

## Editor's Notebook



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### Genetically Altered Varieties Take Toll on Farm Tires

"Killer corn."

So read the caption of a photo showing a 4-WD tractor maneuvering through "tough" corn stalks in a September edition of an Ohio farm newspaper.

The article quoted Goodyear as saying that new corn hybrids and altered genetics, such as Bt-resistant corn, have created stronger stalks that cause an increased "spiking" or puncturing of tire sidewalls.

As a result, Goodyear this year introduced new smooth tires for no-till planters and tillage equipment designed to slip through stubble keeping tire damage to a minimum.

Goodyear's announcement started us wondering if other tire manufacturers have seen similar problems. And what they're doing about it if they have. At the recent Farm Progress Show near Amana, Iowa, we tracked down two other leading farm tire manufacturers.

Officials at both Firestone and Titan Wheel International agreed that stalks on new hybrids and also on newer soybean varieties are wreaking havoc on farm tires in some parts of the country.

In response, Firestone plans to introduce a smooth tire made of a tougher tread compound early in 1997, said engineer Dave Walulik. The company is also working on a 4-rib front tractor tire called the "Stubble Stomper," he added.

Titan Wheel sales director Ken Allen told FARM SHOW, "We've converted virtually our whole bias ply line to a significantly tougher compound and we'll be experimenting and testing these compounds in our radial line this year. We're not planning to go the smooth tire route, however. Our concern is that big implements like grain drills will slip and slide too much in wet conditions." (Jim Houtsma, Associate Editor)

### "Jackpot Coyote" Attracts Hunters

You can get paid for hunting in Oregon thanks to an innovative new program that pays \$10 for every set of freshly harvested coyote ears. The program was set up by the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA), which received a donation from a private citizen who was concerned about ever increasing livestock and wildlife losses to coyotes.

To make things even more interesting, the OHA released an ear tagged coyote in Baker county in Eastern Oregon. The lucky hunter who bags the tagged coyote, named "Jackpot", will win a bonus award of \$500. The OHA had to go through a lot of government red tape in order to be able to live trap and ear tag a coyote.

### Farmer Gets Speed Warning On Hot New Tractor

A north central Ohio farmer driving one of the world's hottest new tractors recently got the most unusual speeding "ticket" we've ever heard of.

In August, Lavon Weaver of Wooster, Ohio, was pulling a big forage wagon driving down the highway in his 1996 JCB Fastrac. The high speed English-built tractor, which debuted in the U.S. a couple years ago, boasts a top highway speed of 40 mph.

Weaver, who was traveling on a state road, was stopped by a trooper who claimed to have clocked him doing 43 mph. That's 3 mph *higher* than the tractor's speedometer goes but still well *below* the posted 55 mph speed limit.

The trooper told Weaver he felt something had to be wrong with a tractor moving so fast but that he couldn't quite put his finger on what it was. On the one hand, it sported a Slow Moving Vehicle symbol on back but was definitely going too fast to be an SMV. On the other hand, anything traveling at that speed probably needed license plates instead of an SMV sign. In the end, the trooper let Weaver off with a warning.

### British Farmers Required To Recycle Plastic

A new law in Britain bans the burning or burying of plastic used in silage bags or to wrap big round bales. At the same time, a 5 percent tax was placed on the sale of all agricultural plastics. The funds collected are used to pay the cost of collecting the plastic for recycling.

The "Farm Films Recovery Service" contracts with individual recycling businesses to pick up ag plastics from farms. There's no charge to the farmer for the pickup, although you must have a minimum of about 500 lbs. of plastic a year.



Roy Hiddleston bales discarded plastic wrap with his Claas round baler.

The new law created opportunities for rural entrepreneurs. One custom hay baler, who uses a Claas Rollant round baler to make 30,000 bales a year for farmers in his area, decided to get into the plastic collection business as a sideline to his hay business. Roy Hiddleston, of Dumfriesshire, hit on the idea of using his baler to compress the plastic wrap into big 750-lb. round bales.

It takes wrappings off of about 400 big round bales to make one 1,700-lb. round bale. At first, recyclers were hesitant to accept the big round bales because they were used to square packages. But Hiddleston says the big bales have caused no problems.

