SELF-PROPELLED UNIT COVERS FIVE 22-IN. ROWS AT A TIME

Home-Built Narrow Row Silage Chopper

When he couldn't find a narrow-row silage chopper on the market, Butch Kerkhoff of Redwood Falls, Minn., built his own 22-in. head out of two used 4-row, 30-in. heads and mounted it on his self-propelled Deere 5460 power unit.

"It lets me use the same planting and cultivating equipment on my corn, soybeans, and sugarbeets. And the 22-in. rows result in higher silage yields," says Kerkhoff. "I spent about $3,500 to build it."

He bought one used 4-row 30-in. Deere "stalker" head that was in good shape and another one that was in poor shape. He slid the two center units on the good head toward the outside, then mounted a row unit from the damaged head at the center to make five rows.

Kerkhoff built the narrow row chopper head three years ago and has used it every year to cut about 200 acres of silage. "I already had the Deere 5460 self-propelled power unit which had a 3-row, 30-in. head mounted on it. My 5-row, 22-in. head has about the same capacity except that I have to drive slower with it, at about 3 mph instead of 4 1/2 mph. I can cut 60 to 65 tons per hour and fill six tandem axle trucks an hour, each carrying about 10 tons of silage. I figure I've used my narrow row header to cut almost 10,000 tons of silage since I built it.

"Originally I intended to build a 4-row, 22-in. head but I found that it would have been narrower than the power unit, which would have knocked down corn. Deere sells a 22-in. corn head for combines, but not a narrow row silage chopper head. The only other alternative is the Kemper head but I think it's too expensive - about $38,000 for a new 15-ft. model.

"I believe that 20 or 22-in. row corn will catch on with farmers like 30-in. row corn did 25 years ago because it yields 5 to 7% higher. A lot of farmers in our area grow sugarbeets on 22-in. rows which caused many of them to start growing 22-in. corn and beans. Our local Deere dealer now sells mostly 22-in. row equipment.

Kerkhoff built his own 22-in. head out of two used 4-row, 30-in. heads and mounted it on his self-propelled Deere 5460 power unit.

"I had trouble finding Deere "stalker" heads because the company didn't build very many of them and they haven't built any new ones for about 10 years. However, they're ideal for this modification."

When he made the switch to narrow row corn, Kerkhoff also switched to a different kind of corn for his silage - TMF hybrids from Mycogen Seeds (720 St. Croix St., Prescott, Wis. 54021 (ph 800 692-6436). Its protein level runs from 1 to 1 1/2 percent higher than regular corn. "It saves hundreds of dollars in purchased protein. It also grows 2 to 3 ft. taller than regular corn," says Kerkhoff, who raises beef cattle.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Butch Kerkhoff, Rt. 4, Box 97, Redwood Falls, Minn. 56283 (ph 507 249-3956).

CAN ALSO BE FITTED WITH DEERE FINGER PICKUP UNITS

Rebuilt IH Planter Uses Kinze Brush Meters

"It allows me to plant faster with more accurate seed spacing and population control," says Paul Downie, Rodney, Ontario, who removed the seed boxes and plate units from his 10-year-old International 800 6-row conventional planter and replaced them with new boxes that allow him to use either Kinze brush metering units (to plant beans) or rebuilt Deere finger pickup units (to plant corn).

Downie removed the original seed boxes and replaced them with new aftermarket boxes that he bought from a local dealer. He stripped off the top of the plate drive system to accommodate the brush metering units and finger pickup units. He also fabricated new seed box mounting brackets and seed tubes. The boxes were designed to mount 6 to 8 in. farther back so he had to lengthen the drive chain off the planter's main driveshaft. The planter still has its original parallel linkage, depth wheels, shoes, press wheels, and is also equipped with Dawn trash wheels.

