

Owners Report On "Best & Worst" Planters, Drills

Are you satisfied with your row crop planter or grain drill? How could it be improved? What steps have you taken to cut down on the number of trips through the field? Have you modified your planter in any way? What methods have you come up with to simplify filling seed, fertilizer and insecticide boxes?

These are some of the questions we asked planter and drill owners in an effort to highlight those planters and drills that perform with flying colors and to pinpoint the "lemons" that fail because of poor performance or failure of the dealer or company to provide service.

Here's how our survey shaped up:

John Suhar, Kinsman, Ohio: John's had a lot of trouble with a **Great Plains** "Solid Stand" 13-ft. grain drill he bought new in 1990.

"The coulters packer arms started breaking at the seed tubes after only 300 acres. It now has 700 acres on it and I've had 14 of 20 of the arms break. I complained to the company and they told me I was running the depth cylinder too deep. I told them I have to run that deep or the planter won't engage. Finally, the company sent me a reinforcer kit, which consisted of 1/2 by 1/2-in. bars, 4 and 8 in. long, that was supposed to be welded onto each arm. I installed them and they didn't last much longer than the arms themselves. I've improved the drill somewhat by reinforcing the arms with 3/16-in. thick angle iron 10 in. long. I weld and bolt them in place on each arm."

Phil Kirk, Admire, Kan.: "If I were in the market, I'd buy another planter just like it," says Phil, pleased with his 1995 **White** 6342. "It's so versatile I use it for both 15-in. soybeans and 30-in. corn. It gives me exceptional seed placement and is built heavy enough for tough conditions or no-till.

"However, it does need a skid shoe or gauge wheel in the middle of the markers. They're mounted so low that the middle of the marker drags on terraces and shears the breakaway bolts. It also needs 12-ply tires instead of the standard 6-ply."

John R. Illies, Elrosa, Minn.: John says his 1993 **Deere** 7300 provides "great" seed spacing. "That's especially true in soybeans," he says. "It's also easy to set bean seed population, compared with my old 7000 with bean cups."

Still, John says the unit's population counter could be more accurate.

He added row cleaners, liquid fertilizer squeeze pumps, and heavy-duty downpressure springs. "I also use an Orthman Tracer guidance hitch with two Orthman disk stabilizers to keep the planter centered when I plant on ridges," he says. "When planting conventional ground, I use the guidance hitch to follow the marker groove made using Orthman twin disk markers."

Richard Thompson, Clarion, Iowa: "I'm pretty well pleased with it, except that it's not very accurate on spacing in 30-in. soybeans," says Richard about his 1998 **Case-IH** 955 12-row planter. "Also, the markers stick out so far that even when they're raised you can't get close to the fenceline. They need to move the marker brackets from the rear of the frame to the front so the markers can be moved in closer along fencelines."

Richard built a catwalk on back of the planter so he can carry seed from box to box rather than getting up and down to fill each box.

Dale Mandel, Freeman, S. Dak.: "My drill is equipped with no-till coulters that work real well in standing corn stalks," says Dale, "well satisfied" with his 1995 **UFT** 30 • FARM SHOW

5200 drill. "However, the population setting could be more precise."

Dale moved the steps to the end of the drill and added some grab rails from a semi cab to make it easier to get up on the catwalk on back of the drill.

Martin Casper, Menomonie, Wis.: "It's very accurate," Martin says about his 1996 **Deere** 7200. "There isn't a thing about it that I'd change."

Mark Mueller, Brownsville, Wis.: Mark "loves the simplicity" of his 1986 **White** 5100 planter. "It has few moving parts and has proven to be one of the lowest maintenance pieces of equipment I own," he says.

Wayne O. Aarhus, Sherwood, N. Dak.: "They've done a good job for us," says Wayne about his 1982 **Case** 6200 press drills. "I just wish someone could explain why every once in a while it won't seed a 2 to 3-ft. long strip. It doesn't occur regularly so it's kind of puzzling.

"If I were in the market for a new drill or planter, I'd probably go with **Case** 7200 hoe drills because they're more affordable than an air seeder."

Jamie John Labat, Marshall, Minn.: Jamie says his 1989 **White** 5100 does an "excellent" all-around job. "It has good depth control and seed placement," he says. "I also like the ease of setting it up and general operation."

His only complaint: "The markers are built a little weak."

Emil Wittenborn, Udall, Kan.: "I'm well pleased with my air planter," says Emil about his 1974 **IH** Cyclo 400. "I switched from running it off the tractor's pto shaft to running it with a hydraulic motor driven off remotes in order to extend the trailing distance from the tractor."

Gerald Krutsinger, Chariton, Iowa: "If it wasn't a good piece of equipment I wouldn't have used it for over 20 years," says Gerald, well satisfied with his 1977 **Deere** 7000.

