

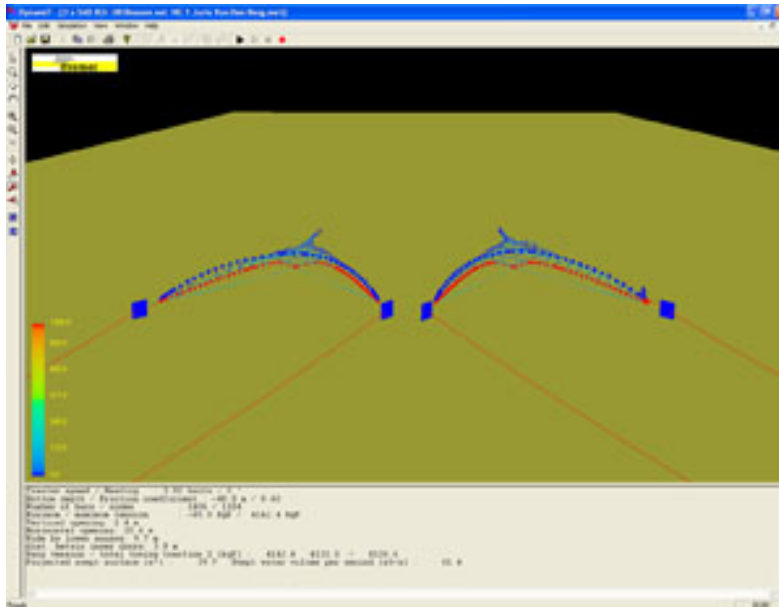


A PAIR of double bosom nets from Danish netmaker Nordsø Trawl has helped the Dutch-owned and German-flagged beamer NG-1 slash fuel costs and stay fishing with her outrigger trawls. Cees van den Berg of the Urk-based family-run company tells FNI that NG-1 had been fitted out with a pair of outrigger trawls to replace her beam trawl gear. He reports that they had adjusted their old trawls to improve the performance.

However, by September last year, they had got them working as well as they could. He tells FNI: "We wanted to expand this further. So, we spoke to Flemming Ruby at Nordsø Trawl and his Dutch agent Arjaan Willeboordse to see what they could come up with – and the result was double bosom gear." The trawler fishes mainly flatfish and, while the old nets had spreads of 18 to 19 metres, the new Nordsø Trawl gears spread to 21 metres each side with a pair of 80 in. Perfect doors towed from each derrick. "For a week we fished with one of the new trawls one side and an old one on the other. We were able to see a big improvement in performance straight away, outperforming the old nets by 25%." The Nordsø Trawl double bosom trawls are made with a false fishing line and, in the centre of what would otherwise be the bosom, is a spike of netting extending as far forward as the square does in the top panel.

Says Cees van den Berg: "We were straight away catching more plaice and turbot, as well as some sole, although not as much as we would like to see, while burning approximately one-third of the fuel the boat used fishing with beam trawls. So, this has come out very well." He comments that, with the additional 25% in catch, this has become acceptable financially and the boat's finances are similar to what they were before fuel started to rise in price. "We tow with one net 15 to 20 metres behind the other to keep them clear of each other, especially in a turn. We can fish in weather up to a Force 7 and there's no problem handling the gear. "The nets are linked directly to the doors and, now that we have been using this gear for a year and a half, there's no problem in getting the gear on board." He tells FNI that from the outset one of the main aims was to develop gear that would burn 65% less fuel compared to beaming – and this

has been achieved. "The only thing missing is the sole in the catch. But our running costs in gear repairs are only a fraction of what they were with beam trawls." He comments that one reason to stick with the outrigger trawls was that, under the German flag, they had 206 days at sea. With beam trawls this would have been limited to 132 days. He adds that the crews were initially sceptical, expecting to see their earnings fall. But, with the lower running costs, they have come out of this well and are now more positive about the outrigger trawl method.



A DynamiT screenshot showing a simulation of NG-1's double-bosom trawls with their false fishing lines



Fishing gear on NG-1's deck.

Cees van den Berg and his family operate the Dutch beamers UK-243 and UK-61, as well as

German flagged outrigger trawler NG-1 and the NG-2/NG-4 pair team which had been fishing together for cod off the Danish coast last year. "They did very well on cod last year, until we were forced to stop and overran our quota. This didn't happen on purpose and we had to buy quota to cover what we had taken over quota." Now, these boats are being fitted out for other fishing. "NG-4 is being fitted out for shrimping as the German shrimp fishery is not regulated and there is still space for us. "We're looking at fitting out NG-2 for crab fishing but, for that, we would have to fit tanks," he says.

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