



Quicke QCS front loader control:

Digital loading

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The QCS system with Q-Companion terminal and QE joystick brings real driver assistance for repetitive work cycles. Photos: GE.

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At first spec glance, the Quicke QCS system will seem familiar, the new 'mechanical' QM-Command control working pretty much as you would expect of an existing Quicke loader joystick, albeit with enhanced ergonomics and ease of use. The electronic QE-Command version with the QCS joystick, however, is considerably more advanced, with a thumb-operated mini control that provides access to all of the key attachment controls. Just like the existing LCS Electrodrive system, entry-level variants of the company's new QCS joystick bring more standard features:

- Vibration damping/boom suspension on/off
- Push-button hydraulic attachment lock/unlock
- Bucket shake
- Third/fourth service on/off
- Float for both lift and tilt rams
- Two unused controls that can be assigned to other non-loader related functions.

A true assistant

This is just the start as the system gets more interesting when the QE-Command joystick is linked to a further new development, the

Q-Companion. This adds a display module, angle sensors on the boom and headstock plus oil pressure sensors. This enables the system to give dynamic weighing, an accurate position monitor, a service interval reminder and data recording.

QE-Command plus Q-Companion also adds:

- QMotion. Stores two boom and attachment positions, automatically restoring them as and when needed
- QRange. Limits lift, crowd and dump angles
- QEnds. Stroke cushioning when the rams extend fully into a pre-set position

- QShake. Used to set the intensity of the bucket shake
- It is possible for the operator to preselect the cycle speed of each loader function to smooth operation.

150 memories

Q-Companion will store up to five different operating modes for 30 different attachments. As a typical example, this will be useful when swapping between a bucket, shear grab, forks or whatever, as the empty loader weight and weighing position, cycle speeds and other features relative to the specific attachment are stored. This can also include attachment-specific settings for the QMotion, QRange and QEnds modes.

All of this may appear to 'over complicate' setting up a loader and attachment, but, with the aid of the display screen, all the features should be simple to set, the screen issuing various text prompts to guide you through the process, with all settings easily accessed via the joystick scroll wheel.

Once an attachment is set up, its operation will remain as previously set, so there's no need to repeat the process.



The multi-coupler works under pressure and has a rotatable fitting on the loader side.



The control equipment mounts on the loader crossbar (the guard is removed for the pic).

Loading impression

We had the chance to try the QCS system with a Q5L front loader on a Steyr 4145 Profi CVT tractor. The QE-Command joystick mounting position was determined by the tractor's armrest design, and it was a bit of a stretch to reach it comfortably. Despite this, the small, mini control was easy to 'thumb' in the right direction to control the attachment, even if it did lack a bit of resistance when returning to its 'neutral' position. This initially made it too easy to go beyond the point where you would want to stop a function. A firmer neutral detent would make the control easier to operate. But this is being picky. The overall control of the loader was precise.

As to Quicke's QCS system itself, automating certain loader functions, such as weighing loads, made using the loader extremely user friendly. We swapped between the stacking of wrapped bales to using a pallet fork and back again, the seamless swaps demonstrating the scope that QCS has to make front loader operation both easier and potentially more productive. It is an impressive system and one that's easy to like.

GOOD TO KNOW

- ▶ The Quicke QCS system offers digital loader operation and incorporates weighing and automated functions.
- ▶ Up to 150 separate memories can be stored for various attachments and operating conditions.
- ▶ Has Quicke set a new benchmark for tractor loader ease of use, application options and in-built weighing?



Angle sensors measure the position of the loader boom and the attachment. The data can then be stored and retrieved automatically.

Other details

- QCS can be fitted to older tractors, as it does not use ISObus
- The operator's manual can be accessed through the Q-Companion terminal
- QE-Command relies on electro-mechanical actuators to achieve its fully digitised proportional control
- The maker has increased the oil supply lines from 3/8in to 1/2in to boost flow
- As Quicke are OEM partners to Massey Ferguson and Valtra, Q-Companion is likely to be offered as a factory option.



Q-Companion provides numerous functions and plenty of memory space.

How much?

As an outline guide, an entry-level Q5L Value loader for a four-cylinder tractor is priced from £9,200. Order a Performance Pack – this includes a multi-coupler, third service and vibration damping – and this adds an extra £775. Hydraulic attachment lock is a further £515. To get the QCS system, with electronic QE-Command and Q-Companion, the buyer will need to find another £4,410. Not cheap, but, for those who do a lot of loader work and need accurate weighing, this premium should represent decent value.

Gottfried Eikel

Quicke

Precision loading



Taking the guesswork out of weighing

Operating from Hillfoot Farm in Perthshire, Alistair (Asty) Hynd runs the D.S. Hynd & Sons with his father and uncle as well as their fourth-generation family farm. The farm sits in 216 acres and produces arable crops alongside a herd of Simmental Cross, Limousin Cross and Shorthorn Cross cattle.

Running twelve Massey Ferguson tractors to assist with the constant lifting and loading of Barley, Potatoes, Turnips, Grass and Muck throughout the year, all with the requirement to be weighed.

"I read about a device that could be fitted to a loader to record weights and thought it would be a handy tool for the work we do," Asty explains. Purchasing a new loader, they fitted the Q Companion from Quicke to put it through its paces.

The load weighing system from Quicke gives the team accurate load measurements with each lift, as well as the benefit for instrument position information via the in-cab monitor. With the data from each lift being stored on the cloud and made available to the team via an app on their mobiles or on their desktop. "We can see how much we have lifted in a day or week and also compare time periods," Asty added.

Using it daily Asty has built a trust in the system confirming, "We have a driver who knows his trailer weighs 150 kilograms over. After loading 28 tonnes, 270 kilos with the Q companion it was confirmed with the trailer reading showed a 150-kilo difference. We could therefore agree that the correct amount had been loaded without the need for a weighbridge.

The safety and efficiency of labour is paramount to the business. "Before having the load weigher we used to guess the weight of the loads, weighing one bale and then assume that the others were

similar stopping short to prevent overloading," Asty explained. Being able to weigh each bale as it is lifted offers the team, real time, cumulative loading weights, so they can now load the maximum number of bales, saving time and fuel in tractor runs and ensuring his team are safe.

With many remote farms in the area "...being able to weigh each bale in the field and establish the price based on the per tonne rate gives both ourselves and the farmer the fairest and most accurate deal, without the need of a weighbridge trip," Asty confirmed. This is the same for the muck spreading where the team can confirm the loading weights against the GPS mapping, confirming the accuracy of the application across each field.

Back in the office the Asty and the team are able to monitor the efficiencies of each job and apply the data for future quotes. Asty explains, "I can look at the number of hours it takes to do a job and how many loads were needed to help me quote the next job. Each time I get a little more accurate as I evaluate the performance and efficiency of each job."

"Farmers are more analytical now; we need to be able to offer a transparent and friendly service that is backed up by hard data. With Q Companion I can show a farmer the app on my phone or email a job report. It's easy and can be done anywhere so it saves me and the business a lot of time and gives our clients more information about the work we do," Asty concluded.