Jim Hefner, Lima, Ohio: "We've seeded over 9,000 acres with it and it's always done a generally good job," says Jim, pleased owner of a 1990 **Great Plains** 15-ft. CPH no-till drill. "If the ground gets too hard, penetration becomes a problem but I think the newer drills have more downpressure."

To improve performance, Jim retrofitted his drill with **Great Plains** "Seed Lok" wheels behind the openers. "They help stand emergence but are not as durable as they should be," he says. "They need to be bigger in diameter to keep the bearing out of the dirt and need to run at a slower rpm."

He also added new larger pivot pins to the coulters, extended the mounting brackets to get more front-to-back stagger out of the openers, added new larger bushings to the opener and closing wheel pivot points, and built his own flat-fold markers for the drill.

Alan Lyman, Cambridge, Ill.: Alan is "mostly satisfied" with his 1996 **Case-IH** 900

12-row (30-in.) Cyclo planter. "I like the row units and the single fill hopper, but the metering system needs improvement," he says.

"The biggest problem is that it'll overplant - triples or doubles - in small and medium round seeds."

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Dale A. Brandt, Freeburg, Ill.: Dale recently replaced his 1992 **Great Plains** 15-ft. no-till drill and **Deere** 7000 6-row planter with an 8-row **Kinze** fitted with 7-row pusher-type splitter units.

"The drill had the ability to plant up to 12 mph and with an auger wagon I could fill it quickly," he says. "However, it didn't control the seeding rate as well as I'd like, a costly proposition when planting Roundup-Ready beans.

"I love how easy it is to fold the **Kinze** planter and with bean meters, it should save me \$14 per acre in Roundup-Ready beans, which equals more than my payment on a four-year note."

John Newman, Baraboo, Wis.: "They seem to be reliable and hold their resale value," says John, owner of a **Deere** 7000

planter and **Deere** 8300 drill. "My only complaint is that row units should be strengthened on the planter, which was done on later models."

Allen Wehrspann, Sherrill, Iowa: "I love them because of their simplicity to operate and maintain," says Allen, happy with both his **Deere** no-till drill and his **IH** 400 Cyclo planter.

Rich Schlipf, Milford, Ind.: Rich says he's getting along fine with his 13-year-old **Deere** 7000 planter and that it's easy to work on and maintain.

"I replaced the original markers with Canadian-built markers to narrow up my transport width (Kearney Planters, R.R. 3, Thamesville, Ontario, Canada N0P 2K0; ph 519 678-3206). I've also added Ausherman no-till coulters, Monsanto/Deere's Lock & Load system for fertilizer boxes, a homemade rear spray kit equipped with Red Ball monitors, and drive chain releases to save wear and tear on drive chains in transport (Jackson-Lee-Pearson, P.O. Box 27, Flora, Ind. 46929; ph 219 967-4164)."

Keith A. Eidom, Gettysburg, S. Dak.: "It's much more accurate than our old **Deere** planter," says Keith, very satisfied with his 1997 **White** 6100. "It's easy to adjust the basic settings. Also, seed drop is short for more even spacing.

"One complaint is that it needs larger fertilizer boxes. We plan on putting an air cart in front of the planter to increase fertilizer

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Serrated disc on assembly helps provide excellent seed-to-soil contact.

New Planter Add-Ons From J.S. Ag Innovations

You can improve the performance of your **Deere** 7000 or newer or **Kinze** planter with these two new add-ons from J.S. Ag Innovations, Ewing, Mo.

The "Seed-To-Soil-Inforcer" closing disc provides excellent seed-to-soil contact by closing the seed trench even in adverse conditions. The discs first crumble both sidewalls of the seed trench inward with a lift tear action, thus eliminating sidewall compaction and open seed slots. A steel arm attaches to the factory V closing wheel bracket and pivots on the existing closing wheel bracket axle while holding the closing disc in the lead and trailing with the factory press wheels. This allows the press wheels to firm the loose soil and act as gauge wheels controlling the depth of the closing disc. Closing disc depth and downpressure are fully adjustable. In no-till, the amount of downpressure required to close the seed trench is significantly less than with standard V press wheels or cast iron wheels, according to the company.

Sells for \$140 per row.

The "Seed-To-Soil-Inforcer" seed shoe



Shoe bolts in place of seed tube guard.

bolts in place of the seed tube guard on **Deere** 7000 and newer and **Kinze** planters. The shoe side plates hold the top 1/2 in. of the seed furrow open by keeping dry dirt or other debris from falling in before the seed is placed properly. It also keeps the seed tube directly centered over the V furrow for proper seed placement.

Sells for \$19 per row.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, J.S. Ag Innovations, R.R. 2, Box 125C, Ewing, Mo. 63440 (ph 800 400-2610 or 573 494-3698).