"Chisel-Shredder" Boosts Yields

"I've used conservation tillage techniques for over 10 years and drilled soybeans for 7 years. However, I noticed some residue build-up which resulted in poor seedbeds and herbicide ineffectiveness," says Richard Althaus, Mendota Ill., who solved the problem with a combination chisel plow and stalk shredder. His machine was recently selected as one of the country's "Top 20 Conservation Tillage Ideas" in a contest sponsored by Ciba-Geigy as a promotion for Dual herbicides (Copies of the booklet which contains Althaus' idea, and 19 other good ideas, are still available. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Karen Smith, Ciba-Geigy Corporation, P.O. Box 18300, Greensboro, N.C. 27419 ph 919 292-7100).

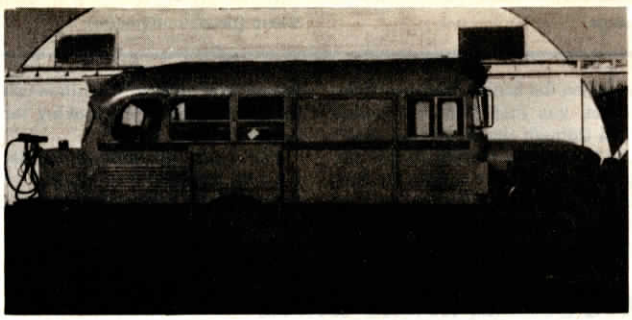
Althaus says that when he noticed the residue build-up problem, he decided to try some of the conservation tillage practices used by Herman Warsaw, Saybrook, Ill., who's well-known for regularly producing 300 bu. corn yields. "One key to his program is reduction of crop residue to as small a size as practical to facilitate usage by the next crop. He uses a stalk shredder to chop his heavy cornstalks prior to chiseling.

"After calculating the costs of shredding, I found that labor, fuel, and repair expenses would be excessive as an extra operation. Also, timeliness could be a factor for large acreages. I decided that if I could combine chiseling and shredding into a single operation, this might be more economical, despite the fact that slightly fewer acres per day could be covered.

"Nothing was available from equipment companies to implement my idea. With the help of a local welding shop, we fabricated an arch-type drawbar for the chisel plow, attaching it to the tractor 3-point. The arch allows the 15 ft. flail shredder to be connected to the tractor drawbar and pto drive.

"The combination worked very well on over 700 acres of cornstalks in the fall of 1982. The immediate result was a pleasing field appearance, with enough residue left for erosion control. In 1983, a dry year, my decision proved invaluable. We had our best soybeans ever, and the corn yields were exceptional, considering the growing season. We also observed greater herbicide effectiveness, better seed/soil contact, and increased soil tilth."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richard Althous, 038 N. 4453 Rd., Mendota, Ill. 61342.



School Bus Makes Great Portable Farm Shop

"Three years ago I decided to try to put our tools, oil, fuel, welder and other shop equipment on one vehicle for field servicing and repairs. We farm about 5,000 acres and custom cut hay on another 1,400 acres so we spend a lot of time repairing and maintaining machinery in the field," says Ron Armstrong, Youngstown, Alta.

"We started with a 1966 36-passenger bus. We removed all the seats, and cut out one section of the wall and floor to install a welder cabinet. The cabinet is made from steel and opens only to the outside of the bus. It houses the welder-power plant and ocy-acetylene torch," says Armstrong. "A fold-up bench on the side of the bus provides a work table for welding, grinding, and so on. When not in use the vice slips out of the bench and stores inside."

He equipped the bus with two 150-gal. fuel tanks, so he can haul both gas and diesel fuel if needed. He also outfitted the inside of the bus with an air compressor, complete set of bolts and hardware, a full set of hand tools, impact wrench, angle grinder, drill, grease, oil, parts cabinet full work bench and hydraulic hose and couplers. He also wired it for 110 with plug-ins.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron Armstrong, Box 178, Youngstown, Alta. TOJ 3PO (ph 403 779-2432).

Photo courtesy The American Tree Farmer

Up & Down "Disaster" Bridge

High water each spring used to wipe out the bridge across the 20-ft. creek on Harold Smith's farm near North Jackson, Ohio. He finally solved the problem with a floating "disaster" bridge that lifts off its pilings at high water but later settles back into place.

"The bridge is 10 ft. wide and 24 ft. long and was built to span the normal width of the stream. Spring floods increase the width to 100 ft.," says Smith who built the bridge out of three 10 by 24-ft. treated white oak cross beams covered by a 2-in. plank deck. (He says he'd add a fourth cross beam for added strength if he did it again.) When at rest the ends of the bridge rest on poured concrete "pylons".

At high water, the bridge is held in place by four 10-in. dia. wood posts — one at each corner — sunk deep in the ground. "The length of the corner posts is governed by the water depth at flood stage but it's important that the bridge be able to slide freely up and down," explains Smith. Planks are notched at each corner to hold snugly to the posts.

Smith, who operates a tree farm, says the bridge had to be strong to bear the weight of trucks loaded with wood. "I built it from wood from my woodland area so my only cost was the custom sawing of the 2 by 10-in. decking, the cost of wood preservative, and the cement," says Smith.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harold L. Smith, 1831 N. Newton Falls, North Jackson, Ohio 44451 (ph 216 538-3717).