

Eliminating Mud-Clogged Gauge Wheels

After planting thousands of acres each year, custom planter Allen Jung believes he has a solution to mud-clogged gauge wheels. His solution came after years of seeing depth gauge wheels plug up with mud, bearings burn out, tires wear, and depth gauge wheels fall off. It's a wheel retainer and a steel ring to protect the wheel's tire and reduce mud clogging.

"OEMs use a bolt with a hexagonal head and no washers to secure the bearing on the depth gauge wheel," says Jung. "My retainer slips into the OEM bolt hole and with its flange, secures the bearing and the wheel. It does require a little longer bolt, but if the bearing burns out, the wheel can't fall off. It'll wobble around the retainer until the operator notices and replaces the bearing."

The same retainer can also be used to secure the closing wheel bearing. Depth gauge wheels cost as much as \$180, and closing wheels cost around \$35. Replacing the OEM bolt with the \$19.95 retainer is pretty cheap insurance.

Jung's steel ring is designed to prevent mud clogging that can cause bearings to burn out. The \$39.95 ring is installed on the side of gauge wheel tires with six screws. It prevents the lip of the tire from rubbing against objects and helps prevent mud from packing in the tires. This reduces traction loss and improves performance. It also eliminates the need for mud scrapers on planters, air seeders, and no-till drills.

"The steel rings prevent premature wear and tear and are easy to install," says Jung. "Once installed, the wheels turn easier and shed mud easier, so they don't get plugged. I've had them installed for 3 years and seen only 1/16 of an inch of wear after planting



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13,000 acres."

Jung annually plants from 4,000 to 5,000 acres but hasn't purchased a new planter since 2009. He notes that his retainers and steel rings make buying used planters safer financially.

"When you buy a used planter, you don't know when a bearing was last replaced or how much life is left in it," says Jung. "With my retainers, you don't have to worry about losing wheels if a bearing does go out. With the steel rings in place, you can eliminate scrapers and not have to replace the rubber tires."

Jung has retainers and steel rings for depth gauge wheels on Deere corn planters and air seeders, as well as White and Kinze corn planter gauge wheels.

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Wheels at each end keep the boom at specific heights, which are fully adjustable based on in-field weeds. The sponges evenly distribute chemicals across the boom to thoroughly coat every weed it comes in contact with.

Weed Wiper Takes Out Stubborn Weeds

Smucker Manufacturing Inc. of Harrisburg, Ore., sells sponge weed wipers for cost-effective weed control that's gentle on the crops growing beneath and has no risk of chemical drift, even in windy conditions. This targeted approach makes it a popular choice with organic farmers, as they have complete control over the type of herbicide used.

The company got its start 40 years ago when grass farmers Willard Smucker and Walter Kropf joined forces to develop a device for drift-free weed control - the weed wiper. Though the tool has been modified over the past decades, it remains a popular choice now considered ahead of its time.

"In the Midwest, the most common use of a Weed wiper is attaching a kit to a self-propelled sprayer," says Darek Smith, Smucker ag products sales manager. "Farmers use high clearance sprayers to kill pigweed and water hemp in soybeans."

The key to successful weed wiping is getting enough herbicide on the weeds so that they die quickly. The Smucker Sponge Weed Wiper accomplishes this through pump-fed sponges that can hold and apply a higher concentration of herbicide to weeds through direct contact rather than as a spray that might drip down and damage the crop below. This way, the underlying crops and soil stay safe from contamination. If a few drips end up on crop leaves, it will likely only cause light spotting.

Wheels at each end keep the boom at

specific heights, which are fully adjustable based on in-field weeds. The sponges evenly distribute chemicals across the boom to thoroughly coat every weed it comes in contact with. This design means that the tool works best when there's a significant height difference between the weeds and field crops.

Best of all, the absorbency of the sponges ensures that the tool uses minimal amounts of chemicals compared to other methods. Farmers who use it report less than \$1 in chemical costs per acre treated.

