

# "Best & Worst" No-Till Drills, Planters

Here, courtesy of Frank Lessiter, editor and publisher of NO-TILL FARMER, are the "best" and "worst" buy comments by that publication's readers about their no-till drills and planters.

Lessiter asked his readers to "tell it like it is" about planters and drills that perform with flying colors and the lemons that fail because of poor performance or failure of the dealer or company to provide service.

(Subscriptions to NO-TILL FARMER sell for \$28.95. Contact: NO-TILL FARMER, P.O. Box 624, Brookfield, Wis. 53008 ph 414 782-4480).

Here's how the survey shaped up:

## Drills

**Amazone 375** - Frank Vanek, More, Mont., says this drill penetrates the soil well and is easy to adjust for seed and fertilizer placement. However, he says it doesn't pack the seed properly. "I'm trying to improve it. The planter points are too expensive so I make my own using Acra-Plant tips."

**Case-International 5200** - Ronald Gerken, Sterling, Ill., rented a 5200 planter equipped with a Yetter 6600 coulters cart and got a perfect stand.

**Case-International 5400** - David Morgan, Fayette, Ohio, mounted a Yetter coulters cart and Fuerst harrow on his 5400 drill. "The coulters on the cart do a very nice job of cutting through heavy corn stalks. The harrow does a nice job of shredding stalks and spreading them evenly."

**Crustbuster 3800** - "The spring-loaded 1 by 12-in. press wheels operate independently of the disc openers for consistent soil-to-seed contact," says Kelly Cheesewright, Christman, Ill.

Wayland Magee, Bennington, Neb., says the drill's staggered discs and excellent down-pressure eliminate the need for coulters.

**GT Drills** - James Thomas, Decatur, Neb., says the gangs on his GT drill do a poor job of clearing trash. "The company suggested we wait until the ground was a little drier, but we can't wait. We need a drill that will work under variable conditions."

**Great Plains 10-ft. End Wheel** - Dick Sohrcweide, Chilton, Wis., says there are some things he doesn't like about his drill. "The alfalfa seed box is too small and the disc openers are built too light. The alfalfa seed tubes are too long. We had to cut them all off and redrill the holes."

Rex Frieden, Lamar, Mo., mounted a coulters cart on his drill for more flexibility. "I can attach the cart for no-till, then unhook it for conventional tillage."

**Great Plains 15-Ft. Solid Stand** - Scott Freeman, Muncie, Ind., says he gets uneven stands and poor seed depth control with his 1987 model. "The packer wheels aren't built rugged enough and the planter has limited down-pressure."

Greg DeMott, Ashley, Mich., says his drill is equipped with a center-pivot hitch. "It really works well when seeding soybeans into corn stubble."

Roy Pontzius, Columbia City, Ind., says his drill seeds at a consistent depth and has good residue clearance.

Jonathan Lemon, Stouffville, Ont., used his drill with a combination drill hitch and rippled coulters. "It penetrates the soil well and is equipped with mounted harrows for good seed coverage. The combination drill hitch lets me turn short."

Neil Harder, Martin, Ohio tested his no-till drill two years ago, planting soybeans in a head-to-head comparison with a Deere 7000 no-till planter equipped with splitter row units. "Soybeans planted with the drill

were spaced evenly but at an uneven depth. Seed emergence was disappointing compared to the Deere planter and splitter."

**Great Plains 20-ft. Solid Stand** - Dave Erlandson, Smithshire, Ill., says he likes everything about his drill except that the seed firming wheels tend to gum up with mud under wet conditions.

Kenneth Woolston, Sutherland, Iowa, isn't pleased with the quality of the bearings, discs, or bushings on his drill.

**Haybuster 107** - Stanley Smock, Edinburg, Ind., says this drill is simple to adjust in the field, but could do a better job of placing seeds at a constant depth.

Representatives of the Douglas Soil And Water Conservation District in Alexandria, Minn., say they like the drill but that the discs and bearings wear out too fast.

The Rasmussen Farm in Hyde Park, Utah, has had to replace bearings on their drill eight times in six years. Rusty fertilizer boxes have also been a problem.

Johnny Daniel, Charlotte, Tenn., has had excellent results seeding wheat after corn has been chopped for silage, and also spring seeding oats after corn. He's also had good luck seeding alfalfa in the fall after wheat harvest and seeding sorghum-sudan in grazed wheat.

Jim Brautigam, Wapokeneta, Ohio, says his Haybuster drill is very simple to use and maintain. "The wheels are mounted behind the drill so it handles well on the road. I pull it with my 50 hp tractor."

The Butler Soil And Water Conservation District in Hamilton, Ohio, leases four drills to farmers. "We've planted about 6,000 acres with good to excellent results where field conditions are good. The drill has few moving parts to replace and the offset coulters work well," says David Carter, representative.

**Haybuster 8000** - Jeff Brown, Scranton, N. Dak., has used his 8000 drill to no-till small grains into stubble with little moisture loss. "It's equipped to deep band anhydrous ammonia and starter fertilizer which makes for a healthier root system. It seeds in paired rows and is a hoe drill so weeds have difficulty competing for moisture."

**Deere 515** - Verdell Stark, Arlington, Neb., bought this 3-pt. hitch drill without seeding units. He installed Acra-Plant soybean planting units and says they do a good job of seeding beans in 10-in. rows.

**Deere 752** - Charles Rubenberg, Britton, S. Dak., has used his drill to seed wheat and soybeans into both corn stalks and wheat stubble. "Excellent seed placement and good stands."

**Deere 9400** - Vance Ehmke, Healy, Kan., likes this drill's clean, simple design. "There's plenty of clearance under the drill which helps in heavy residue."

