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## Drone Pollinators Boost Crop Production

Dropcopter is a company out of Syracuse, N.Y., that uses fleets of drones to drop pollen over fields and orchards.

One-third of the world's food supply depends on pollination, but natural pollinators are struggling to keep up. Colony collapse alone has decimated bee populations by more than 50 percent within the last decade and renting hives can lead to unpredictable results.

During the blooming period, Dropcopter drones fly 10 ft. above the trees and dispense pollen to the blossoms below at a pre-determined application rate, resulting in even pollination for better fruit set and more predictable harvests. On average, each Dropcopter drone can pollinate 20 acres per day.

Mechanical pollination is nothing new. It's a proven way to increase yields and seed production for many high-value orchard crops. Dropcopter changes the equation by offering a way to do mechanical pollination on a larger scale.

Dropcopter pollination also improves on nature from a consistency standpoint. Bees aren't programmable, and they tend to

visit certain sections of orchards more than others, which leads to uneven pollination. Relying on drones ensures every plant receives enough pollen.

Likewise, Dropcopters can operate at night or in chilly conditions when living pollinators are inactive. The drones can even replenish pollen if unexpected rainstorms have washed it away. Independent research suggests that Dropcopter pollination measures can increase crop yields by 10 to 60 percent.

Dropcopter currently works with apples, almonds, cherries, pears, and other nut and fruit crops, and has locations in N. Y., Calif., and Wash. - although the company will work worldwide. While prices vary, the average pollination cost for the recommended two applications is \$300 per acre.

Interested growers can get in touch at [Dropcopter.com](http://Dropcopter.com) to learn more about their options and receive a custom quote.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dropcopter, 235 Harrison Street #48, Syracuse, N.Y. 13202 (ph 530-586-4770; [www.dropcopter.com](http://www.dropcopter.com)).

## Small Farm Implements Made "Big Farm Tough"

Frustrations with poor quality Cat. 1 and Cat. 2 implements are the reason Homestead Implements exists. Co-owner Lee Lodestro started the company after realizing how many farmers were having to beef up smaller tractor equipment.

"Lee was sick of poor performing implements," says Spencer Santilli, Homestead Implements. "He created and launched Homestead as a quality source of American-made implements for small farms."

Practically every aspect of production and assembly is carried out in the company shop. Some components are imported if U.S.-made parts are not available. Using only U.S. steel, Homestead workers engineer, laser-cut, weld and paint every implement in-house.

"We spent 18 months refining and perfecting our front-end grapple," says Santilli. "It has been our big focus, and the investment has paid off. It is our biggest seller, followed by box blades, landscape rakes and land planes."

Santilli credits the grapple's popularity to high-quality materials like the extra abrasion-resistant Hardox 450 steel used in the grapple teeth and 2-in. Schedule 80 pipe. They are available in 60 and 72-in. sizes and require a third-function hydraulic kit. Grapples are priced from \$1,780 for a sub-compact tractor to \$3,930 for a utility tractor.

While the grapples have proven popular as is, the company is open to suggestions for improvements, notes Santilli. "We have a very dedicated and knowledgeable customer base, and they may pick up on things we



**Homestead Implements are U.S. made for small farms. They make grapples, box blades, landscape rakes and land planes.**

don't notice," he says. "We encourage our customers to come back to us with problems or suggestions."

Homestead implements are available in all major brand colors, as well as in standard-duty and heavy-duty models.

"We provide quality equipment at competitive prices," says Santilli. "In our first 15 months, we have shipped to every state in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii, and all parts of Canada."

The upstate New York company offers free shipping within the continental U.S. and to Ontario. It also offers 10 percent discounts to active-duty military and veterans on every purchase.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Homestead Implements, 2855 Girts Rd., Jamestown, N.Y. 14701 (ph 833-625-0635; [www.homesteadimplements.com](http://www.homesteadimplements.com)).



**The ECO automated lamb and baby goat feeder has up to eight adjustable teats and only requires an electrical outlet for installation.**

## No Hassle Lamb And Kid Feeder

Jan Ziemerink has an easy way to keep lambs and kids supplied with milk. The ECO lamb and baby goat feeder can satisfy up to 240 head around the clock with up to eight adjustable height sucking teats.

"It is a great piece of equipment for dairy goats and sheep, but also for meat flocks," says Jan Ziemerink, Foerster-Technik North America. "With dairy sheep and goats, you can take the lamb or kid off once they've had colostrum. With meat flocks, you can leave one or two on the mother and put the extras on the feeder."

Ziernerink was a veal producer in 2000 when a sheep producer asked about an automated lamb feeder. He began selling them in 2001 and has sold 30 to 40 a year since in Canada and has begun marketing them in the U.S. as well.

"Many of my original customers have upgraded to the new ECO feeder," says Ziernerink. "Many are so dependent on them that they buy a second as a backup. They

don't want any interruption if a problem develops."

Ziernerink has a full-time technician to respond to questions and can overnight parts if needed. He says the system is so simple to set up that 95 percent of his customers set up their own.

"All they need to do is to provide an electrical outlet," says Ziernerink. "The control panel is easy to learn and it's also easy to adjust the water and milk powder portion amount."

The milk substitute is prepared hot and fresh in small portions as needed. The built-in boiler maintains the optimum temperature of the mixture throughout the day and night.

The ECO unit is priced at \$5,300 (Can.).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Foerster-Technik North America, 490 Sheldon Dr., Unit 9-10, Cambridge, Ontario Canada N1T 2C1 (ph 519-239-9756; [jan.ziernerink@foerster-technik.com](mailto:jan.ziernerink@foerster-technik.com); [www.foerster-technik.com](http://www.foerster-technik.com)).



**Forstack's pto driven bale accumulator stacks bales automatically in the field, eliminating the need for extra handling.**



## Grab And Stack Big Squares Fast

The Forstack 8-12 big bale accumulator from Arcusin makes it easy to clear a field fast and load a flatbed even faster. The Spanish-made accumulator is designed to grab big square bales at up to 5 mph and stack them on the go while moving on to the next bale at up to 10 to 12 mph. Once loaded, it can drop the loads in the field or travel at road speed between the field and a storage building.

"It's super quick, super simple and completely automatic," says Michael Ray, U.S. sales manager for Arcusin. "It takes out human error by keeping the stack straight for loading on a flatbed."

The stack is kept straight by Forstack's unique, but simple design. Instead of stacking successive bales on top, it grabs each bale and raises it between vertical bars, while making room for the next bale below. Successive bales raise the previous bale, creating a tight, straight stack.

Ray points out that a lot of bales get stacked in the field, but often not straight. This often

requires a second driver and tractor.

Fully loaded, the Forstack can carry four 3 by 3-ft. bales or three 4 by 4-ft. bales. "It is light and requires only a minimum of 100 hp. It's pto driven, so there is not a lot of hydraulics."

Ray says the Forstack is priced at \$54,000 for 2022.

Ray has been signing up dealers in the U.S. since 2018. Yael Serena, head of marketing with Arcusin S.A., said they currently have two dealers in Canada, one in Manitoba and one in Alberta.

"In other areas of Canada, we sell direct from the factory," says Serena.

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