

# Crop Roller Mounts On Cultivator

By Bill Gergen, Senior Editor

Rollers have become popular in recent years as a way to eliminate problems with rootballs, rocks and corn stalks during soybean harvest. They don't come cheap, though, costing up to \$40,000 for a 45-ft. model. A Minnesota company says you can save money by turning your existing row crop cultivator into a roller.

Tebben Mfg. displayed its new Culti-Roller units at the recent Farm Fest show near Redwood Falls, Minn. Each roller is 16 in. in dia. and made from 1/4-in. thick steel. A clamp-on toolbar mounting bracket mounts on front.

The idea is to remove the back shanks from the cultivator, and bolt the Culti-Roller units in their place. The crop slides through between the rollers, which are equipped with metal shields on both sides.

According to the company, Culti-Rollers can be used any time after planting and on soybeans up to 12 in. high. The rollers can be filled with water or sand for more weight, depending on the weight of the cultivator toolbar.

"Waiting until the crop comes up to roll is a new idea, but we think it has a lot of potential. Along with using trash cleaners on the planter, Culti-Rollers will produce the same results as a land roller for about 25 percent of the cost," says Mike Tebben. "So far we've built only enough Culti-Rollers to test the idea on a Deere 875 18-row cultivator, but we plan to make units for other cultivator brands and models.

"Most farmers use trash whippers on their planter that move the trash away from the row, followed by press wheels that smooth out the soil. So most of the need for rolling is between the rows."

Rolling later during the growing season helps eliminate any erosion problems caused by high winds or heavy rains, says Tebben. And it leaves you more time to pick rocks before rolling.

One problem may be that Culti-Rollers apply only 275 to 375 lbs. per ft., compared to about 475 lbs. per ft. for conventional rollers. "If you have a lot of really hard rootballs, Culti-Rollers won't put as much downpressure on them. However, the amount of downpressure depends on the location of the springs on the cultivator and how adjustable they are."

Farmers are using rollers more all the time, says Tebben. "One reason is today's high yielding corn hybrids and higher plant populations - rootballs are getting so big and full of dirt that they're not decomposing over the winter. You don't want rootballs, rocks and trash taking out sickle sections or going through the combine. Also, the threshed crop will be a lot cleaner when you don't bring in that stuff. When you unload soybeans from a combine into a truck, you can usually tell which fields were rolled because the threshed sample is much cleaner."



Culti-Rollers were field tested last spring on this 18-row Deere cultivator. Rollers can be filled with water or sand to add weight.



Each roller is 16 in. dia. and has a clamp-on toolbar mounting bracket on front.

The company offers 2 different Culti-Roller models. A 14-in. wide model is designed for 22-in. rows and uses 10-in. rollers on end rows; the other is a 22-in. wide model that's designed for 30-in. rows and uses 18-in. rollers on end rows. The 14-in. wide model sells for \$591 per unit; the 22-in. wide model for \$661 per unit.

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Crop slides between rollers, which are equipped with metal shields on both sides.

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# Old Combine Turned Into Playground

An old Deere combine has been retired to a rather pleasant job. Instead of ending up at a salvage yard, happy, screaming kids now climb all over it and come sliding out the back. The combine playground is part of the entertainment package at Round Hill Farm in Culpeper, Va., where the Faulconer family holds a Pumpkin Festival in October. They sell pumpkins and offer hayrides, corn mazes and a petting zoo.

The combine playground was introduced in 2009. Eric Faulconer explains that his family regularly adds new features to their operation. When they were offered a free combine, they bought a \$4,500 slide to fit the combine's angles and dimensions — and to match the Deere yellow paint.

Faulconer and three farm employees cut out the augers and shellers and other parts to make room for the slide. They built solid stairs and picket-style railings with support posts mounted on concrete pads. They removed part of the cornhead to create a bench, where visitors can have their photos taken.

"We disconnected all the gears and pinched the hydraulic steering line. We staked blocks with rebar behind and in front of the tires so it can't roll," Faulconer notes.

When they are open for business the cab door is chained open so kids won't pinch their fingers and can climb in and out freely. By the time it was finished and professionally painted, it cost just under \$9,000, but it should be around for years.

So far it's been a hit. The kids love playing on it and it looks so good some adults asked if Deere made it. Faulconer says photos of the



By the time he was finished, Faulconer says he'd spent about \$9,000.

combine have been showing up on internet photo pages. His family is already thinking about another big attraction — possibly something using an old truck.

Check out the Round Hill Farm website, which will be available later this summer.

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Kids climb all over the combine and come sliding out the back.

