

SPRAYING CREW RIDES SLED TO "SHOOT DOWN" ESCAPES

New Way to Whip Weeds

Here's an interesting new twist to those "bean buggies" you've been reading about in FARM SHOW.

Instead of a motorized buggy that carries one to four persons armed with hoes or corn knives, Paul Gorder, who farms near Wahpeton, N. Dak., hit on the idea of a tractor-mounted sled that carries six riders, each armed with a pistol-type spray gun. Riders shoot weeds, taking careful aim not to hit the crop. "It really works slick," says Paul, who along with his son designed the weed sled. Paul had finalized plans with a local manufacturer to custom build weed sleds for any interested row crop farmers as this issue of FARM SHOW went to press.

The sled is V-shaped and hooks onto the tractor's 3 pt. hitch. The V-shape gives each pistol packin' rider a good view for spotting "escape" weeds.

The sled rides on skid-type runners. A guide wheel can be slipped on at each end for stabilization if the sled is being used on uneven terrain.

The Gorders built the weed sled primarily for use in sugar beet fields but feel it would be applicable to most other row crops, such as for re-

moval of volunteer corn and soybeans. "The sled doesn't have as much clearance as bean buggies so you would have to get into a field before the crop is 1½ or 2 ft. tall. However, that's really no problem since the earlier you can go over fields to nail escape weeds, the better," says Paul.

When planting beets, the Gorders mount marker knives on the planter. They make grooves which the front tractor wheels, equipped with tires which have a narrow, pointed rib in the center, follow to guide the sled as it moves down the row. With this guidance system, the driver doesn't have to do hardly any driving, except for turning at the end of the row, Paul points out.

The sled is 240 in. wide and will handle twelve 20 in. rows, eight 30 in. rows or various other row widths. Each spray gun carries 5 to 10 lbs. pressure. Individual guns shoot a narrow or wide stream, depending on how far back the trigger is pulled by the operator. "We hired high school kids — mostly girls — to ride the sled last summer. With a little practice, they could nail weeds in the row without hitting beet plants on either



Labor and chemical costs using the Weed Sled on sugar beets averaged about \$10 per acre, vs. up to \$42 which Paul Gorder, inventor, paid for migrant labor. Riders used 23 in. long guns commonly used to spray cattle.

side. If the weed and beet plant were right together, they sacrificed the beet plant to get the weed," says Paul. He credits Wayne Schwitters, of Appleton, Minn., for the spraying idea: "We were planning to use hoes until he told us that spot spraying is faster and easier than using hoes or knives, and just as effective. Now that we've tried it, we agree."

Depending on the crop and the weeds, the Gorders use 2,4-D, Betanex or Dowpon in their spray guns. For sugar beets, they run two shifts on the sled — one crew taking it from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and another from 2:00 to 9:00 p.m. "We moved through the field at 2 or 3 mph. So far as we could tell, there was no undue

safety hazards for the riders," Paul points out.

Cost of his custom built weed sleds, which will have folding wings and transport wheels to make them easier to move down the road, will be right at \$1,750.

For more details, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Gorder, Route 1, Wahpeton, N. Dak. 58075 (ph. 701-533-8833).

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