Smucker offers three models: pull type, 3-point hitch, and ATV and UTV compatible. Pull-type models have wheels and heavy-duty U-joints that contour to the terrain for uniform sponge height. MSRP ranges from \$2,799 for 10 ft. to \$6,150 for 40 ft. 3-point hitches that are best for row crop applications and allow for quick height adjustments. The MSRP ranges from \$2,469 to \$4,629 for 10 ft. to 30 ft. ATV and UTV models that are great for pastures, orchards, and other areas that require versatility. MSRP ranges from \$399 to \$1,799 for 5 ft. to 15 ft. Finally, the front bucket models have quick attach brackets for simple mounting. The MSRP is \$1,175 to \$2,159 for 10 ft. to 20 ft. The company also offers kits for sprayer booms and DIY frames.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Smucker Manufacturing, Inc., 22919 N. Coburg Road, Harrisburg, Ore. 97446 (ph 541-995-8000; info@smucker.net; www.smucker.net).

Laminated Tires Are A Durable Alternative

High Grade Manufacturing makes laminated wheels for rotary mowers as well as split and punch products for the loading dock industry.

Laminated tires are designed for harsh environments. The lamination process improves each tire's strength and reduces the risk of punctures, cuts, and abrasions from daily wear and tear. The tires offer traction, stability, and high load-carrying capacity across rugged terrains. They're designed for shock absorption and cut down on vibrations. Their rugged design can also improve maneuvering capabilities.

High Grade works directly with some of the original creators of the laminated tire, taking their unique manufacturing process and combining it with High Grade's engineering and technological innovations. By their account, it's resulted in the best-segmented tire in the industry. The brand's tire designs have earned the position of an Original Equipment Manufacturer for brands like Alamo, Diamond Mowers, John Deere, Kodiak, Kubota, Woods Equipment Co., and more.

Since its start, the company has expanded its product line to include a comprehensive range of wheels and accessories, including full tail wheel assemblies, solid molded tires,



Laminated tires have better strength and reduce the risk of cuts and abrasions from hard use.

finish mower assemblies, turnbuckles, hubs, forks, and a full line of replacement parts.

Pricing for individual tires ranges from about \$32 for 10 in. to \$162 for 25.5 in. models. It's possible to purchase tires directly through the company website. They offer personalized support and technical advice for your specific needs.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, High Grade Manufacturing, 5250 Old Louisville Rd., Bldg. 15, Pooler, Ga. 31322 (ph 912-330-0708; www.highgrademfg.com).

They Offer Custom Cab Mounts

Since 2010, DWE has produced unique monitor mounting rails for the R-Series John Deere tractors. It's expanded its product line to include monitor mounting solutions for row crop, haying, and harvesting equipment.

The Radio Reaper (\$128) is a two-way radio mount that doesn't require drilling holes in the tractor cab. It's suitable for the S series John Deere combines and W series windrowers. The "Stubby" version has a 3-ft. shorter bar to better fit around swivel seats. This version acts as a combination monitor and two-way radio mount for S6, S7, and X9 JD combines and W series windrowers, as well as Hagie STS sprayers with X9 cabs. Both models easily bolt into the right rear cab corner post bosses. Brackets hold the radio at head level for better use of cab space and to let the driver use a lower volume. The unique DWE design provides a 10 1/2-in. slotted rail for mounting tablets, monitors, cell phones, and more. All mounting hardware is included, as is an angled mic "hang up" mounting plate.

The company also offers "Sparky," an automatic grip wireless phone charger kit. Sparky will sense the presence of a phone, securely grip it, and charge the device. Removing the phone again takes just one hand. Prices range from \$132 to \$144, depending on the specific mount.

Other products include a "Radio Boss Kit" two-way radio mount and mic hanger (\$96), "The Boomerang" monitor mounting station (\$182), "The Ranger" dual shelf package (\$220), both compatible with R



DWE Radio Reaper combination monitor/radio mount.

series sprayers, F series applicators, and R series tractors. The website lists many other products.

Find a DWE supplier by looking at the company's dealer map of John Deere locations that carry its products. Most are located throughout Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, DWE (cabmonitorinfo@gmail.com; www.cabmonitor.com).

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