Hugh McFarland uses four of the drills on his Conrad, Mont., ranch. "They have lots of clearance and good down pressure."

**Lilliston Drills** - Ken DePriest, Paw Paw, Mich., has used his Lilliston drill to plant

4,000 acres with minimum maintenance and no major breakdowns.

Bill Kirchgessner, Floyd Knobs, Ind., says the drill's 50 bu. soybean seed capacity lets him plant lots of acres without having to stop to refill. However, he says the drill often leaves seed on top of uneven ground.

**Lilliston 9680** - "It places seed at the right depth in all types of seedbeds including pastures, corn stalks, soybean residue and conventional seedbeds," reports Terry Dahmer, Marion, Ill.

**Melroe 702** - Lynn Whitlesey, Atwater, Ohio, isn't pleased with this 702 drill's depth control and says parts are difficult to find.

**Marliss Drills** - Brock Baker, Peabody, Kan., says the drill is heavy-duty and will operate in any type of residue.

R.D. Wolheter, Wolcottville, Ind., says his drill is difficult to transport between fields. "The end wheels are too wide for road travel. Trash flow through the drill could also be improved."

**Tye Series V** - Keith Torbeck, Shobonier, Ill., credits his 15-ft. Tye with good seed-to-soil contact. He says it handles seed gently and is easy to adjust, and adds that it's easy to clean out the seed box.

Larry Lukow, Chebanse, Ill., says the fluted coulters on his drill tear up too much residue. He's also had problems with uneven seed placement.

Stanley Smock used a Tye Series V drill owned by his Soil And Water Conservation District. "It seems to have better depth control than the Haybuster drill I had tried before. However, it's more difficult to adjust."

Ronald Adams, Convoy, Ohio, says his drill does a good job of seeding soybeans into corn stalks. He adds that it's easy to adjust and that the seed cups don't crack the seed.

"It needs lots of smooth ground to oper-

chisel plow and left very little residue on top of the soil."

**Yielder 220** - Dick Lloyd, Lewiston, Idaho, says his drill is built heavy enough to penetrate hard ground and rugged enough to seed through rocky soil. "It lets me place fertilizer 4 to 5 in. below the seed and 2 to 4 in. to the side. I can attach any type of opener on the floating toolbar. I like the wide range of fertilizer options. I can apply two different dry fertilizers in combination with liquid fertilizer or anhydrous ammonia all at the same time. I can also spray liquid herbicides and apply granular herbicides or insecticides. It can also handle minor nutrients or N-Serve."

**Deere 750** - Lowell Weitzenkamp, Hooper, Neb., says this rugged, heavy-duty drill penetrates well and has never plugged up.

"The drill's weight provides excellent soil penetration whether the seed hopper is full or almost empty and maintains a uniform seed depth. We've had no trouble seeding in heavy trash," says James Domagalski, Richmond, Mich.

"Seeding depth and placement have been extremely accurate," says Cheryl Hazelton, Memphis, Mich. "This drill covers seed well without packing soil, even when planting shallow."

Neal Koberlein, St. Elmo, Ill., says his drill seeds very accurately and has no problems handling heavy residue. "It even cuts through green corn stalks. It's easy to set both seeding depth and down pressure. It's built heavy and designed exceptionally well."

James Wish, Bellefontaine, Ohio, used easily cuts through corn stalks. The single furrow opener works great and produces good stands."

## Planters

**Allis-Chalmers 77** - "The planter's short conventional shoe that extends behind the disc openers left a trough that was hard to properly close over the seed," says Paul Conkright, Jones, Mich. "I later replaced the seed units with Allis-Chalmers 78 Air-Champ units that drop seed through a tube between the opener discs."

**Allis-Chalmers 333** - Alan Carlson, Boyceville, Wis., says his drill is heavy enough to penetrate ground under all no-till conditions. The frame design makes it easy to add attachments. Both seed placement and spacing are good.

Dennis Whitsitt, Huntingdon, Ind., has had problems with disc openers throwing too much dirt out of the seed slot with his 78 Air-Champ planter units. He also had problems with air and seed delivery.

**Black Machines** - C.R. Shaffer, Newton, Iowa, has had good luck with his 1990 Black Machine toolbar equipped with Kinze row units and 1-in. fluted coulters.

Gary Eden, Iowa City, Iowa, uses a Black Machine toolbar equipped with Deere 7200 air units. "I can plant twelve 30-in. rows or add extra splitter units to plant thirteen 15-in. wide rows. It's equipped with no-till coulters and heavy-duty down-pressure springs so it does an excellent job in any condition." Eden previously had used a 1986 Black Machine toolbar equipped with White air units that didn't have no-till coulters. "I

"This drill takes too long to adjust and doesn't have good seed depth control."

ate decently," says Wynn Provines, Vandalia, Ill., who equipped his drill with a coulters cart. "This drill takes too long to adjust and doesn't have good seed depth control. The linkage wears out too fast and rivets often break on the disc openers."

Gerlad Knobloch, Bradford, Ill., says he can't get soybeans seeded deep enough even when the coulters are completely in the ground.

George Ault, Roseville, Ill., says his 20-ft. model doesn't do an even job of seeding.

**United Farm Tools 5000** - James Hobbe, Princeton, Wis., likes the heavy-duty features on this drill, but has had problems with seed metering and adjustment of drill settings.

**Vermeer 107** - Ron Kittle, Troy, Pa., says his Vermeer drill produces an even stand. He likes the steel press wheels.

Dale Daniels, Wakeman, Ohio, has had problems with uneven soil penetration and seed depth.