

"Owner's Report" On Best, Worst Planters

Are you satisfied with your corn-soybean planter? How could it be made better? What steps have you taken to cut down on the number of trips through the field? Have you modified your planter in any way? What methods have you come up with to simplify filling seed, fertilizer and insecticide boxes?

These are some of the questions we asked planter owners in an effort to highlight those planters that perform with flying colors, and to pinpoint the "lemons" that fail because of poor performance, or failure of the dealer or company to provide service.

Here's how the survey shaped up:

"We like this planter except that we have more double drops on corn than I would like to see. Unfortunately, we can't use the new vacuum planter because we plant large edible beans (red and white kidney)," says Paul Stein, Caledonia, N.Y., about his 1989 Deere 12-row 7200 flex-fold Max-Emerge 2 with finger pickup.

"My biggest problem has been with the monitor. The problems are almost always in the wiring harness even though there is no external damage. Very hard to fix. Also, the seed box failed repeatedly because of the pressure until we put bands over it that resemble spray tank hold-down bands," says Donald R. Wegener, White Cloud, Kan., about his Case/IH 800 Early Riser planter. "It has very good seed placement and overall, we're well-satisfied with it. I've been shopping for a new planter for two years. I

reasons. First, it's a plate planter so each time you change varieties of corn, the plate must be changed. Second, each row unit has its own chain drive and I have had problems with the chains coming off so I've missed rows in the field," says Donnie Tennyson, Scotland, Md. "It does do a good job penetrating in no-till and has a sturdy, well-built frame with plenty of weight."

Larry Britt, Patoka, Ill., owns a 1990 Black Machine. "I like the way the planter folds for transport - when it's folded out you've got 30-in. spaced rows and 15 in. rows when the wings are folded in. The spacing and depth control for corn are good. They could do a better job on bean spacing. They also should make the markers heavier."

"My 1988 Case/IH 900 Early Riser is dependable and seed placement is excellent. I mounted a spray boom on the front of the planter frame. That way I get some incorporation of herbicides," says Kenneth E. Smith, Middleburg, Penn., adding that if he were in the market for a new planter, "I'd buy another 900."

"In two years of use, nothing has broken or had to be replaced. Excellent performance," says George Mills, Port Byron, N.Y., pleased with his 1989 Deere 7200.

David Michaelson, Dawson, Minn., has had good luck with his 1990 Deere 7300 12-row planter. "We're pleased that the wings do not float like our previous planter because we can now more accurately set our cultivator, which does not have floating wings. We were also looking for accurate spacing of seed in the row and we believe we have achieved that. There's also less plugging of mud between the discs of the openers. One thing we like is that the planter is fully mounted so we do not have to stumble over or walk around any lift assist wheels."

Bruce Creasp, White Heath, Ill., owns a "best buy" 1986 Case/IH 800 air planter. "Why fill 12 or 16 seed boxes when you can fill just 1 or 2. Other planters haven't caught up with the times. It also no-tills without any added attachments. We mounted the planter on a Shoup front-folding toolbar because IH did not have a folding 12-row planter at the time."

"I'm very satisfied with our 1984 Kinze 4-row planter. The heavy construction eliminates the worry over cracked frames and unnecessary breakdowns. Plenty of grease fittings keep all moving parts lubricated to prevent wear. Easy to adjust from one seed population to another. Accuracy of seed count is exceptional. What you set is what you get in corn. The large fertilizer and row openers go through trash easily without any problem. The only thing I would change is the bean meters. Controlling the rate of flow from one size bean to another is sometimes difficult. The company recently came out with a new-style bean meter that might be an improvement," says Tom Reuter, Montecello, Iowa.

James W. Knetzer, Carlinville, Ill., is

pleased with his Deere 7000 6-row with no-till coulters and insecticide applicators. "I bought it last year after renting it to plant no-till beans in wheat stubble. I fell in love with it, especially the markers. My previous Deere 494 and 1250 planters had mechanical markers, which usually drove me nuts before I finished up each year. If I were in the market for a new planter, I'd buy a Deere 7200. It's supposed to do a better job in beans."

"I like everything about my 1987 Case/IH 800 12-row, 3-pt. vertical fold planter, especially filling hoppers instead of individual boxes. Placement of seed is good, although they should redesign the closing discs so they don't drag stalks. However, it handles no-till corn into soybean stubble quite well, and allows reduced tillage in corn. We also use a Tye no-till drill for planting beans into standing cornstalks," says Steve Rash, Union, Iowa.

"I built a hydraulic-driven auger to hang on the discharge chute of my gravity wagon for filling the hopper on my IH Cyclo 400. I used a slow-turning orbit motor so as not to crack soybeans," says Ron Schroeder, Belleville, Ill. "If I were in the market for a new planter I'd buy a Deere 6-row Max-Emerge. I've never heard a complaint from anyone about this planter and prices have come down enough on the used market for a small farmer to justify the cost."

