



Unhappy with the results of drilled beans, Irvin Plotz made a 21 row "soybean special" out of two Max-Emerge planters.



Lift assist wheels were remounted in line with the tractor skip rows.

HOME-BUILT RIG PLANTS 21 ROWS, 15 IN. APART

Modified "Max-Emerge" For Narrow-Row Beans

At one critical stage of the project, Minnesota farmer Irvin Plotz, of Clement, began to wonder if, in his eagerness to convert his 565 acres of soybeans to yield-increasing 15 in. rows, he might have dismantled two expensive Deere Max-Emerge planters for no good purpose.

"I had two Max-Emerge planters torn apart and the pieces strewn all over the floor of my shop when I called Deere. They told me there was no way to combine the two," says Plotz, who nonetheless went ahead and built his 21-row modified Max-Emerge planter, solving several "impossible" engineering problems along the way. After only one season of use and 4 to 8 extra bu. of soybeans per acre, he says his home-made, \$38,000 narrow-row soybean planter has already paid him back half its cost.

"It's insane for a soybean farmer to stick with 30-in. rows. Even a minimum 4 bu. per acre yield increase, at \$8 a bushel, adds up to \$32 extra income. That's \$16,000 on 500 acres of soybeans. Smaller operators can benefit, too, since a smaller planter can just as easily be converted," Plotz told FARM SHOW.

"We started with a 12-row 7100 Max-Emerge and 'filled in' with 9 row units from a second Max-Emerge. The main problems were in trying to figure out how to drive the additional units, finding room for wheel tracks, and handling the extra weight."

In the end, Plotz says he drilled just 5 holes to convert the planter. Lift assist wheels had to be removed in between rows. He also changed to heavy-duty wheels from a Balzer manure spreader in order to handle the added weight. His 21-row rig holds 39 50-lb. bags of beans at once.

Plotz drives his modified planter off one solid drive shaft, dropping one planter unit back onto a rear support bracket to make room for the center hitch.

Row units are grouped in three sections of seven each with 22.5-in. of space between for the wheels of Plotz's Deere 4430 tractor. The planter drive wheels are mounted further out along the bar to avoid packing the wheel-tracks. Two 12-

row Dickey John monitors keep track of planting rates.

A key accessory on the planter, according to Plotz, is a marker and Culti-guides from J & J Guide Systems, of Sanborn, Minn. Used together with single-ribbed front tires on the tractor, the marker digs shallow grooves that guide each of the single-ribbed front tires. "I can plant with my hands off the wheel and travel down the row at speeds up to 8 mph," says Plotz. Culti-guides dig shallow trenches and later, when mounted on the cultivator, they hold the line and will again actually steer the tractor. Plotz says he wouldn't plant narrow-row soybeans without them.

He cultivated once in producing 52 bu. per acre soybeans last year. The cultivation, he says, wasn't because of weedy fields but because he thinks aeration of soil is beneficial. To get between the narrow rows, he uses a cultivator that runs one shank down each 15-in. row spacing, and one shank with 2 spikes in the wider 22.5 in. rows in which the tractor wheels travel.

As for planting soybeans, he usually doesn't start until his neighbors are finished. "I need perfect weed control for 15-in. beans and later planting helps. I'm almost certain most farmers are planting their beans too early," he concludes. Before building his planter, he drilled his beans but says that poor depth control and spacing were a problem.

Plotz plants corn in 30-in. rows with a 10-row Max-Emerge planter he special-built out of left overs from the "parts" planter he bought to make his modified soybean planter. The corn unit uses the same planter row units as the soybean special. "It takes two men about 2½ hours to pull the units off after corn planting and mount them on my new soybean planter, and vice versa," he points out.

Plotz says he would be willing to custom-build his modified Max-Emerge narrow row planter for interested farmers.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Irvin Plotz, Clement, Minn. 56224 (ph 507 692-2126).



Edwin Scott's truck lid consists of a welded tube frame coated with neoprene-coated nylon.



The 12-V powered lid is controlled from the cab.

EASILY REMOVED AND ATTACHED

Automatic "Lid" For Farm Trucks

"It's completely water tight and opens and closes in 19 seconds at the touch of a control switch inside the cab," says Edwin Scott, developer-manufacturer of an automatic Load Containing Lid for trucks.

First featured in FARM SHOW two years ago, it's now in commercial production, featuring several improvements over the prototype.

"Response from FARM SHOW readers was tremendous. We're now set up to manufacture the unit but would still like to compare notes with manufacturers interested in taking it over," Edwin told FARM SHOW.

His Load Containing Lid fits trucks up to 8 ft. wide and comes in 14, 15 and 16 ft. lengths. Components include a welded tube frame, 14 oz. neoprene coated nylon cover, a Warner linear actuator control arm, and switch. The cover fastens to the top of the truck with five bolts and can be easily removed.

Edwin originally built the "lid" to solve a littering problem with chop-

ped silage: "In our operation, we use two self-propelled silage cutters with dump boxes that empty into our six dump trucks for transport. Then, the load is hauled down the road to our trench silo several miles away," explains Edwin. "People began complaining about the amount of silage that blew out of the trucks onto the highway and, eventually, the State Highway Patrol intervened with a litter warning." To solve the problem, Edwin designed the automatic cover to avoid the time and expense of covering each load with a tarp.

"It works off the truck's 12-volt system and is controlled right from the cab. There is no need to climb on the truck, thus eliminating possible injuries due to slipping or falling off the truck," Edwin points out.

For more details, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Edwin Scott, Route 2, Box 575, Mebane, N.C. 27302 (ph 919 563-1328).