



Replacement track is extruded aluminum, and the trolley is rated to 3,000 lbs.

## Sliding Door Fix For Butler Buildings

Farm shed owners with doors that don't slide can get a better-than-new fix. Illiana Sliding Shed Door has heavy-duty kits to get doors back on track and sliding smoothly. While the company repairs wind damage and other door problems with all brands, it specializes in Butler Buildings.

"The big, heavy, steel doors on Butler Buildings are a real problem," says Shane Meade, Illiana Sliding Shed Door. "The standard track just doesn't hold up. The company is out of business, and nobody works on them."

Meade saw a business opportunity and now travels throughout the Midwest installing his track and trolley replacements. The track is extruded aluminum, and the trolley is rated to 3,000 lbs. He often recommends extruded aluminum doors as well.

"I charge \$22 per foot for the track and \$120 per trolley," says Meade. "Most fixes

run about \$2,800, \$2,500 if closer to home. It's not a cheap fix, but it's a permanent one."

When Meade travels to do one door, he usually finds others in the neighborhood. Meade has shipped track and trolley kits to California for DIY installation. "Sometimes, I will ship the materials and then fly to the location and do the install with the customer's tools," says Meade.

Meade offers options beyond the smoother slide. They include an automated system with push-button and remote control. He also offers a swing door that uses electric actuators instead of hydraulic cylinders.

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No-till grass seeder puts liquid fertilizer in the cut in the ground. "I've used it on 30 acres, and it works well. I like it because I don't have to pick it up at the end of the row," says Hodgson.

## Made-It-Myself No-Till Feed & Seed

Bill Hodgson gives his broadcast grass seed a boost by ripping slots in the ground with old plow coulters and dripping in liquid fertilizer. He mounted a small electric broadcast spreader to a pipe frame with a 3-pt. hitch and hooked a section of drag behind. It works great and about the only out-of-pocket cost was the plastic fertilizer tanks. He got the idea from fellow Ohio farmer Don Brown (Vol. 44, No. 1). However, Hodgson built his frame out of old pipe and other scrap he'd set aside. "We use it in fields where the grass is wearing thin," says Hodgson.

Hodgson used 2-in. pipe for the 2 by 6-ft. frame. He used steam fittings for the right-angle elbows and welded in heavy-duty angle iron for cross members.

"I used 2 in. pipe for an upright to mount the top link of the 3-pt. and braced it to either side," says Hodgson. "I didn't quite trust the butt weld on the upright, so I ran two aircraft cables from the top link end to the rear frame and put turnbuckles on them for added support."

Hodgson is 86 and not anxious to wrestle the 3-pt. hitch into place, so he added standpipes, two in front and one in the rear. He sets them in place and lowers the seeder, removing them when he hooks it back up. He stores the front ones on the top of the frame.

"The standpipes make it easy to hook up the 3-pt.," says Hodgson. "Everything is at the right height."

Hodgson varied his design from Brown's by replacing the concrete block weights for down pressure with liquid fertilizer tanks. If fertilizer isn't needed, he fills them with water. Tubes with valves drip fertilizer into the slots made by the coulters.

"I've found I don't often need to fill the tanks, but if I need the fertilizer, I can use them," says Hodgson. "I plan to add a pressure pump for better control. Now I estimate how much to open the valves."

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## No-Till Transplanter

Mechanical Transplanter Co. has the add-ons needed to transplant seedlings into no-till beds and fields. The transplanter is compact yet built tough to handle the job.

"We add Yetter row cleaner wheels to remove plant material before the heavy-duty 18-in. wavy cutting disk opens up the ground," says Dan Timmer, Mechanical Transplanter Co. "The suction point tooth follows, heaving up the soil to create a 3/4 to 1-in. furrow for the seedling."

The wide furrow is needed for the larger plugs of more established plants recommended for no-till transplanting. Closing up the furrow around the roots is key to plant survival. It is one reason a 50 hp. or larger tractor is recommended to pull the transplanter through the untilled ground. Weights on the planter are needed to provide 75 to 100 lbs. of down pressure on the closing wheels. To counter the rear weight on the 3-pt. hitch, weights may also be needed on the tractor's front end.

"There was a lot of interest in no-till transplants when the hemp market boomed,"

says Timmer. "The transplanter is finding a market today with the use of crimped cover crops. We have customers using theirs for tomatoes and pumpkins. Rolled ryegrass makes a nice surface for pumpkins to grow on."

Timmer notes that the no-till elements could be added to an existing transplanter if it's less than 10 to 12 years old and if it has the right toolbar and 3-pt. hitch. Even then, a single row upgrade may run \$1,800. He adds that multi-row transplanter conversions shouldn't be as expensive on a per row basis. "The no-till additions raise the price of a new \$3,200 transplanter to almost \$6,000," notes Timmer. "That's expensive, but unless your transplanter is set up for the components, it may be better to buy a new unit."

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Baskets are placed on the X-Trect slatted platform just above the floor. As the chicks hatch, they drop through the slats onto the floor where they find feed and water.

## In-Barn Hatch Better For Chicks And Owners

Hatching chicks in the barn where they'll be raised is paying off in multiple ways for a group of New Brunswick poultry producers. They've adopted a hatching system that has been in use in Europe for some time. It eliminates the need to ship live chicks.

"We tried it for animal health and welfare reasons," says Marco Volpe, Groupe Westco. "We were looking for a way to minimize stress to the birds and give them access to feed and water faster. We found we got a better hatch, lower flock mortality and better gain. We were expecting these results because that's what producers were seeing in Europe."

The company was formed by six poultry producers. They produce 50 million lbs. of broiler chickens a year and have laying hens that produce 14 million fertilized eggs per year.

The eggs are transported to the company hatchery where they are incubated for 18 days. Then they leave the incubation chamber and are vaccinated, placed in baskets, and transferred to the production farms where the company has installed a hatching system

called X-Trect.

The baskets are placed on the X-Trect slatted platform just above the floor. As the chicks hatch, they drop through the slats onto the floor where they find feed and water. When hatching is complete, the platform with baskets and egg debris is raised to the ceiling for cleanout.

Volpe says confidence in the new system is high. "We have conducted more than 100 trials of 9,000 chicks each," he says. "We compared them to eggs from the same breeder flocks, same feed, same everything, and we got a 2 1/2 percent better hatching rate."

That equates to 22,500 more live chicks just from the trials. Multiplied out against the 14 million fertilized eggs produced, if the system is adopted company-wide, live chick numbers would jump by 350,000.

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