



SIP Silvercut Disc 340S FC mower conditioner:

Slovene scythe

When it comes to mounted mower conditioners there is no shortage of choice, and one firm fighting for your cash is SIP. While some may associate the Slovenian firm with old drum mowers, SIP has moved on in the world of machinery making, as we find out with our driving impression of the 340S FC

Mervyn Bailey

When Irish importer Farmec dropped off the SIP mower in the yard my father gave me that puzzled look and then asked 'where are this lot from?'. And it is probably a recurring question for many coming across the Slovenian manufacturer for the first time despite it producing machines since the late 1960s including some badge engineered grass kit for more recognisable names. Taking a fresh-faced approach, SIP started turning heads in Ireland last year when it was working at the FTMTA Grass and Muck event and a UK subsidiary has been established this summer.

Following on from our practical test of the Spider tedder (see profi 05/2017) we decided to see what the Silvercut Disc 340S FC has to



Looking down from the cab it is easy to see the pressure gauge for the suspension system and mechanical break-back. The rope for releasing the lock for transport and work could do with better routing.

offer. This is the larger of the two mounted mower conditioner models and confusingly despite the 340 tag it actually has a working width of 3.25m. The smaller model is the 2.90m Disc 300S FC.

It is probably best to start with coupling up to the mower, which is left unfolded when parked up. It uses Cat III pins and Farmec points out a taller parking stand is now available so the mower sits at a more ideal

The Silvercut Disc 340S FC is the widest mounted mower conditioner from SIP, dropping 3.25m on each pass.

height for larger tractors. The single-acting and double-acting pipes are stored in a simple bracket. The s/a pipe is used for pressuring the suspension to 150 bar and then isolating with a tap. The other two hoses are for raising and lowering and come with easy-turn restrictors to tailor oil flow. It would be useful if the hoses were marked for flow and return. A simple pull-down hoop holds the 1,000rpm, slip clutch protected pto shaft. A spring-loaded pin is used to hold the stand in place and works well.

A tug of a rope lifts the mechanical latch allowing the mower to continue rising from its in-field headland position to transport. After a day's mowing in several fields we did notice some paint flaking on the latch hook indicating some flexing in the steel. If you want to reduce the transport height the end guard can be manually folded. Simply insert the supplied peg into the lock to release it. This same approach is used for the front guard to access the mower bed. All of the drive shafts and gearboxes are sourced from Walterscheid.



Quick-fit blades are standard. The lever is not the most ergonomic chunk of steel but does its job and has a hook on the end for opening the eyelets to move the swathing boards.

Attaching/disconnecting the pto from the mower end of the pto is a tight operation and a little more space would make the job easier. In fairness SIP points out the pto is rarely removed and there is a guard plate underneath, which once removed should make the job easier. The eight-disc bed is made in house with the discs made from Hardox steel. Quick-fit blades are standard and the cover folds back enough for decent access. To protect the bed each disc has four dowels which shear when an obstacle is encountered, something SIP likes to call DDSS (Disc Drive Safety System). The conditioner has just the one speed (1,000rpm but there is the option of a reduction kit for 710rpm) and there are five positions for the baffle plate - we used the conditioner plate in position two in a decent yielding first cut. Equipped with nylon fingers the conditioner rotor measures 2.67m long and the hood is double skinned. Changing from a minimum 1.60m row to full width is done by loosening the eyelet bolts and swinging the doors open - this is done with the quick blade change tool which has a suitable hook on the end. Some form of marker would make it easier to marry up both sides if just wanting to go with wider rows. Despite not having three dimensional travel which we are starting to see being rolled out by other manufacturers the SIP's centre pivot did a good job of maintaining an even cut. It was only in heavy lodged crops where we had a little trouble but tilting the mower slightly got round this issue pretty well. When raised at the headland a secondary ram beside the pivot stabilises the mower and increases the height on the inside to give enough clearance over swaths.

Overall finish on the mower is good with even paint coverage on the edges; in fact it was hard to find fault here. SIP adds that as well as farm machinery it also manufactures and paints components for German car manufacturers. We

Data sheet

SIP Silvercut Disc 340S FC

Linkage	Cat III
Weight	1,180kg
Ground pressure	100kg (at 150 bar)
Transport height	3.65m
Working width	3.25m
Number of discs	Eight
Break-back	Mechanical
Conditioner	Five positions, nylon fingers, 2.67m wide
Swath width	1.60m-3.00m
Power requirement (min)	68kW/90hp
Hydraulics (F/R)	One s/a and one d/a
Price	€13,500 plus VAT

Manufacturer's information.

would like to see some form of connection between the front canvas covers and the sides, because once you fold into transport the flexible guard hits the rear mudguard and work lights - not ideal.

Coming from a farm which has been using trailed mowers for over 20 years there was some intrepidation in using a mounted mower. But the ability to quickly lift and reverse on headland corners as well as short ground was seen as a real plus point. Sweeping headland corners did take a little getting used to and the fears of poor ground following were soon forgotten about. Then there is the ease of moving on narrow roads.

Other details:

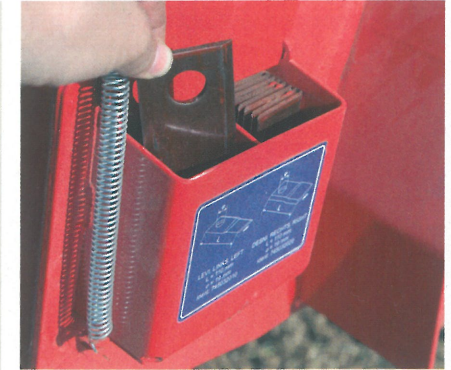
- There is no option of a hydraulic folding end guard
- Optional lighting kit is only for right side and costs €180
- Replacement skids are €25 each. Blades are €1.65
- A roller conditioner is available for leafy crops



Peg slots into the guard latch to release it but lacks on-board storage. Cuts in the canvas cover to access the latch look like they could create a weak point and continue tearing.



Four dowels shear if the disc hits something solid – giving individual protection. Replacement is a five-minute job once you have a 36mm socket. There is no need to remove the disc itself.



Spare blades are stored in this box behind the headstock. If it was slightly bigger the spare dowels could be stored here too along with the guard-releasing lock pegs.

- The blade change tool has a hook for slotting into the eyelets to alter swath width
- Front-mounted, rear butterfly and trailed disc mower conditioners are also part of the Silvercut range
- SIP has a two-year warranty as standard
- New canvas covers are left side €265, front €275 and right side €290
- All the bearings are sourced from SKF and the majority of steel is said to be either Hardox or Domex.

Summary: If our impression is anything to go by then it is time to lose the snob attitude to machinery made in Central Europe? If you removed the SIP name from our test mower there is not much to indicate this is not a machine from one of the more familiar Western Europe brands and is just as capable of mowing grass and conditioning. Indeed there are some genuinely nice detail touches.

Like any machine there are things which could be improved, but these are mostly little details such as more storage for the on-board tools and a better finish to the canvas guards. But Irish distributor Farmec points out the Slovenian manufacturer is quick to respond with simple tweaks to its design.

The mower folds over centre to 125° to help spread the weight but the right hand lift arm still looks to be carrying more of the weight.

