Scripter cut down a school bus and mounted a semi fifth wheel hitch and plate on back. He uses bus to pull his 23-bale hay trailer.

Old School Bus Makes Cheap Hauler Hay

When Armin Scripter, Abilene, Kansas, went looking for a semi-truck to pull his 23-bale hay trailer, he didn't have to go far.

He found what he needed in one of the old school buses he'd picked up at an auction. Scripter simply shortened the body of the bus by cutting the rivets that hold the body together just behind the first row of seats. He cut the rear body section off, too, and then, using sheet metal screws, put it on the remaining front section.

He then cut down the channel iron frame under the bus and shortened the drive shaft to the right length to handle the semi fifth wheel hitch and plate he salvaged from an old truck.

Scripter also installed a Brownie transmission he found at a salvage yard behind the bus' 4-speed automatic transmission. And he converted the engine to run on LP fuel.

The bus already had air brakes, so he merely added lines to hook up the brakes on his trailer.

Scripter says the cost of this conversion was under $1,000. "I paid $500 for the bus, $100 for the transmission, another $100 for the propane conversion, and $60 for the semi-trailer hitch. There were a few other costs,

Main body of bus was cut off just behind the first row of seats.

but those amounted to under $200," he says.

To Scripter, the conversion was fairly simple, though it took several weeks to get all the pieces together. He had previously converted another of his bargain buses to a straight truck and mounted a grain box on it. He still has two or three remaining buses and is considering a number of different uses for them.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Armin Scripter, 3421 Mink Road, Abilene, Kan. 67410 (ph 785 461-5642).

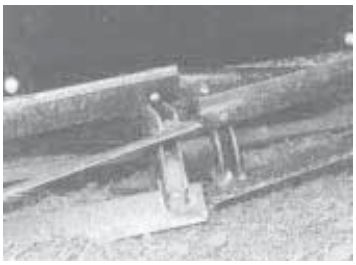
"Combo" Seedbed Preparation Tillage Tool

A new seedbed preparation tillage tool designed to maintain uniform soil density below the seedbed was introduced at the recent Farm Progress Show near Cantrall, Ill.

The new "Roller Harrow" combines a 17-in. dia. rolling blade on front with a series of rotary harrows, set at a 40 degree angle, to condition the top inch of the seedbed. The rolling blades cut and chop surface residue, the rolling harrows crack the ground surface and lift and redistribute the residue, and a trailing leveling board leaves the soil surface smooth and ready for planting. An optional 5-bar spike tooth harrow is available to replace the rotary harrows for less aggressive distribution of residue.

The unit is 32 ft. wide and is designed to be pulled by a 200 hp or more tractor.

"It works the ground without changing soil density. As a result, seeds germinate in warm, moist soil and roots get off to a healthy start," says Ken Sauder, Precision Planting, Tremont, Ill. "By working only the top inch or two of soil you avoid creating different soil density layers. Any time you till below the planting depth, you create soil density



Rotary harrows crack the ground surface and also redistribute residue.

layers. Plant roots have a tough time growing straight down through these layers. The wetter the spring the harder the layers will be. With our tillage tool the roots can keep growing at full potential.

"It works great in soil that has been chisel plowed or deep ripped the previous fall and works best at high speeds of 10 to 12 mph."

Sells for $26,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Precision Planting, 23207 Townline Rd., Tremont, Ill. 61568 (ph 309 925-5050; fax 5029; E-mail: planting@dpc.net).

