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To install, the old shank is cut off and the existing opener is reattached to the side of the Orange Shank assembly. Optional coulters (shown above) can be mounted on the Orange Shank assembly bar ahead of the opener.

Orange Shanks Turn Air Seeders Into Precision Planters

Put Orange Shanks on air seeders or air drills and get the kind of individual row depth control found in high-cost precision drills. The assemblies are easy to add to existing air seeder toolbars and even use the owner's preferred openers.

"The old shank is cut off and the opener is reattached to the side of the Orange Shank assembly," says John Gehrer, Orange Shank inventor. "Every farm is different, and there are hundreds of different openers available. This lets the grower use what they already have that works for them."

This isn't the first manufacturing venture for Gehrer and his wife Angelika. They developed and still market Never Spill Spouts (Vol. 21, No. 5). Like the spouts, the Orange

Shanks, with their 5-ft. bar, rubber torsion mount, and packer wheel are a simple answer to a problem Gehrer faced on his farm.

"With regular air seeders, when you cross ditches or rough ground you don't get even seeding depths," says Gehrer.

Gehrer didn't want the cost or complexity of a system that delivered individual pressure to each row. The rubber torsion mount first proved itself in cultivators 50+ years ago. More recently, European and Australian vertical tillage equipment have made use of the design.

"I saw we could use them on our seeder shanks too," says Gehrer.

With the Orange Shank, he still changes the depth by lowering the toolbar. However,

the opener shank rides between the toolbar and a packer wheel. The rubber torsion mount provides flexibility so the shank can adjust to an irregular surface, but the packer wheel prevents the opener from going too deep.

Gehrer first tried a prototype of the new assemblies a year ago, planting canola, soybeans and oats. This past fall he converted the entire unit to plant winter wheat and winter canola. Results were positive, and this spring he used them on about 1,200 acres. He also has several other growers testing the new design.

"I have about 12 sets of Orange Shanks out and am waiting on feedback," says Gehrer.

"The only change made so far is to move the shanks closer to the packing wheels for even

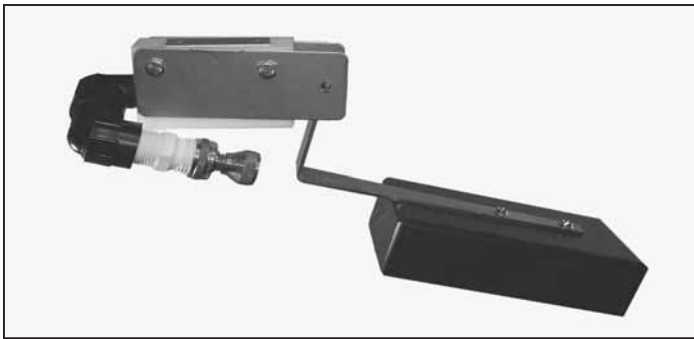
better depth control."

Optional coulters can be mounted on the Orange Shank assembly bar ahead of the opener.

"Coulters eliminate any concern over a trash problem in heavy residue," says Gehrer.

The Orange Shank assemblies, with packing wheel, suspension mount and bracket for the reused shank, are priced at \$400 each. "It is a low-cost way to upgrade depth control instead of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a new precision air drill," says Gehrer.

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Spring-loaded valve stays closed until water level goes down. Then the weight, a solid block of HDPE plastic that floats on the water surface, pushes valve open to refill trough.

Weighted Float Valve Built To Last

The next time the float valve in your livestock water tank fails, you should consider replacing it with a new type of valve - the Brown Weight Valve.

The inventor, Garry Brown, developed the float when he purchased a dairy farm in Utah. He started selling it with a booth at a couple of farm shows. Currently he has customers all across the U.S., and the valves are available through Nasco (enasco.com) and Amazon. Customers range from livestock owners with small herds to some of the largest dairy operators in California, Arizona and New Mexico.

What makes the Brown Weight Valve different is that the valve is spring-loaded closed until the water level goes down. Then the weight, a solid block of HDPE plastic that floats on the water surface, pushes the spring-loaded valve open to refill the trough. All metal parts are stainless steel, and the housing is a machined block of HDPE, and

the weight is a solid brick of HDPE like the weight.

It's easy to install. Just remove the old float valve and install the weight valve. Brown adds that livestock owners who supply water to galvanized or rubber tanks with a hose can build a stand out of scrap metal to attach the valve to so they can move it to different tanks.

Brown also offers the valve in 5 different sizes. The sizes range from 300 to 500 gph (\$32) to 2,000 gph (\$80). He also makes them with hanging weights for under water or other situations. In addition, he has a freeze-proof model.

Brown emphasizes that he guarantees his valves for 5 years. At present he sells most of them directly to farmers. If you call, he can help order the right valves to fit your needs.

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Cut-off template is bolted to a couple of short, angled 2 by 4's and a piece of plywood that connects them. Entire assembly is held on post with a C-clamp.

Cut-Off Template Helps Make Uniform Fence Posts

By Philip Whitmoyer

Along with a couple of other volunteers, I was helping redo a fence around a local graveyard. We needed to set 36 4 by 4 posts to the same height. We also wanted the posts to be angled at the top to shed water. Since no one had a circular saw big enough to cut through the posts with one pass, I decided to make a jig to do the job with a reciprocating saw.

I started by welding together two rectangular boxes big enough to fit over the posts, out of 1-in. sq. tubing. I bolted them together with washers between so there's just enough room for a saw blade. The boxes are long enough to allow the blade to cut

through without hitting the bolts that hold them together. The narrow slots keep the saw blade from wandering.

To get the right angle, I bolted the template to a couple of short, angled 2 by 4's and a piece of plywood that connects them. Then I attach the whole assembly to the post with a C-clamp. We snapped a chalk line along the outside of the posts to align the template.

The idea cost me nothing, worked great, and the cuts came out very uniform. The new fence looks great.

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