

New Ways To Fill Center Pivot Tracks



The "Gadget" is a 77-ft. long rig equipped with 17 tires and a 14,000-lb. packer on back. Machine's center section has four large tires that can be raised and lowered to pre-form the soil into a hump.

Custom Rut Filler Business Minimizes Crop Damage

Robert Hittle of Liberal, Kansas, has a thriving custom business filling in center pivot wheel ruts on alfalfa and grass - using a home-built machine that lets him fill in ruts without damaging the crop.

"Conventional rut fillers use discs that penetrate deep into the soil and cut off alfalfa roots, killing the plant. My machine shaves only the top 3 in. of soil without killing the plant. By the following summer the crop has grown back so much you can hardly even tell where I've gone," says Hittle.

Hittle uses a Deere 8410 MFWD tractor to pull the hydraulic-operated machine, which he calls the "Gadget." It's 77 ft. long and is equipped with 17 tires and a 14,000-lb. packer on back. The machine is built around an old road grader frame. Its center section has four large tires that raise and lower and are used to pre-form the soil into a hump. A single semi-tire runs over the hump to pack it down, followed by the packer which packs the hump into a dome shape. A harrow section then smooths out any ridges that form between the rig's dual wheels.

If soil erosion is a problem, a second machine equipped with a trailer is used to bring more soil into the field and build an even bigger hump over the rut. The trailer holds 22 yards of sand and has a live floor to unload the material out a hole in the middle of the floor and another one at the back. There are two harrows under the trailer - one in the middle and one under the back end - to smooth out the dirt. A scraper blade hooked on back of the trailer then catches all the extra dirt and makes the hump. Blow sand taken



If soil erosion is a problem, this machine is used to bring more soil into the field and build an even bigger hump over the rut. The trailer on it has a live floor to unload the soil, which is then formed into a hump by scraper blade on back.

from fence rows works best for fill.

"Both machines are built heavy and ride on dual semi truck axles and wheels for reduced compaction," says Hittle. "I've used this equipment for seven years and have been improving on it all the time. I've worked for farmers up to 150 miles away and have done as many as 70 circles in one winter. Over the years I've put on at least 8,000 miles. I carry a 150-gal. fuel tank with a hose reel on the side of it, so when I'm on the road I can fill up with diesel in towns that I travel through.

"It usually takes me 4 to 5 hours to complete an 8-tower field. I charge \$110 per hour for the Gadget. I've also done several wheat fields over the years. I charge \$95 per hour for the dirt trailer. I don't use the Gadget in corn or milo fields because the residue plugs the machine up. However, I'm now building a machine designed to work in corn, milo, and wheat stubble."

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Trailer-Type Rut Filler

Last issue we told you about Brian Hoffner's center pivot rut filler. Unfortunately, there was a mix-up on the photos. The correct photo is at right.

Hoffner made a cart out of an old road sand and salt spreading trailer which he bought from a local state highway maintenance department. The machine, which holds about 10 tons of material, has a 16-in. wide conveyor at the bottom to drop material onto the fan. The sides slope in to the conveyor, so it empties out completely.

He stripped off the spreader fan and then turned the box around on the trailer so he could see the opening from the tractor seat. Then he added a 2-ft. long flange on each side of the drop opening. "The flanges direct material into the tracks. I made them adjustable, so I can open or close them to fill narrow or wide tracks," Hoffner says.

"It's become a small sideline business for me. I can use whatever material people want,



Jace Agee recently built this 10-wheel semi trailer rut filler. It holds 22 yards of material and can travel at highway speeds.

Center Pivot "Rut Filler"

A new "rut filler" fills deep ruts with pea gravel or small crushed rock.

The machine, which is available for purchase or rent, is designed to be pulled by any tractor with at least 130 hp. It consists of a wagon with sloping sides that rides on dual wheels all the way around. There's a hydraulically-operated, 16-in. wide door at the bottom center bottom part of the wagon, with a steel compactor plate underneath and behind it. There are also a pair of steel skids on each side of the door that are positioned about 10 in. off the ground in transport position. A pair of hydraulic cylinders are used to raise or lower the entire wagon as needed.

To fill a rut you lower the wagon so the skids just touch the ground, then open the door and drive forward. The rig fills the tracks perfectly full, as fast as you can drive around the field.

The box holds about 10 tons of rock.

"It does a nice, neat job. The operator has total control over the material at all times," says Jace Agee, A.G. Products, Inc., Alamo, Nevada. "Other belly-dump machines on the market don't have any control over how the material is spread. The hydraulically-operated door on our machine allows you to drive up to a pivot and shut the door, then raise the machine and turn around and drive over to the next track without making a mess. If you want, you can even overfill the track which can help prevent erosion on sidehills. It also works great for filling ruts on roads that lead out to the center pivot, and for filling gullies in fields.

"We've been renting out a prototype model for about six years, charging about \$100 per day, and our customers keep asking us to come back year after year."

Agee also recently built a 10-wheeler semi tractor trailer rut filler with a capacity of 22 yards. It works on the same principle as the



Hydraulic-operated door at back of trailer has a steel compactor plate underneath it.



Agee's original center pivot rut filler has duals all the way around and lowers to the ground to fill ruts.

other machine but is much larger and can travel at highway speeds.

"It lets me haul material in from a long distance and also spread it with the same machine, without having to move the material twice," says Agee. "It eliminates the need to haul material in and stockpile it."

Agee charges \$80 per hour for work with the bigger machine.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, A.G. Products, Inc., HCR 61, Box 52, Alamo, Nevada 89001 (ph 866 226-0463 or 775 729-2620; fax 775 729-2621; website: www.hayhandler.com).



TrackPacker can be adapted to 30, 36, and 38-in. wheel spacings.

Track Packer

Nebraska farmer Dan Gillespie built the TrackPacker, a rut filler that mounts on front of a tractor and packs irrigation pivot tracks in one pass. Disc gangs move the displaced soil back to the track where it's packed twice into the bottom of track.

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Cart's opening is in front so tractor driver can see material as it discharges.

from gravel to sand or soil," he says. "Gravel allows better drainage away from the wheel track, so ruts aren't as likely to form. I've found that if ruts are deep, I can fill them about two-thirds full with gravel and then the field can be tilled without disturbing the gravel base."

He charges \$30 per 10-ton load to fill ruts.

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Inventor says the Track Tamer is an easy way to fill ruts.

Track Tamer

This patent pending implement has adjustable rotating blades for filling tracks. It uses tractor's hydraulics to make the adjustments. Cutting edges are replaceable.

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