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a Maurer Grade Master tile plow. A neighbor had one and, after actually watching the pull-type plow work, Gary made the purchase. "It seems to have more clearance than the other plows I considered. The hitch shifts a lot of weight to the back wheels of the tractor when the plow is in the ground, boosting traction," he says.

One of the features Gary likes best about the Maurer is the tandem-walking beam. "This helps minimize the effect of ditches or uneven field surfaces on plow depth, so it maintains grade better," he says.

So far, Gary hasn't had any problem pulling his Maurer plow with his 335 hp Case-IH 9270 4-WD tractor. "We can hook up a second tractor to the plow, if we need it," he adds.

He says the plow is heavy enough to take some abuse, too. "We hit a rock and the back wheels of the tile plow came right off the ground. The tractor almost came to a complete stop. We had to dig out the rock, but it didn't hurt the plow," he says.

"I think it would be no problem to put in 10,000 ft. of tile a day with this plow," he says.

"We hit a rock and the back wheels of the plow came right off the ground. But it didn't hurt the plow."

Bob Rickers, Vail, Iowa: Bob uses a 3-pt. mounted plow from Farm Drainage Plows to install about a semi load of tile a year. The manufacturer provided Bob with a 6-ft. long boot, so he could put tile at least 4 ft. deep.

"This is our second plow. We sold our old plow for what we paid for it and bought a newer model. We've had it three years now, and the only change we made from our first one was a longer boot," he says. "In every other way, it's exactly what we need for our rolling land."

Bob did not buy a laser leveling system. "We're tiling fields that have enough break from top to bottom to allow water to flow naturally without having to put the tile in on a grade," he says. To make sure his tile all goes in at the same depth, though, he added a horizontal pipe to the hitch that extends out to the tire track where he can see it. "We hang a chain on that just the right length to touch the ground when the plow is at the right depth. If it gets off, we can raise or lower the hitch to correct the plow depth," he explains.

"I did look at a couple of other plows before I bought my second one from Farm Drainage Plows. They're all similar in design, but the soil seems to flow around this one more easily," he says.

Bob mounts his tile plow on a 160 hp 2-WD tractor with duals. This works well if he makes two passes, ripping about 2 ft. deep the first pass and then going down to 4 ft. and laying the tile on the second trip. Most of the time, a second tractor with front-wheel-assist is hooked to the plow in front of the first tractor. "The problem is traction, not horsepower," he says. "The hitch on the plow is made so you can pull with a second tractor by running a heavy cable under the first

one. Our soil is underlain with heavy yellow clay that's very difficult to pull through. There are times when we need even more traction than the two tractors can give us. Then we replace the front-wheel-assist tractor with a tracked tractor."

Phil Matthews, Laingsburg, Mich.: Phil is more than pleased with his Farm Drainage Plows pull-type tile plow. In fact, he's now on his second plow.

"I wore out the first one, pulling it through sandy, pebbly subsoil that lies beneath most of my crop land," he says. "The company has provided great service, and even worked with me to make sure their machine does what I need to do."

He says the highly abrasive subsoil literally ground down the heavy steel plow until it collapsed. Still, he'd put more than a million feet of 4-in. tile through the plow, so he felt he more than got his money's worth from it.

After he wore out the first plow, Phil rented a commercial tiling machine for awhile. He was trying to figure out how he could justify owning the more expensive machine when Don Wurdinger, owner of Farm Drainage Plows, offered to build a heavier one for him.

"The commercial machine I rented was built heavier than the Farm Drainage Plows tile plow. But, Wurdinger's plow is simple to run and a lot less expensive in the long run than the commercial machine," he says.

Matthews has continued to work on his second tile plow. "We added arms to the original axle to make it into a walking beam to help take some of the stress off the plow and stabilize it in rough ground. I added electronic hydraulic controls on the tractor that allows the laser to control plow depth. With my tractor's open hydraulics, though, this is not as responsive as I'd like and I don't always have pressure for other hydraulic functions. I'm planning to move the electronic hydraulic controls from the tractor back to the plow. I think this will eliminate some of the stress on the tractor's hydraulic system and let me use just one line to control depth and other functions on the plow. And it will make it easier to use any tractor with the plow," he says.

"Every time you add something to the plow, you raise the price of it. Right now, for the price, the Farm Drainage Plows machine is the best," he says.

Brodie Craig, Howick, Quebec: Brodie's cropland is fairly level but he says, "Even though we have a lot of tile to help move water off the fields, there are some bad spots in it that don't drain well. It's all underlain with heavy gray-blue clay, and we lose crops in low places because it just doesn't dry up."