"I liked the planter's depth control and seed placement but not the plate-type metering system because it wasn't very accurate, especially in soybeans," says Downie. "When I bought the planter 10 years ago I could plant knowing that all the seed in the bag was exactly the same size. However, seed grading has gotten worse. If I used a plate to accommodate the biggest seed in the bag I got doubles, and if I used a smaller plate I got skips. As a result I was never sure how many seeds I was actually planting. Also, whenever I changed varieties I had to spend a lot of time emptying out the boxes and switching plates. I think I had every plate that the company made.

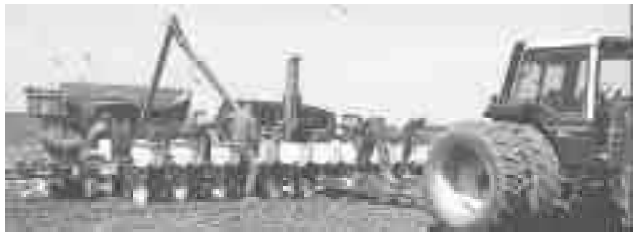
"The brush metering units are foolproof. They let me set the planter to plant at exactly the desired population regardless of seed size. I change seed population by changing the sprocket size at the end of the driveshaft. The driveshaft chain-drives the brush metering units just like it did the plates. The brush metering units let me plant at about 5 mph vs. 4 mph with the plates. I also reconditioned the planter drive system so it now drives much easier.

"I used it last year to plant about 400 acres of corn and 100 acres of beans and it worked great. My total cost was about $3,000. I paid $160 apiece for the Kinze brush metering units and $150 apiece for rebuilt Deere finger pickup units. Once I had all the parts gathered and seed box mounting brackets and seed tubes manufactured, it took about two days to assemble. I think the same idea would probably work on any plate planter. Because the seed boxes are mounted farther back they're easier to fill and the weight helps the openers penetrate better.

"The hardest part was building the frames and seed tubes. I used sheet metal to make the frames. I had them sheared into left and right halves by a local fabricator, then welded them together and bolted them onto the planter's original parallel linkage. I also painted them black. The original seed tubes were made out of plastic and were too long for the new boxes. I couldn't simply shorten them because they wouldn't have been shaped right at the top to fit properly around the finger pickup units. I used lengths of 1 by 2 in. steel tubing to make new tubes and flared them out at the top. I wanted to continue to use my seed monitor so I drilled a hole on each side of the tube where I mounted the electric sensors for the monitor."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Downie, Rt. 1, Rodney, Ontario, Canada N0L 2C0 (ph 519 785-2300).

Downie removed seed boxes and plate units from his 10-year-old IH 800 6-row plate planter and replaced them with new boxes that allow him to use either Kinze brush metering units (to plant beans) or rebuilt Deere finger pickup units (to plant corn).



Electric-Controlled Telescoping Fill Spout

"It lets you fill a 16-row planter without moving your wagon or truck," says Wayne Neiwold of Hydra Fold Auger, Inc., about his new electric-controlled telescoping fill auger.

You control the new fill spout at the discharge end with a 12-volt switch, making it easy for one man to fill a planter. What makes the new unit unique is that there's a manual override if the 12 volt system ever malfunctions, or if 12-volt power is not available.

The spout mounts on any new or existing hydraulic-powered Hydra Fold unload auger. Hydra Fold augers have been on the market for 34 years. "It's the most reliable auger on the market. In fact, parts from new augers still fit augers we built more than 30 years ago," says Niewold, noting that the company's unload augers fit any gravity box unloading door from 32 to 42 in. wide.

Spout is controlled by a solenoid valve that opens and closes hydraulic flow to the motor that powers the auger. If 12-volt power is not available, the motor can be controlled with a standard hydraulic valve.

The telescoping spout sells for $550. A 6-in., 16-ft. Hydra Fold unload auger sells for $976. A 14-ft. auger is also available for $878.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hydra Fold Auger, Inc., 149 North Market St., Paxton, Ill. 60957 (ph 217 379-2614).