Bag Your Bulk Fertilizer?

Bagging your own bulk fertilizer may offer an economical new option to using self-unloading hoppers, while reducing storage and handling problems at the same time. This is the view of John Read, retired Canadian fertilizer dealer, who has developed a 500-pound plastic bag and a special clamp to lift the bags with a front-end loader or forklift.

Read says the system allows fertilizer to be stored safely outside and permits farmers with flat bed trucks to pick up their own supply at fertilizer plants.

"If a farmer wants to, he can pick up his fertilizer at the plant, take it home and spot the bags on headlands where hopper or drill fill-ups will be made at planting time.

"I've stored potash, which will harden as quickly as any element in fertilizer, outside for a year without any lumpiness developing. The bags are black poly so the sun has no effect on their contents. However, they're open at both ends, with wire ties being used to close them, so they have to be laid flat on the ground.

"With drills, spreaders or hoppers that take 500 pounds or more to fill, all you have to do is attach the clamp by a chain or cable to a front end loader, lift and position the bag and then undo the bottom wire tie. For smaller fertilizer hoppers, I've developed a plastic cradle to hold the bags at a convenient angle so part of the fertilizer can be poured out and the remainder held in the retied bag," Read says.

Besides eliminating the manual handling of fertilizer without the capital expense of purchasing self-unloading hoppers, Read believes the difference in cost between bulk and bagged fertilizer should quickly pay for the plastic bags, clamp and cradle.

Photo courtesy Cash Crop Farming

"The plastic bags cost $2.50 each, or $10 a ton. The spread between bulk and bagged fertilizer of one tobacco analysis I priced (on February 21) was $18 per ton," he said.

With careful use and storage, Read believes the plastic bags should be durable enough to last for up to five consecutive seasons. He said he had used lighter mil plastic bags in a warehousing situation for as many as 10 to 15 times. For details on the bag-lifting clamp Read developed, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Read, Apt. 612, So. Moorgate Crescent, Kitchener, Ont. N2M2G1 (ph 519 579-4849).

Sheep Catering Cart

South Dakota sheep raiser Allen Griepp, of Watertown, designed this "sheep catering cart on wheels" for catching sheep in a pen and wheeling them to a spot to be sheared or checked over.

All you do to use the cart is push it up against the sheep's back legs, then pull the sheep back into the cart and onto an 18 in. wide seat, strong enough to hold a 300 lb. sheep. A seat-belt type buckle and strap allows you to secure the animal in the cart.

To unload, you just pull a lever which drops the seat down, sliding the animal onto the ground.

Griepp adds that his wife likes the cart for doing yardwork "because it's easier to wheel around than a wheelbarrow".

Griepp estimates the catering cart could be built for about $160.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Allen Griepp, R.R. 5, Box 45, Watertown, S.D. 57201 (ph 605 756-4234).

Self-Propelled Silage Wagon

Darrel Spader, Fedora, S. Dak., built this self-propelled silage wagon out of an old 1940's Dodge stub-nose truck.

"Even with two forage boxes the tractor always seemed to be at the wrong end of the field. Now, I just unhook this truck/wagon and drive away," says Spader.

To build the wagon, which carries half again what his conventional forage boxes handle, Spader first tore off the fenders, cab and all tin work. Then he moved the steering, clutch, brake and shifting controls out to the front of the truck frame and mounted a seat over what was the front left fender. He then covered the engine — a flat head 6 cyl. — and mounted the 7-ft., 8-in., by 14-ft. box on the rear frame. The box has a gate that opens by pulling one lever and closes and locks by itself, and a regular hoist underneath.

A spring-loaded tongue mounted on the front of the truck hooks to Spader's Allis Chalmers forage harvester. The tongue is spring-loaded so tie rods won't break if he turns too sharp. Spader says the wagon pulls easily behind an 80 hp. tractor on its dual wheels and he notices little difference from his conventional forage boxes. He also hauls grain and other loads with the self-propelled wagon.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Darrel F. Spader, Hayland Angus Ranch, Fedora, S. Dak. 57337 (ph 605 527-2575).

Can You Use This "Disc Weeder"?

An innovative new "disc weeder" built by watermelon grower Melvin Buzbee, Monticello, Florida, might be just the thing for in-row weeding and thinning of other more conventional row crops.

Buzbee says that although his disc weeder has not been used in any other crop, it has been so successful on his farm and been copied by so many other melon growers, that he'd like to see farmers adapt the idea to other crops.

"We can now weed and thin 10 acres of melons a day, a job that routinely takes 10 workers to complete," says Buzbee.

The machine consists of a V-shaped, two-wheeled rig 12 ft. long that trails behind the tractor drawbar. The wheels are mounted on an "overhead axle" that loops 6 ft. over the operator's seat in the center. Just below the seat are two horizontally-mounted discs each equipped with it's own hydraulic motor as well as hand and foot controls. The spinning discs move in and out and up and down, each controlled independently by the foot and hand action of the operator. One disc turns clockwise and the other counterclockwise.

"The operator has his left foot and left hand on the left disc assembly, and his right hand and foot on the right disc, moving them in and out to weed or thin plants. Each disc assembly has a depth control wheel that swivels to make control easier," explains Buzbee.

Watermelons are spaced in rows 6 ft. apart but Buzbee says the wheels of the disc weeder could be spaced to fit any row width and the 10-in. discs could be down-sized to get into any crop. The machine could also be automated with electronics, he adds.

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