Steel-Wheeled Rotary Mower Built For Rough Conditions

Trailing mower is designed for use with horses, ATV's, utility vehicles or non-pto equipped tractors. The heavy gauge deck mounts on steel wheels.

If you're tired of wimpy, lightweight rotary mowers that seem to dent or pop a tire every time you take them out, you'll like this steel-wheeled super-duty mower that comes out of Amish country in Pennsylvania.

The tow-behind mower is powered by a 24-hp. Honda engine that's powerful enough to provide a smooth cut under the toughest conditions, working it's way through cow patties and gopher mounds without plugging up, says builder John Fisher, General Repair Shop, Ronks, Penn.

"We got into the business after an Amish farmer came in and had us custom-build a 15-ft. pull-type rotary. Other people saw it and liked it but they wanted smaller sizes," says Fisher, noting that he now makes a 2-blade 42-in. model, a 3-blade 5 1/2-ft. model, and a 5-blade 9-ft. model. The 24 hp Honda is used on all three models.

A 12-volt electric start and 12-volt electric clutch make them easy to operate.

But what really brings in the buyers is the unusual durability of the mowers, which can be towed behind anything from ATV's to horses. The decks are made from thick 7-ga. steel plate and they ride on 3-in. wide, 15-in. dia. steel wheels (optional rubber wheels available). The heavy mowers really hug the ground. For example, the 5 1/2–ft. model weighs 750 lbs.

"The steel wheels are made out of 3/16-in. flange steel," explains Fisher. "The heavy 1 1/4-in. needle bearings, mounted on a 3/4-in. shaft, are built to stand up to plenty of bouncing on rough terrain."

Cutting height can be adjusted across a 2 to 10-in. range. A ratchet jack lifts all four wheels at one time.

Prices range from $2,575 for the 42-in. model to $5,485 for the 9-ft. model.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Fisher, General Repair Shop, 63 Old Leacock Rd., Ronks, Penn. 17572 (ph 717 768-3902; voice mail 717 656-1967).

Cultivator Grinds Away Weeds

Reyenga earth grinder is designed to grind up weeds at ground level so weed seeds stay buried. It consists of two 12-in. dia. drums, with 1-in. high blades, mounted on a 22-in. shaft with a gearbox at the center.

Dig up a weed with a traditional cultivator and you expose new weed seeds for growth. But if you can grind up the weeds at the surface, weed seeds will stay buried. That's the idea behind Johnny Reyenga's Earth Grinder, and it works even better than he expected.

"It grinds away the weeds and throws dirt up between the plants in the row to bury grass and weeds growing there," he explains. "It's easily adjustable. I can run it at the surface and barely throw any dirt or lower it into the ground and throw more."

Reyenga mounted two 12-in. dia. drums with 1-in. high blades on a 22-in. shaft with a gearbox at the center. An upright shaft connects the grinding mechanism to a drive pulley powered by a belt from Reyenga's 10-hp Sears garden tractor. The entire mechanism mounts ahead of the garden tractor.

"I just increase the throttle on the tractor to increase the rotation speed and throwing action of the Earth Grinder," says Reyenga. "Because it mounts in front of the tractor, I can steer as close to the row as I want to. I can keep it engaged whether I am in forward, reverse or standing still."

Reyenga designed his prototype to fit his 4-ft. row spacing. He makes two passes on each row. However, it could be modified for different row spacing, mounted on a tiller or mounted in multiples on a tractor toolbar.

"It can cover ground 10 times faster than a tiller and can be used to level ground as well," says Reyenga. "The other day, someone drove over my lawn and left ruts too deep for the lawn mower to cross. I took the earth grinder out there and worked the ground back smooth."

Reyenga plans to modify his Earth Grinder with a hydraulic motor so he can run it off his Cub Cadet with a hydraulic drive. He is also looking for feedback from FARM SHOW readers on his innovative weeding system.

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Robotic System Manages Grazing

Automatic grazing system consists of two mobile robots powered by solar panels and connected to an electrified wire. Each day the operator can set how much pasture should be released, and the robots calculate when to move.

A system of robots and guide wires is now available to move cattle between pastures - no humans needed.

The automatic grazing system is called Voyager, and it was recently introduced by the Dutch company Lely for just under $30,000.

The system consists of two mobile robots powered by solar panels and connected by an electrified wire. Solar charged batteries ensure continual power, and side wires serve as guides for the robots that have four-wheel steering and drive. The units can handle turns of up to 45˚. Solar panels can be rotated for maximum solar gain.

Each day the operator can set how much pasture should be released, and the robots calculate when to move. The robots communicate by Bluetooth wireless to travel in unison. As they move ahead down a paddock, cows graze fresh grass in a line behind the wire, a practice called frontal grazing.

The Animal Science Group, a Dutch research organization, has demonstrated frontal grazing can improve grass utilization by 12 percent over full-access grazing. The advantage is that grass doesn't get trampled or soiled before it can be grazed. The digestive process also benefits from fresh grass regularly being made available. This translates into increased milk production and reduced feed costs.

While it may be hard to imagine a robotic grazing system catching on, the same was thought about robotic milkers, which Lely first introduced in 1992. Today, the company has more than 4,000 robotic milkers in place around the world.

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India-Built Pickup

Mahindra pickup is scheduled to be on the North American market by late 2008.

Mahindra has been selling tractors in the U.S. since 1994. Late next year it plans to introduce an India-built pickup to the North American market.

At first only three vehicles will be offered - an SUV and a 2 or 4-door pickup. They'll share power trains, axles and dashboards as well as front seats. Both regular and crew cab models will be available.

The pickup has a wheelbase of 120 in. Power is supplied by a new 2.2-liter, 4-cyl. turbodiesel engine with about 180 hp and 300 lb.-ft. of torque hooked up to a 6-speed automatic transmission. Other features include a boxed frame, cast iron gear drive transfer case, steel suspension arms, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, and electronic stability. The 2-door pickup has a 7 1/2-ft. long deep bed, with rolled lip edges and steel tie-down hooks on all three sides.

A four-year, 60,000-mile bumper-to-bumper warranty will be standard.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mahindra U.S.A., Inc., 17723 FM 2920, Tomball, Texas 77377 (ph 800 887-2286; www.mahindrausa.com).