No modifications were needed to the baler to handle the plastic other than to make shields so the plastic won't catch in the bearings on the pickup. Plastic is simply laid out

along the ground in windrows. (Excerpted from *Farm Contractor & Large Scale Farmer*)

**Privatizing Social Security is one idea** being talked about to save the system. I think my idea is better. I propose we substitute a baby tax. Every time a baby is born, the parents would be required to contribute \$500 into a government-run retirement system. That's all the money that would ever be contributed. The money would grow over the years to give that person a healthy retirement fund by the time he or she reached the age of 65. Those who didn't reach retirement age could leave the money to their survivors.

You don't think the \$500 contribution would be enough? Believe me, it's just like doubling a penny every day for a month. It would work. If the money were put in a stock fund and earned an average of 10 percent per year (a conservative figure), the money would double every 7 years, growing to over \$500,000 by age 65. (Don Larson in the *Business Newsletter*)

### Roundup Failure Scares Farmers "Down Under"

Australian no-till farmer Derek Barnstable dropped by our offices a few weeks ago. He was traveling across North America talking to manufacturers, dealers and researchers about new developments in no-till.

He asked if we'd be interested in a controversy he's become involved with back home. Here's what happened:

Barnstable no-tills wheat, corn and other crops. Before seeding, he kills down all vegetation using Roundup. Last year everything went normally until he discovered a few clumps of weeds that the chemical had not killed. It was ryegrass, the most common weed in his area, and he found a number of plants in one field that were not affected by Roundup.

Barnstable took the stray plants to professor Jim Pratley at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. He specializes in research on the development of chemical resistance in weeds. After tests last summer, Pratley confirmed that Roundup applied at normal commercial rates would not kill the suspect weeds.

Word spread quickly throughout Australia about the possible development of Roundup resistance in ryegrass. Barnstable showed FARM SHOW a file full of newspaper stories from rural papers across the country.

Monsanto representatives in Australia say a number of factors could account for the problem ryegrass. "We have urgently requested seed from the Charles Sturt University researchers to conduct further tests," Dr. Bill Blowes, Monsanto's Australian technical director was quoted as saying in a recent news report.

While there are certain weeds that are resistant to Roundup - such as morningglories - Pratley says this is the first case he's aware of where an existing species has developed resistance to the world's most popular weed killer.

**Despite his best sales pitch**, a life insurance salesman was unsuccessful in getting a couple to sign for a policy. "I certainly don't want to frighten you into a decision," he announced, standing up to leave. "Please sleep on it tonight and if you wake up in the morning, let me know what you think."

### Dairy Wife Says "Goodbye"

It was at least a year before I could talk about selling our cows without crying. Being a dairy family carries a certain identity that is difficult to let go. And I was sure I would be a dairy farmer forever.

But life takes different turns and my husband and I had to evaluate where we were headed and make some difficult choices.

On July 26, 1993, I left for my job in town, and Lyman loaded our cows on a truck. That evening, we sat at the dining room table looking at one another and wondering aloud "Where do we go from here?" Our children, then 15 and 11, were wondering the same thing.

Between feeding the heifers we had kept, Lyman cut firewood and did odd jobs. I continued my full-time job in town, began writing more, and realized how tired I had become over the prior months dealing with our decision.

We became sports junkies as well. We were now able to attend every one of our children's school functions, as well as those of nieces and nephews. We could stay later at family gatherings and I could stay awake longer dur-

ing our monthly pinochle games with friends. I continued my involvement with Oregon Dairy Women and the Holstein Association.

As I look back, that first year is now a little blurry. Lyman has found his niche as a girl's soccer and softball coach and is proudly recognized by young children in our community as "my bus driver".

Our daughter is headed to OSU to study agriculture and our son continues his interest in farming and animals.

I still work in town, spend a little time writing, and work in our old milk room. It's been transformed into a little country store where I sell herbs, dried-flower wall hangings and preserves made from our raspberries and Marionberries. Good use for an important place in the barn.

And I've adjusted to a new identity. Now I fully understand when someone tells me, fondly, that they used to be a dairy farmer. It's an exclusive club. (Margaret Barrett, Turner, Oregon)