Brodie bought a Farm Drainage Plow five years ago to augment his existing subsurface drainage system. "I wanted to be able to put in the tile myself to save money, and this plow was just what I needed," he says.

He pulls his 3-pt. mounted tile plow with a 150 hp 4186 International 4-WD tractor most of the time. The clay subsoil is so tight that he sometimes needs a little help from a second tractor. And quite often, he finds it's easier to make a pre-cut with the plow and then put in the tile on a second pass. Wurdinger modified Brodie's plow to allow him to put tile down to 5 ft. deep.

"I've put in more than 100,000 ft. of tile since I got the plow, just draining problem areas. It's well-built and does everything I expected," he says. "The only problem I've

had with it has been my own fault. Once when we hitched a second tractor in front to tile through some of the toughest soil I have, we actually bent the hydraulic cylinder. The plow is built for a maximum of 200 hp and we were definitely using more than that."

Brodie says improved yields from areas where he's added tile have more than paid for the machine. "If I were to do it again, I'd still buy the same machine. It was inexpensive, easy to operate and suits me 100 percent."

Rick Schultz, New Richland, Minn.: Rick's only had his Maurer Grade Master tile plow for a couple of months, but has already put in 30,000 ft. of tile with it.

Actually, he bought the plow with neighbors Doug Christopherson and David Sponberg, who farm together. They've put in close to 15,000 ft. with it, too.

"Next spring will be the test, to see if what we've put in this fall actually helps drain the fields and we get better stands," says Rick.

They took delivery of the plow in September and Rick went right to work with it in some fields where he had grown sweet corn.

They bought the plow with a boot that will handle up to 6-in. tile. "We're putting in mostly 4-in. tile, but it takes just 5 minutes to adjust the boot for 6 in.," he says. "We looked at a lot of tile plows and talked to a lot of people who had them before we bought this one. After I saw several plows demonstrated at a farm show, I decided this was the

one I wanted."

Other features of the Maurer plow that sold Rick were that it's drawbar pulled rather than mounted to the frame or 3-pt. and the A-frame of the plow keeps the boot at the same angle no matter how deep it's running. He also liked the walking tandems, which minimize the effect of uneven terrain.

"The other plows we looked at were good, and maybe a little less expensive than this one, but we decided we wanted to do the best job we could. This one looked to us like it did the best job at the demonstration," he says.

Another selling point for Rick was that a local company made it. "We felt service would be good and that we could get parts quickly if we needed them," he says.

He pulls the plow with a Deere 8400. "It has a very slow low gear and a lot of low end torque. So far, it's worked great with the plow behind. And the electric-over-hydraulic design is just right for the plow and laser," he says.

Robert Fear, Montpelier, Ind.: "This plow paid for itself faster than any other machine I've bought," Bob says of the tile plow he bought from Johnson Drainage Plows, Clarksville, Iowa.

Bob and three other farmers bought the plow together two years ago. They've installed 800,000 ft. of tile with it so far.

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"Disc Blade" Ditcher Makes Field Drainage Easy

"It's a new concept in ditching that works great to solve temporary water problems in fields," says Brian Rust, Fargo, N. Dak., about his new 3-pt. mounted "disc blade" ditcher. It makes a narrow, V-shaped, 6 to 8-in. deep ditch that disturbs very little soil, allowing us to use it right after seeding without damaging any of the crop," says Rust.

The ditcher consists of two disc blades welded together at their edges and mounted on a 2-in. dia. shaft. The blades are reinforced inside by a steel plate that's also welded to the shaft. The blades mount on a frame equipped with weight brackets on back. To operate the ditcher you simply lower it into the ground and drive.

"It drains water effectively, yet the ditches it makes are narrow enough that when you drive across them you can hardly feel them," says Rust. "We use it on our own farm, which has shallow ditches running lengthwise to deeper roadside ditches at the ends of the fields. In the spring we have to till across the headlands and every time we make a pass the ditch fills in a little, causing water to pond up. The ditcher lets us get that water out of the field. It packs the soil down without making ridges which allows the water to draw in. You can't even see the ditches when you look across the field. I think it could also be used in fields with natural drainages that are blocked."

Fits Cat. I and II 3-pt. hitches including quick tach hitches.

Sells for \$1,295 without weights.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brian Rust, 901 42nd St. S.W., Apartment 222, Fargo, N. Dak. 58103 (ph and fax 701 282-7570).

"Works great for quick drainage of trouble spots in fields," says inventor Brian Rust.



Ditcher consists simply of a pair of disc blades welded together face-to-face and mounted on a 3-pt. frame.



Tractor weights mount above ditcher wheel to keep it in the ground.