"I put notched furrow openers on my Case/IH Early Riser 800 12-row, along with a Red Ball monitor and spray kit to band spray herbicide. They all work great. The furrow openers let me plant in moist soil and also work great for minimum till. I also mounted a walkway on the back of my planter for unloading bags," says John Sinson, Lovington, Ill. "I wish Case/IH would build an economical pull-type vertical fold 12-row. I know they have the technology and I think there is demand for one."

"This planter has a severe problem in

loose sand or muck," says Duane Sutfin, Climax, Mich., about his 1986 Deere 7200 12-row vacuum planter. "Wheels are so close to units that soil builds up in front of units and then it keeps pushing dirt like a bull dozer. Stones are also a problem between units and drive wheels. Otherwise, we're satisfied with the planter. It places seed very accurately. I built my own dry fertilizer auger because I wanted to fill the entire planter from the left side. Deere's fill auger only fills half the planter at a time from the center."

"I own one of the first no-till specials built by Allis Chalmers," says Greg Koether, McGregor, Iowa. "It has a strong frame and well-designed planting mechanisms. The only problem is that the press wheel drives the planter plate with a flat chain which isn't shielded well enough. Stalks sometimes throw the chain off without the operator knowing it. If I were buying a new planter, I'd buy a Buffalo ridge-till because I believe it's the future of row crop production."

"My 1984 Deere 7100 planter works well for conventional or ridge-till planting of corn but is not real accurate for beans. I'd like to buy the new Kinze bean meter to put on my planter if they prove to work well," says Darwin Reyne, Rushmore, Minn.

John Stevens, Allendale, Ill., plants soybeans with a 1984 Kinze 12-row Twin Line planter with pusher units for narrow rows, and he plants corn with a 1990 Kinze 16-row Twin Line. "Both planters are well-made and heavy enough to last many years without any mechanical problems. I have no suggestions for improvement. The newest Twin Line has many improvements over the older one. I have never broken or bent a marker in field use."

"I'm satisfied with our 1988 White 5100 planter. Does everything we ask of it. One improvement would be to make the units easier to clean out. We mounted the planter

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don't like the Deere because I don't want to fill 12 seed boxes. And the new Case/IH is too complicated with far too much hydraulics. Kinze is the most rugged and simple but I don't like the bean meter. Wish I could get a Case/IH seed delivery system on a 12-row Kinze frame."

Andy Veenstra, Sherkston, Ontario, has been happy with his 1984 Deere 7000. "I modified it by building a double frame so I can mount planting units on the back bar for planting narrow row beans. I also mounted a sprayer on the planter frame for pre-emergence spraying. Works great."

"The vacuum metering system on our 1989 Deere 7200 8-row planter is simple and it works excellent. Seed placement is very accurate, as is the placement of fertilizer and herbicides. The machine has been trouble-free," says Steve Socken, Ellinwood, Kan. "They could improve the way the boxes come off for clean-out or to change plates."

Gene Tumbleson, Huntington, Ind., owns a 1987 Case/IH 800 Cyclo. "We're satisfied with it but they could get better seed spacing by redesigning the seed drops. The air delivery system works very well but the seed bounces at the seed boot if you are not precise with your settings. Works very well on beans. We added single disc fertilizer applicators and built a seed box on our loader to fill the seed hopper."

"We've been pleased with our Deere 7000 planter. We rebuilt the planter units once and it was ready for another 5 to 10 years of planting 1,000 acres per year. Our only problem has been with the Dickey john monitor," says Brian Chicoine, Elk Point, S. Dak.

"I have not been pleased with my Allis Chalmers 6004-row no-till planter for many



12-Row Planter Made From Old 4, 6 and 8-Row Units

Missouri farmer Paul Berwanger, of Boonville, built his own low-cost 12-row, 30-in. planter by combining an old 4-row and 8-row planter.

Berwanger bought a 4-row, 38-in. planter in 1986 and used it for two years. He then bought an 8-row, 20-in. planter and combined the two, using parts from an old Allis-Chalmers 6-row planter.

"New 12-row hydraulic-fold planters can sell for over \$35,000 and even used 12-row planters sell for \$6,500 to \$20,500 or more, depending on the make and condition. I've got a total investment of less than \$5,000. I was lucky to find two used

planters that were in good condition."

Berwanger cut the 8-row planter's toolbar in half and installed the 4-row planter in the middle, then added 4-row wings to each side. The wings are folded by a single hydraulic cylinder on each side. He also filled the front toolbar with concrete for better balance and for added weight for no-till planting. He replaced the original 14-in. tires with 16-in. tires for better clearance when the planter is raised, and he also doubled the hitch for added strength.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Berwanger, Rt. 2, Box 308, Boonville, Mo. 65233 (ph 816 882-5073).