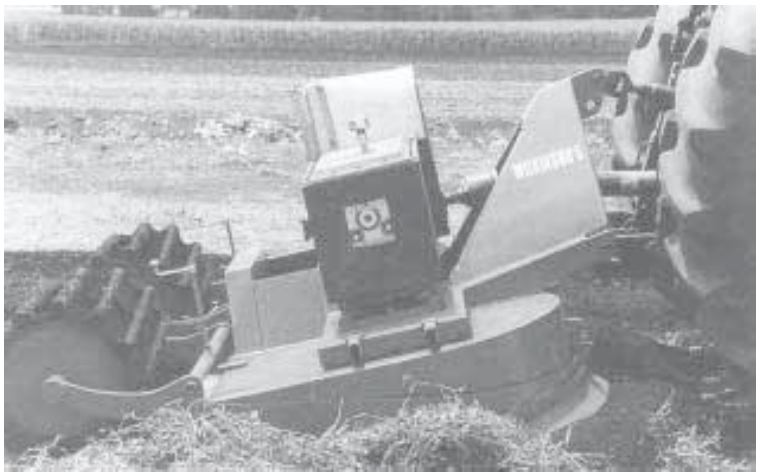


Photo courtesy Power Farming

Machine has tilling blades that cut horizontally in the soil, not vertically. Blades mount on rotating discs that are powered by tractor's pto.

Revolutionary New Tillage Tool Tills Soil Without Turning It

John Wilkinson has turned tillage on its ear. Or at least on its side.

He owns and operates Wilkinson's Engineering, a manufacturing, welding and blacksmithing in Queensland, Australia. He and project engineer Graeme Twidle, developed a new tillage machine, which they call the Roto-Till 2000. The revolutionary tillage machine is built like a rotary tiller, but with a twist - the tilling blades cut horizontally in the soil rather than vertically.

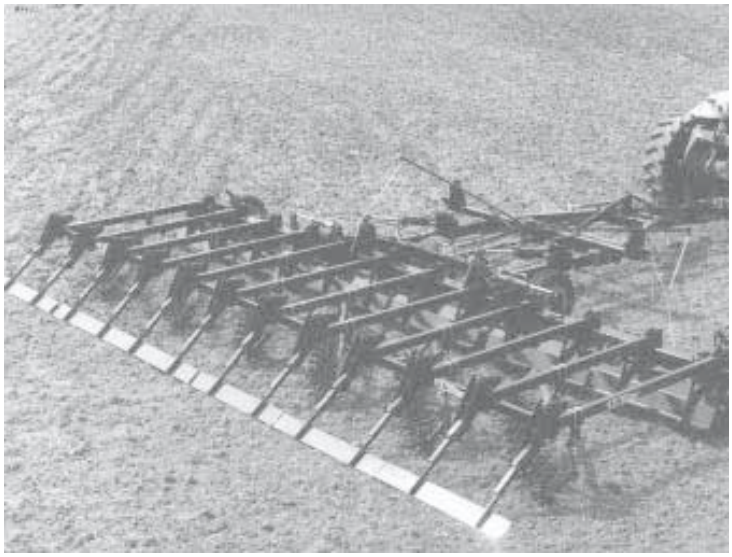
It has two sets of six blades - one inner and one outer - with the points curved down. These are mounted on rotating discs that are powered by the tractor's PTO. The discs are mounted at a slight angle so they extend above ground in front, in order to gobble up crop residue. The beauty of the design is that the soil is aerated and residue is incorporated without turning the soil over or beating it up as most rotary tillers do. The reason for this is the speed of the knives, which allow them to cut thin slices of the soil and loosen it without turning it.

"It does little to disturb soil structure and doesn't bring up subsoil and mix it in with the top soil," Wilkinson tells. And while it aerates the soil and mixes in crop residues, it doesn't create a lot of dust, even in hard dry soils. He's had backing from several environmental groups and support from the government in developing the machine because it promises to be an outstanding soil conservation tool.

Wilkinson's Roto-Till 2000 is about 30 in. wide and works the soil 17 to 18 in. deep. Residue is buried at about 7.5 in. deep. It requires a tractor with about 160 HP to operate. It can be used to strip-till, leaving residue between wide rows.

He's working on two new versions of the tiller - one for broadcast crops, such as small grains, and one that will till strips in a 6-row configuration for row crops. His current broadcast prototype is 20 ft. wide and will till about 8 in. deep. Wilkinson hopes to have both of these perfected soon, and is looking for help in reaching the North American market with all three versions.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Wilkinson, Wilkinson's Engineering, 1 Gill Street, Atherton, Queensland 4883 Australia E-mail: hse@wilkinsons.com.au; Website: www.wilkinsons.com.au. (ph:011-61-740-911-833).



"Roller Harrow" combines a rolling blade on front with a series of rotary harrows to condition the top inch of soil. Trailing level board leaves soil surface smooth.