



Straw chopper is powered by a 5 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine and can be wheeled anywhere.

## Combine Straw Chopper Makes Great Bedding Chopper

One of Jason Hellickson's jobs is to spread bedding in the loose housing barn for his family's 50-cow dairy herd.

The 16-year-old son of Dave and Sandy Hellickson, Brooten, Minnesota, has had this job for a few years now. "Spreading straw from bales with a fork took a lot of time," he says.

So, he built a bedding chopper that gets the job done faster and easier, and reduces the amount of bedding used.

Jason got the idea for the bedding chopper when he found the straw chopper from his grandfather's Deere 42 pull-type combine.



Engine belt-drives the chopper.

It was in the woods near the farmstead. "He used the combine mostly for corn so he took off the chopper and left it," Jason says.

The chopper had been used only a few times, but after more than 20 years in the woods it was in poor condition. Jason cleaned it up and freed the hammers and shafts. Then he built a frame from angle iron on which to mount it, along with a 5 hp Briggs & Stratton engine with a centrifugal clutch. He put a couple of wheelbarrow wheels and tires on one end of the frame so he can roll it around the barn. A V-belt from the clutch turns the chopper.

Once he got it all together, he painted it silver.

The chopper is about 2 ft. wide, which is big enough to accept a small square bale endways. Jason usually feeds in about a half bale at a time. By adjusting the fins on the chopper, he can aim the chopped bedding into the stalls so very little is wasted.

Jason says he might be a little more careful about welding the chopper onto the frame if he were doing it over. The old straw chopper still has the original knives and after two years of use, they get dull. He's thought about replacing them. "The way I welded the frame on it, though, it's going to be difficult to replace them. So far, I've been able to sharpen them and get by," he says.

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Home-built 23-ft. "weed whacker" mounts on front of Woolhouse's self-propelled swather.

## Giant "Weed Whacker" Takes Out Tall-Growing Weeds

By Janis Schole

Saskatchewan farmer Dwayne Woolhouse chops off tall-growing weeds with his home-built 23-ft. "Weed Whacker" that mounts on the front of his self-propelled swather. He says it mulches the weeds before they hit the ground.

"It's most effective on wild oats and wild mustard just as they are starting to head out because they usually extend above the crop canopy," Woolhouse says. "By using tillage and post-emergent harrowing as added weed control, you can achieve impressive results."

The Assiniboia, Sask., farmer invented the machine because he couldn't find anything else that would control weeds at such a late stage, and he farms organically so he couldn't use chemicals.

Woolhouse says he based his idea on a hand-held Weed Eater.

He first bought a used swather table at a wrecking yard and cut off everything except a steel beam that attaches to the front of his swather power unit. Then Woolhouse mounted nine rotating horizontal steel rods (made from cold-rolled steel) under the beam and hung a 6-in. length of fine chain from the end of each strap. Each "blade" is fitted with a pulley that's belt-driven off the swather driveshaft.

Woolhouse used the system during the

1999 crop season with good results. This year, he has been experimenting with various types of chain, as well as the strongest commercial weed whip nylon line. He has found that the nylon line outlasted any chain and says that the best overall results might be with no hanging chain or line at all because less maintenance is required. He has found that the rods need to be at least 3 ft. long for the best results.

Woolhouse can remove the Weed Whacker and install his regular swather table in about 10 minutes.

"Before I designed this unit, I tried using a swather to cut off the tops of tall weeds in the same way, but it didn't work. The swather leaves rows of material that you cut off. It won't cut as close to the crop, and it doesn't cut as clean or as fast," he says.

Woolhouse has applied for a patent for his Weed Whacker but says he's too busy to manufacture it himself. Instead, he would consider a partnership.

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