual Helix rotors. Despite using this same basic architecture, Fendt says the

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The Ideal 10T is Fendt's new flagship combine
- ▶ 'T' stands for tracked
- ▶ A joystick replaces the steering wheel and column
- ▶ Joystick control is easy to learn and positively enjoyable

10T manages some 15% more output than a 9T. Changes to Idealbalance - a system able to compensate for up to 15° slopes - include 12% more concave area; two return pans feeding material full-width to the sieves; floor and sieves split into four sections rather than six, and a curved shape for the double-drop steps which lead material to the sieves. Header widths run from 10.7m to 12.2m. An interesting option we tried is the Geringhoff TruFlex Razor Air 40: a three-section flexible unit featuring an integrated air blast system aft of its cutterbars, designed to carry seed to variable-speed draper-type belts.

### Bottom lines

Idealdrive is offered for all Fendt's tracked combines. A basic Ideal 10T lists at £531,000 before VAT and less header, to which you'll need to add another £10,550 for joystick steering on the upgraded deluxe seat.

**Summary:** Banishing a combine's steering wheel and column makes perfect sense. Fendt's substitute joystick is easy to love and easily adapted to, particularly in the field. The sticky bit is its whopping option cost - an outlay that will take pretty major improvements in operator efficiency to justify.

Lucas Colman, Andrew Pearce

### DATA SHEET

#### Fendt Ideal 10T

##### Header

Fendt Superflow 12.2m or Geringhoff TruFlex Razor Air 40 or 45. Width 12.2m/13.7m.

##### Threshing

Two 4.84m x 0.60m axial rotors. Separation area 4.54m<sup>2</sup>

##### Cleaning

5.4m<sup>2</sup> sieve pan, two 2.05m<sup>2</sup> grain pans

##### Grain tank

Capacity 17.1m<sup>3</sup> discharge rate 210l/s

##### Engine

MAN D42. 16.2 litre, Stage V, 581kW/790hp (ECE-R 120). Fuel capacity 1,250 litres, AdBlue 180 litres

##### Drivetrain

Two-speed hydrostatic drive. Track widths 0.66m, 0.76m or 0.91m

##### Price

from £531,000

Manufacturer information

Familiar place, unfamiliar view (below). The new joystick has a rocker switch on top for indicators, plus front buttons for headlamp dip, horn and field autosteer (left).

