



## Truck Tire Alfalfa Seeder

You can make a state-of-the-art alfalfa seeder by mounting an air seeder on rollers made out of old truck tires, according to Harlan Anderson, Cokato, Minn., who says he built the seeder "after trying just about every other method of seeding alfalfa".

"We have about 500 acres of alfalfa that we rotate with our other crops. Stand establishment is our biggest problem. We've tried grain drills, dropping seed and dragging over the seed, and even seeding with Brillion roller-packers. The problem with using a drill or just dropping seed on the ground is that you don't get good enough seed-to-soil contact. Seeding with Brillion-style packers works good but you have to go slow or you'll break the cast iron packers and they plug up easily in moist soil. One of the best methods we found was dropping the seed with a drill followed with a Brillion packer. This improved seed-to-soil contact but was slow and took too much labor.

"Three years ago we came up with the idea of making 11-ft. wide rollers out of large semi-truck tires slipped over a 20-in. dia. steel pipe. Tires can be pulled faster without fear of breakage and we welded in the ends of the pipes and filled them with water for extra weight.

"There are three gangs of rollers, with one in front and two behind, for a total width of 30 ft. The two rear rollers move in for a 20 ft. road width. We plan to modify the hitch so we can pull them one behind the other for longer road trips.

"To eliminate the need for a grain drill, we mounted a Gandy air unit on the front roller, equipped with 12 seed hoses. Four hoses run to the front side of each roller. An orbit motor drives the blower on the seeder while a metering wheel runs against the top of the truck tires.

"We're able to seed 15 to 20 acres per hour. When the field is finished, we pull the tire rollers over the field again at a 30° angle to compact soil left unpacked between tires and also to increase seed-to-soil contact. It's now a pleasure to seed alfalfa and we can finish an 80 acre field in one day. Requires less than 100 hp. for the 30-ft. seeder.

"We plan to experiment with soybeans this spring.

"Although we are not in the business of building these seeders, we'd be happy to assist anyone interested. We spent a total of about \$6,500 to build it."

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## Giant Tractor Snow Rake

They get a lot of snow in Trempealeau, Wis. That's what prompted Don Stelpflug to come up with a giant-size "rake" made out of a tree trunk to pull excess snow down off the roof before it can cause damage.

"Last winter I used a Nipco gas heater to melt snow off the roof. I mounted the heater right up under the roof. It worked but I spent nearly \$100 on fuel. This idea is simpler, worked great and cost next to nothing," says Stelpflug.

He cut a 25-ft. long sapling and wired a push blade from a small garden tractor backwards onto the small end of the tree. Then he attached the trunk of the tree to the loader bucket on a utility tractor using steel cable and chain. With the loader fully extended, the rake is long enough to reach over the ridge pole on his machinery shed.

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Cultivator shanks attach to short toolbar mounted ahead of planter. View from behind planter (below) shows side-by-side furrows that guide cultivator.

## Do-It-Yourself Guidance System

Hydraulic-controlled guidance systems that mount between the tractor 3-pt. and cultivator are starting to catch on all over the country for "hands free" crop work. But Illinois farmer Roger Wessels didn't have to spend thousands to get a guidance system that works. Using scrap materials he came up with what he calls a "cultivator assistance" system for almost no cost.

Wessels, who farms near Fairbury, simply mounted a pair of deep-running 6-in. cultivator sweeps on either side of his 12-row Deere Max-Emerge 7100 planter. They're mounted on a short toolbar bracket ahead of the row units, spaced to match wheel spacing on his row crop cultivator. The sweeps dig 5 to 6-in. deep furrows - centered between rows - which the gauge wheels on his cultivator can follow.

The add-on toolbars - one mounts on each side of planter - are made out of 2-in. sq. steel tubing held in place by angle iron braces that run back to the planter gauge wheels. The gauge wheels trail directly behind the sweeps.

"They make nice clean furrows without affecting operation of the planter. The sweeps are set at the same angle as on a cultivator. The only change I plan



to make is to put guards over the planter drive chains so dirt can't get into them," says Wessels, who says he spent almost nothing on the furrow guidance system since he used old shanks, sweeps and scrap steel. He had to increase the number of gauge wheels on his cultivator from two to four so he'd have a wheel in each furrow.

Wessels didn't get to give the system a complete test last year because heavy rains right after planting washed out some of his furrows. "I don't expect any problems. We're farming flat land around here so these furrows will provide plenty of holding power for the cultivator."

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