Factory-Direct Planter Built The Way You Want It

A new planter manufacturer is doing business in a different way. A-M-E Co. – it stands for American Made Equipment – describes itself as a "premier manufacturer of planters with an emphasis on choice, performance, and quality". Their manufacturing facilities are located in Eldora, Iowa.

The company builds its own toolbars, row units, wheel assemblies, and other planter components. An open design construction allows use of off-the-shelf attachments and accessories so you can get your planter set up exactly how you want.

"We custom-build planters to your specifications and can build models with 4, 6, 8, 12, 16, 24, or 32 rows," says company rep Jim Harken. "We offer 7 different base models that can be configured in 72 different ways. We can use a wide variety of dry and liquid fertilizer attachments as well as OEM accessories so you don't have to settle for what's available on the dealer's lot."

The company started out rebuilding used planters for farmers in eastern Europe, and also built a few completely new, custom-built planters on the side. "We were overwhelmed by interest in the custom-built units and found that in order to keep up with demand, we had to get out of the re-manufacturing business so we could concentrate on new planters," says Harken. "Our company is relatively small and we don't have multi-billion dollar facilities, which keeps our overhead costs down."

He says their row unit design is similar to Deere and Kinze's, including the attachment points. "Any attachment you want to put on a Deere or Kinze planter, you can put on ours because we make the attachment points the same as theirs. So if you want to mount Deere's no-till coulters, fertilizer openers or row cleaners on our row units you can. Or, you can mount attachments from Yetter or Dawn or other companies that make attachments for Deere and Kinze planters.

"For example, we can build a planter with individual hydraulic row unit drives, with Precision Planting seed meters, and Raven prescription mapping for true variable rate precision planting. With Deere and Case IH, you buy what's already in production, and the only custom building is done at the dealer level. One customer told me he asked his dealer about subtracting components from a planter on the dealer's lot. He was told the only thing he could deduct were the markers. They wouldn't let him change anything else.

"Farmers with big planters are spending up to $15,000 for monitors and controllers. If you have all Deere equipment and then buy a Case IH planter, the Deere controller doesn't always work on it. But if you buy our planter, we can use any of your existing controllers."

The company says their modular planter design also works with smaller 4, 6, and 8-row planters. "We use the same toolbar for all 3 row sizes. For example, we can convert an 8-row model into a 3-pt. planter, put dry fertilizer on it, and set it up for any row spacing. If you decide to do something different a year from now, you can buy tongue and wheel assemblies from us and turn that same toolbar into a pull-type planter. Or if you want you can convert that same pull-type planter to a double toolbar no-till model by adding wheels and another toolbar on front, and putting dry or liquid fertilizer on it. Or convert it to an interplant soybean planter on 15-in. row spacings."

A-M-E Co. planters use an open design construction that allows use of off-the-shelf attachments and accessories. "You can get your planter set up exactly how you want," says company rep Jim Harken.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Harken, A-M-E Co., 1702 21st St., Eldora, Iowa 50627 (ph 515 650-3911; cell 319 269-2580; Jim@A-M-E.co; www.A-M-E.co).

Soil-Busting Doesn't Mix Soil

A new subsoiler from Australia is breaking up compacted zones in Canadian prairies. The unique design of the AgrowPlow, distributed by R.A. West International, results in taller crops and higher yields in dry years and better movement of snow melt and rain into lower soil profiles.

"Traditional subsoilers have an elliptical shank that goes as deep as 3 ft. and brings clay and deeper soils to the surface," explains Dustin Farr, R.A. West International. "The AgrowPlow has a straighter shank, is more vertical, and penetrates only 20 in. It doesn't mix the soil layers or profiles and leaves the microbial life largely undisturbed at different levels."

What the AgrowPlow does is to fracture the soil between the shanks, not just down the path of the shank. It does this by closer spacing of the shanks.

"Traditional subsoiler shanks have 24 to 30-in. spacing between them," says Farr. "The AgrowPlow has shanks at 26-in. spacing on each of two toolbars, but staggered for 13-in. spacing across the pass."

Farr explains that when you get more than 7 to 8 in. to either side of the shank, fracturing stops in hard-to-break-up soils. Instead, wavering appears in the lower profile.

"If you are going to spend the money on time and fuel, don't you want to do it right the first time?" he asks.

The AgrowPlow comes in a wide variety of models, depending on application, from vineyard and specialty crops to large fields. Straight-edged coulters cut sod and residue ahead of the shanks. Vineyard plows have 2 or 3 shanks. From there, shank numbers increase by two with options of 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 19 shanks. Toolbars vary in size also with the 11 through 19 shank sets mounted on a heavier frame. Toolbar working width also varies with the number of shanks with 19 shanks on a 21 1/2-ft. toolbar.

AgrowPlow is also available in a special 27-shank, 29-ft. working width. The AP3-95 is designed for broadacre fields. It has floating wings to provide accurate ground following up to + or - 10° variations in the field.

The size of the tractor to be used and the type of soil to be subsoiled may determine the number of shanks to be pulled. After demonstrating an AgrowPlow across much of western Canada, Farr estimates horsepower needs at 20 to 25 hp per shank.

"The soil profile can change within 100 ft.," he recalls. "I've used as little as 15 hp and as much as 35 hp per shank."

AgrowPlows come in 5 different shank options, from the 20-in. Econo Shank Assembly to the 24-in. Hydraulic Trip Assembly.

Farr says the AgrowPlow is a deceivingly heavy machine, built with high-quality steel. While smaller plows start as low as $10,000, the cost can range near $50,000 on the larger models. Pricing depends on the number and type of shank.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, R.A. West International, Box 419, Vulcan, Alta., Canada T0L 2BO (ph 403 485-1998; toll free 888 972-9378; www.agrowplow.com).

AgrowPlow shanks are spaced 26 in. apart on each of 2 toolbars. Shanks are staggered, which results in only 13-in. spacing between shanks for better fracturing action.

Tractor-Mounted Electric "Pusher" Clears Out Cattle

Mike Koenighain made an electrified "pushing device" that mounts ahead of his tractor. It keeps cattle away from his front wheels when feeding silage. It eliminates a common headache when working around a group of cattle with a tractor.

"I've been using it for 7 years, and it works great," says Koenighain. "It's handy when entering through a gate and around bunks or tire feeders."

Koenighain fashioned the electrified pusher from aluminum cable and plastic tubing. The unit mounts 10 in. ahead of and at the same height as the top of the front wheels. An 11-ft. piece of aluminum cable extends through 5 ft. of plastic tubing attached with hose clamps to the weight bucket. The cable extends 3 ft. out to either side.

"The charger mounts in the tractor cab and is powered by the tractor battery," says Koenighain. "It's a simple setup, but it works."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Koenighain Farms, LLC, 3205 275th St., Williamsburg, Iowa 52361 (ph 319 930-1815).

Electrified "pushing device" consists of aluminum cable that runs through a piece of plastic tubing, extending 3 ft. out to either side.