

High-Yield Semidwarf Beans Back On The Market

Semidwarf soybean seed is again available, thanks to former USDA soybean breeder Dr. Richard L. Cooper. Cooper first bred the shorter stature beans in the 1970's to be planted in narrow rows at high populations for higher yields. By the time he retired in 2003, he had introduced 15 varieties of sturdy, high-yielding, semidwarf beans include his last introduction, Apex.

"I ran into industry politics and resistance to change with no one willing to adopt them. Farmers have paid the price since then with slower progress to higher yields," says Cooper. "Recently I've had contact with half a dozen growers interested in trying them, and Apex is now available from a couple of sources."

Ed Winkle, HyMark Consulting, is an Ohio crop consultant and farmer who tried Apex. While all his soybeans did well in 2013, Apex outyielded conventional beans by 5 bu., averaging 80 bu./acre.

"We had 1,000 bu. of good, seed-quality beans that we offered for sale, and we sold out," says Winkle. "There is a lot of demand. I plan to offer more seed this coming year."

Winkle says he was offered a \$1/bu. premium for harvested beans because of their high protein (38 percent) and oil (22 to 23 percent) levels.

FHR Inc.'s Genesys Grain Genetics is offering Apex this year. In 2013 seed trials,

the 10-year-old Apex yielded as well as top yielding recent releases. A company spokesperson said they are continuing trials this year and have some seed available.

Cooper developed the semidwarf varieties for highly productive soils where conventional varieties often grow too tall and lodge. The short, stouter stems of Apex and other semidwarf varieties stand better and are able to handle high populations and narrow rows.

"I had an Ohio grower who tried them this past year on river bottom soil where he usually has lodging problems," says Cooper. "He reported yields over 90 bu./acre on a 10-acre field."

Cooper emphasizes the need to plant the semidwarf in 7-in. rows at 2 bu./acre seeding rates. He points to another Ohio grower who tried Apex at a 1 bu. seeding rate last year, and it yielded in the mid-50's/acre. Cooper also reports an earlier variety called Elf yielding 80 bu./acre in 7-in. rows and high seeding rates, but only 55 bu./acre at standard seeding rates and 30-in. rows.

"Other researchers insist on trying them in 30-in. rows and aren't impressed with yields," says Cooper. "You need to follow the entire system to get the benefit."

Because of the renewed interest, Cooper reports that the Ohio Foundation and Certified Seed Associations are working with Apex



Apex, a high-yielding, semidwarf soybean developed several years ago by former USDA soybean breeder Dr. Richard Cooper, is now back on the market.

once more.

"In 2015 we will have Apex more widely available," says Cooper. "I hope we will have a group 2, another group 3 and a group 4 semidwarf available in 2015."

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845-3269; drlcooper9@gmail.com); or HyMark Consulting, LLC, 3308 Martinsville Rd. Martinsville, Ohio 45146 (ph 937 728-1478; edwinkle@cinci.rr.com; www.hymark.blogspot.com); or Genesys Grain Genetics, 2510 Hwy 63 N.E., P.O. Box 157, Stewartville, Minn. 55976 (ph 507 533-7855; www.genesysgrain.com).

"Waste Products" Used To Build 200-Ft. Windbreak

People keep finding new uses for old stuff at Damon Carson's company, repurposed MATERIALS, which recycles industrial materials on a giant scale (Vol. 35, No. 6). Carson recently sent photos of a project done by one of his customers, Colleen McCormick, who used old conveyor belting and used electric utility poles to build a 200-ft. long, 8-ft. high windbreak on their ranch.

"We cut the poles 12 ft. long and buried them 4 ft. deep, placing the poles 8 ft. apart. Then we used 4-in. GRK fasteners backed with large washers to attach the belting to the poles," says McCormick. "We used fasteners instead of lag bolts because they go through the belting better and are supposed to be stronger. Time will tell."

The belting came in rolls in 2 different sizes, and they used 2 tractors to put up the rolls.

"We placed a pipe inside the big roll and used a 110 hp tractor to unroll it, and then used a 60 hp tractor to lift it against the posts," says McCormick. "We drilled a hole into each end of the rubber, placed a bolt through the hole, and fastened metal on both sides to keep the bolt from bending as we stretched the rubber. We did this every 80 ft. in order to get a good stretch."

"At the ends we wrapped the belting around the end post and bolted it to itself on the opposite side. It was a little difficult to wrap around the post, as the rubber is 3/4 in.



Old conveyor belting was used to build this 8-ft. high windbreak on a ranch.

thick and isn't very pliable. The entire project took only about 4 hrs."

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Creep Feeder Mounts On Cultivator Wheels

After he bought a used skid-mounted creep feeder from a neighbor, Chuck Hardenburger mounted it on the wheels and axle off an old 6-row cultivator, and also built a tongue with a clevis hitch. The cultivator's depth control wheel jacks are used to raise and lower the feeder.

"I use it on pastures scattered several miles apart. I can quickly lower the feeder down to the ground and then crank it back up and travel down the road at highway speeds," says Hardenburger. "In the past I had to winch the feeders onto flatbed trailers, making sure they were empty so they were easier to load. Now it doesn't matter whether the feeder is full or empty."

He already had the cultivator, which was equipped with a 15-ft. long axle clamped to a 2-in. sq. steel shaft. He stripped the cultivator



Chuck Hardenburger installed this skid-mounted creep feeder on the wheels and axle off an old 6-row cultivator.

down to the axle and wheels, used a chop saw to shorten the axle to 6 ft., and then welded it to the feeder's frame. He also bolted the wheel jacks onto the frame and turned them backward to help balance the load.

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Flatbed trailer's wheels move automatically to back of trailer so it can lie flat on the ground.

French Trailer Drops Down Flat For Easy Loading

A reader alerted us to an online video of a flatbed trailer with wheels that move automatically to the back of the trailer so it can lie flat on the ground, making it easier to load and unload cargo (www.Vimeo.com/61723398).

Quivogne UK is the British distributor for the "Plat-O-Sol", which is built by French manufacturer Perard.

The UK website (www.quivogne.co.uk/PlatOSol.html) describes it as a strong and robust trailer that carries up to 10 tons on a bed up to 28 ft. long. To unload, the wheels hydraulically move to the rear and pivot upwards, which lowers the trailer bed to the ground. At the same time, the drawbar on the tractor is lowered to keep the bed parallel.

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