

Simple New Way To Strip-Till

By C.F. Marley, Contributing Editor

Richard and Larry Martin of Lincoln, Ill., are usually ahead of the curve when it comes to planting technology. They have 20 years of experience in strip-tilling and have used many different kinds of minimum till openers over the years. Larry says he's now convinced that a single 10-in. wide sweep opener, combined with 30-in. rows, is the way to go for both corn and soybeans.

"We've tried using bubble coulters, waffle coulters, and residue managers combined with bubble coulters. We've tried all of them in both 30 and 15-in. rows. The patent pending assembly we're using now works the best on both corn and beans," says Larry.

He buys 10-in. wide "high speed" sweeps from a local Deere dealer. The sweeps are designed for the company's row crop cultivators with a two-piece, bolt-together shank. The Martins welded the shank to a vertical steel tube, which slides up inside another tube that bolts onto the planter frame.

The sweep's pitch is adjusted by loosening two bolts on the shank. By loosening two more bolts he can adjust the depth.

The Martins use the system on their Kinze 24-row rear-fold planter.

"It works better than anything we've ever tried before," says Larry, who has used the system for two years. "When people first see it they say it's too simple. But that's the beauty of it. There are no moving parts and it doesn't need any coulters. Also, it's light-weight and sucks itself into the ground so there's no need for any heavy downpressure springs. As a result, the planter runs smooth without bouncing up and down, which results in consistently better seed spacing. Once the sweep is set at the correct pitch it just sucks itself into the ground. We usually set the sweep to just scratch the soil surface.

"Residue managers with intersecting wheels work well in some cases, but too often their components just roll over the top of the residue without throwing it aside. They tend to bounce up and down which results in poor seed spacing and is also hard on the



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planter. And, some of them have clearance problems when folding the planter. That's not a problem with these sweeps."

Martin says they looked a long time to find the sweep they wanted - one that's flat and designed with adjustable pitch and height.

They strip-till in a separate pass during the fall, using an old cultivator that they turned into an anhydrous ammonia bar.

Larry says he prefers 30-in. rows to 15-in. rows because of the seed savings. Last year he saved an average of \$6.41 per acre.

He says if there's enough interest he's willing to build the strip till assemblies for others.

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This 1,325-lb. stuffed boar is used to draw customers into a department store in Wabash, Indiana. People come from all over to have their picture taken with him.

Stuffed Boar Draws A Crowd

A 1,325-lb. boar might not be the first thing you'd think of to draw customers into a department store, but for Tom Spiece of Spiece Store in Wabash, Indiana, it's certainly doing the trick.

Spiece's stuffed boar is named "Ike," and he stands proudly inside the store. People come from all over to have their picture taken with him, and to see what a boar that big really looks like.

"We have lots of hog farmers in our area, and they like to look at him. You don't usually see big boars standing up because when they get that big, they lie around a lot," Spiece says.

Ike is the offspring of the renowned "Spots Stallone" who, at 1,300 to 1,400 lbs., main-

tained the biggest boar title at the Indiana State Fair for five straight years for his owner, Joe Kelich at Elwood, Ind.

Spiece says his staff has fun with Ike, dressing him up for the various holidays; he changes with the seasons.

Spiece also has other unusual items at his store, including a life-sized replica of the world's tallest man, and a giant Kodiak bear dressed in bib overalls.

The store is located on State Road 13, north of Wabash and is open Monday through Saturday.

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Dale McPeake converted a 1997 GMC Sonoma 4-WD pickup into this utility vehicle that he says works better than commercial-built machines.

Poor Man's "Mule"

"It has a lot more capacity than a Mule or Gator-type utility vehicle but cost far less to build," says Dale McPeake, Scotts Hill, Tenn., who converted a 1997 GMC Sonoma 4-WD pickup into a utility vehicle equipped with a hydraulic-operated dump box.

The pickup had been badly damaged in a roll-over accident but had just 40,000 miles on it when McPeake bought it. It's equipped with a 4.3-liter, V-6 gas engine and a 5-speed transmission. He removed both doors and cut off the top of the cab, then used 1 1/2-in. dia. exhaust pipe to make a frame that supports a red vinyl canopy with a Lexan plastic windshield on front. He also installed a new grill, hood, and fenders, which he lengthened by 4 in. in order to cover the door hinges.

He hired a machine shop to build a 6-ft. long, 5 1/2-ft. wide metal bed equipped with 1-ft. wooden siderails. The box is raised or lowered by an electric/hydraulic system powered by the pickup's battery. A handheld remote control is used to raise and lower the box.

He added new 15-in. high tires all the way around and mounted a stainless steel wind scoop on top of the canopy for looks. The cab is painted white.

"I call it my poor man's Mule. It's a nice little rig," says McPeake. "I paid \$1,000 for the pickup and spent a total of about \$5,500



Cargo box is raised or lowered by an electric/hydraulic system powered by pickup's battery.

to build it. A new Kawasaki Mule costs up to \$10,000.

"I use it around my farm to haul gravel, dirt, and sand. I also use it for yard work, landscaping, and gardening. A big advantage of my rig compared to a Mule or a Gator is that it can haul a lot more - 3,000 to 4,000 lbs with no problems. The cab still has the original bench seats so it's really comfortable to drive. Also, I can move at highway speeds. It has a very comfortable ride. I even installed a cup drink holder on each side of the cab."

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Car shelter is made out of gas pipe covered with a plastic tarp.

Low-Cost Do-It-Yourself Shelter Made From Pipe And Tarp

Charles Marley, St. Charles, Mo., made this lightweight, A-shaped car shelter out of welded gas pipe that's covered with a low-cost plastic tarp, stretched tight.

The finished shelter measures 20 ft. square.

Midway up each side of the shelter's roof he welded in lengthwise a 20-ft. long pipe. Elastic straps run from the pipes to the ends of the tarp, which folds under the edges of the roof.

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Elastic straps run from mid-mounted pipes on each side to ends of tarp, which folds under edges of roof.