



Daryl Dixon converted an old Schweiss self-propelled spot sprayer into this 8-ft. mower, reducing machine's height by 2 ft. and bringing the wheels in for a 6-ft. width.



He fabricated a cowling for the engine and a canopy over the driver's seat. A hydraulic cylinder is used to control mower's cutting height.

## Mower Built From Self-Propelled Spot Sprayer

Daryl Dixon wanted a front-mount mower, so he repurposed an old Schweiss spot sprayer. The old field buggy had everything he needed: hydrostatic drive, hydraulic drive wheels, and a solid, 4-in. sq. steel tube frame that articulated. Even the driver's platform and controls were in good shape.

"I cut the height down by 2 ft. and brought the wheels in for about a 6-ft. width," says Dixon. "It's about 6 ft. long without the mower deck."

Dixon fabricated the mower deck with 2-in. sq. tubing for the frame and cross members. He welded on bearings for the 5 blades that give him an 8-ft. cutting width. He also fabricated a cowling for the engine and a canopy over the driver's seat.

The Schweiss sprayer had a little 8 hp

Kohler engine to power the hydrostat and spray pump. Dixon replaced it with a 30 hp diesel that he mounted on the rear of the frame.

"I mounted it backwardsating hinge," says Dixon. "This kept the length of the machine down. I dropped power off the front of the engine to a driveline that runs forward to belt drives on the header for the blades."

Dixon mounted the deck to the frame on pivot points with a hydraulic cylinder to control the cutting height. He says that comes in handy, especially in tall weeds.

"I can lift the header up about 2 ft. and clip the growth and then come back a second time and get the stubs," he says. "With the articulation, it is great for mowing under the bottom wire of a fence and swerving around

posts."

Dixon has mowed a lot of lawns and acreages since he built the tractor/mower. Now 92, he thinks it is time to retire from farming in 1995. His mower tractor is for sale with a price of \$8,500.

Dixon has no plans to retire from fabricating equipment. "I've got a second mower in the shop that I've just completed," he says. "It is just like the first. I'm also rebuilding a 1942 Studebaker pickup to go with the 1950 Studebaker car I rebuilt 10 years ago."

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Sprayer's 8 hp. Kohler engine was replaced with a 30 hp. diesel mounted on back of machine.

## Pivot "Anchor" Prevents Costly Roll-Overs

Pivot Guard from Big John Manufacturing can help keep center pivots from rolling over in high winds. It drills an auger bit 4 ft. into the ground (deeper in sandy soils) to help hold a center pivot in place in winds up to 100 mph.

"Depending on soil type, each 1 3/4-in. auger provides 6,000 to 8,000 lbs. of down pressure on the center pivot towers," explains Jim Frager, Pivot Guard inventor and patent holder. "In our research we found this to be the optimal size auger. Larger ones actually disrupt soil retention."

Frager came up with the design after Nebraska farmers lost 750 center pivots from high winds in 2014. He notes that pivot manufacturers aren't enthusiastic about the Pivot Guard as about 20 percent of their income is from repairing and restoring damaged center pivots. Insurance companies are taking a different view.

Frager cites one Lincoln, Neb., insurance company that paid out more than \$59 million in damages in one year. As a result of

increased claims, deductibles may be raised.

Having Pivot Guards in place could change that. He says some insurance companies are considering offering discounts on policies and reduced deductibles for systems with his devices in place.

In addition, operators have to consider lost yield if a pivot fails mid-season. "We are still evaluating the price, but we expect it will be from \$8,000 to \$10,000 per center pivot, depending on length," says Frager. "Saving the deductible plus yield could more than pay for installation."

Currently the augers need to be activated manually. However, remote control via cell phone or other wireless device is in development. It will work through a module that will interact with a pivot's existing electronic control system.

"If the operator gets a wind alert call, they will be able to shut down the center pivot and lower the augers into the ground," says Frager. "Once winds pass, the augers are withdrawn, and the pivot is restarted."



Pivot Guard drills an auger bit 4 ft. into the ground to help keep center pivots from rolling over in high winds.

He notes that prior to installation, fields have to be evaluated and mapped for buried utilities or water lines. A remote app would include a map of the field showing the pivot's location and any buried lines. Augers would only be lowered once the pivot had reached a safe area of the field.

The units are easy to install. They weigh

less than 100 lbs. and can be put on in less than 30 min. One unit is recommended for each tower.

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## Tractor-Mounted Grave Marker Lift

John Herren says his home-built lift takes the back work out of fixing up flat grave markers so that dirt can be replaced to level them up.

"Before we made this it was all manual labor with a pry bar, shovel and two-wheel cart," says the maintenance man for his Louisville, Ky., church cemetery.

He used scrap iron and purchased square tubing and 4-in. angle iron to create the lift on a 3-pt. hitch for his 20 hp Kubota tractor.

"You set it over the stone and, as you pick it up, it tightens because of the angle of the

arms," he says. He bored several holes to make it adjustable for headstones from 16 to 24 in., and he uses rope to open the clamps to release the stone after it's placed.

"We made it for ourselves, and it makes the job much easier," Herren says, adding it can also work for setting new stones.

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Home-built, 3-pt. mounted lift takes the back work out of leveling flat grave markers. It's adjustable for headstones from 16 to 24 in. wide.