



# Operator praises

Essex-based operator Paul Stebbing has been using a set of low drift Bickers air-inclusion nozzles designed and built by Ipswich-based sprayer repair specialist Dave Bickers. *Geoff Ashcroft* took a closer look at how they work.

From Willow Farm, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex operator, Paul Stebbing runs a 62ha farming business alongside a 300ha contract spraying workload for neighbouring growers.

To remain timely, he operates a 2009-model Househam AR3000 self-propelled sprayer, with a 24m boom. But, unlike many other sprayer operators, his nozzle choice is where convention has been thrown out of the window.

### Farm Facts

**Business:** Willow Farm, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex

**Cropping:** 62ha of combinable crops farmed, plus 300ha of contract spraying

**Soil types:** From clay loams to lighter coastal soils

**Sprayer:** Househam AR3000 with 3,000 litre/24m boom

On the sprayer's five-nozzle holders, you'll find a Bickers 04 short air induction nozzle designed and manufactured by Ipswich-based sprayer repair specialist Dave Bickers.

"I've been running the one set of Bickers' red 04 nozzles since 2009," explains Paul Stebbing. "It has become my 'go to' nozzle – it carries a three-star LERAP status, and the jug tests for the sprayer MoT reveal they just don't seem to wear out."

He stumbled across the locally-sourced nozzle while having his sprayer serviced by Ipswich-based independent firm, For Sprayer Repair, run by NSTS-approved sprayer tester Dave Bickers.

"Dave told me he was working on a new type of air-inclusion nozzle that would have a short body design and be very easy to clean," he recalls. "So, I asked him for a set and I've never looked back."

That was in 2009, and since then, Mr Stebbing has sprayed tens of thousands of acres using an 04 version of the Bickers nozzle.

"In this area of Essex, which does suffer from some challenging weather conditions that roll in from the English Channel, these nozzles have provided a massive improvement in productivity, spray quality and application accuracy, by helping to reduce drift. Switching to the low drift nozzles has also increased capacity.

"If I wasn't using these nozzles, made by Dave Bickers, I wouldn't have half as many spraying days available to me," he says.

### Air inclusion nozzles

Paul Stebbing also operates with two air-inclusion nozzles – the red 04 Bickers joins a GuardianAir 05. He compliments these with Lechler 03 and TeeJet 04 flat fans, plus a Hypro fertiliser nozzle.