



He Turned 24-Row Drill Into 28-Row Drill

When Ross Lay decided he wanted a bigger drill than the 15-ft. no-till Deere he was using, he looked at a couple different options and decided neither was workable.

"In our operation, a 20-ft. drill would have limited maneuverability in transport, plus we couldn't justify the expense," says the Litchfield, Ill., farmer. "There is a commercial kit available that adds two rows to each side, but you have to move disc openers around so spacings are 10 in. We wanted to retain 7 1/2-in. spacings."

So Lay used 7 1/2-in. lengths of 4 in. sq. tubing to extend the frame the disc openers mount on, adding 2 1/2 ft. to the overall width of the drill. He simply welded the tubing onto the existing frame, then welded plates onto the tubing so he could mount

disc openers.

Four new Deere disc openers were purchased for about \$550 apiece.

Lay simply pulled seed metering tubes out far enough to supply the new openers on the outer ends. He added metering tubes to supply the openers on the inner parts of the extensions. He had to move the seed rate adjustment lever to a spot on the side of the box to make room for the additional tubes.

"We made the conversion a year ago last spring and it works great. We've got four more rows than we had before," he says. "And we can go anywhere we could before."

Out-of-pocket expense was about \$2,500. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ross Lay, Route 16 East, Litchfield, Ill. 62056 (ph 217 532-3890).

4-Row Weed Whacker May Cut Chemical Costs

"Whacking weeds" between corn and soybean rows with a field-size string trimmer may be a cost-effective way to reduce herbicide use and eliminate cultivation, according to a USDA researcher who's been testing the idea.

"In no-till, we've been using the string trimmer instead of follow-up herbicide applications. In conventional tillage, we use the string trimmer instead of cultivation," says Bill Donald, at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He's been researching the idea for four years. "Yields have remained comparable to our weed-free checks and we believe this method can significantly reduce potential chemical and sediment runoff into streams, wetlands and wells."

On test plots, a push-type DR trimmer is used twice in both corn and soybeans planted in 30-in. rows.

The first mowing comes after banding herbicides when the crop is about four weeks old and weeds are 3 to 6 in. tall. Weeds are mowed down to within 1 in. of the ground. That's 99 percent effective in killing such problem broadleaves as giant ragweed, lambsquarter and smartweed, but is less effective on grasses such as foxtail, Donald notes.

So a second mowing is done just before the canopy closes to get the second flush of grasses, he says.

Banding herbicides instead of broadcasting and using the string trimmer/mower has reduced herbicide application by as much as 60 percent and mowing has elimi-



One of Donald's students used the string trimmer/mower on a soybean test plot four weeks after planting.

nated the need for cultivation, Donald says.

Donald is currently having a four-row string trimmer custom-built. It will use a wire line or flexible chain instead of nylon line to improve performance, he says.

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Home-Built Header Cart "Better Than Factory-Built"

Mike Fenske built a combine header cart for a fraction of what a commercial rig costs and it works better than some factory-built rigs, he says.

"Some of the commercial carts I've looked at cost as much as \$2,000. Even after-market kits cost as much as \$400 and you still have to supply the running gear," says the Burlington, Wis., farmer. "I built mine for under \$500, including a running gear we had around which I valued at \$300."

The running gear came from a rusted out gravity box. He used schedule 40 pipe to extend the reach 10 ft. in order to hold the 17 1/2-ft. grain table for his 1660 Case-IH combine.

He built the header support out of pipe he had around the farm.

"Pipe doesn't snag and bend sickle guards



the way the channel iron used on some commercial units and after-market kits does," Fenske notes.

He used a set of used 15-in. radial tires off his pickup for the tires on the cart.

The carts could be built for any model or size header, he says. He's willing to build them for others if there's interest.

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Electric-Powered Silage Box

Dale Wilcox set up a stationary electric-powered silage box outside his dairy barn that holds 1 ton of haylage.

It has made it much easier for the Cobleskill, N.Y., farmer to fill the small feed cart he uses to carry feed to cows.

He used an old 16-ft. long by 4-ft. deep silage wagon to build the stationary silage handler. He cut it in half lengthwise to reduce overall width to 4 ft., which is the width of one apron chain.

"I converted it to electric power using a 3 hp, 220-volt electric motor so I can turn it on and off from the feed cart with a switch rather than climbing on and off a tractor.

"The trickiest part was getting the apron to turn at the proper speed. The driveshaft turns at about 8 rpm's, which is just fast enough to fill my 35 bu. silage cart in 30 seconds with virtually no spillage or waste."

The silage wagon is elevated on an old spreader frame so Wilcox can drive his cart under it to load. Silage, he notes, falls directly into the cart.

He's fed 700 tons of silage from his bunker silo through the wagon with no problems



in the three years since he built it. He simply fills the box with silage from his bunk silo with a tractor and loader.

Out-of-pocket expense was about \$200, mostly for sprockets, chains and bearings.

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