

New Planter Has No Seed Hopper

There are a lot of planters on the market, but Richard Follmer, owner of Progressive Farm Products, Inc., Hudson, Illinois, has come up with a design that bulk seed users will want to check out.

So far, he's made only one prototype, but he's taken several orders and plans to have a number of units available in time for planting next spring.

The Progressive planter is a 16-row, 30-in. machine on a standard 7 by 7-in. toolbar. The front-folding bar is mounted in front of a cart, which gives it a look similar to the company's popular strip-till tillage machine. There's just one thing missing: a seed hopper.

Follmer figured that for anyone who buys seed in bulk boxes or bags, a planter-mounted seed hopper is redundant. Instead of a seed hopper, Follmer's planter has an air delivery

system that takes seed directly from the bulk boxes to planting units.

"You plant right out of the box," he says. "The only weight on the bar is planting units and the flotation tires on the seed cart keep compaction low there, too. We'll make it with or without a liquid fertilizer tank and delivery system."

Follmer showed the planter at shows last fall with Kinze planter units on the bar. "We're selling it as a toolbar and cart with the air delivery system only. That way, you can put your favorite units on it. Any make will work on it, as long as they're designed to fit a standard planter bar," he says. "Several people have said they'd like to see Case IH's new vacuum units on it, and those will work, too."

He says the Progressive planter will work in any tillage situation, from no-till to strip-



Instead of a seed hopper, Rich Follmer's new planter has an air delivery system that takes seed directly from bulk boxes to planting units.

till to conventional tillage.

Follmer designed the planter with help from Don O'Neill, a Downs, Illinois, farmer, who has helped him develop other equipment in the past. Their plans are to sell 12-, 16- and 24-row versions. The 16-row version is

under 10 ft. high and folds to 14 1/2 ft. wide for transport.

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"Beach Monster" Made From Combine

Neighbors can tell when Tom Nelson arrives at his cottage on the Michigan shore of Lake Huron in spring by the roar of his "Beach Monster."

"Every spring, we have to level the sand in order to have a useable beach area," he explains.

Most of his neighbors hire someone with a bulldozer to level and clean their beach areas, but Nelson made his own machine out of a Massey Ferguson 300 combine.

"It's a 1974 model, with a Chrysler 225 gasoline engine and a variable speed belt drive," he says.

"I paid \$400 for the combine," he says. "I had trouble getting the engine started and when it finally did start, it just barely ran. I rebuilt the carburetor and the generator. It needed a voltage regulator, and I thought it needed a starter, but after I'd made the other repairs, the starter worked fine."

Nelson stripped out the combine's guts and removed the grain tank and most of the sheet metal, leaving only enough of the combine's shell to make a rough wagon box. "I sold 2,000 lbs. of steel to the scrap yard. I kept some of the shafts and other parts that I thought might come in handy for other

projects," he says.

With low tree branches around the lake, overall height was a problem and Nelson figured he didn't need heat or air conditioning for beach grooming, so he cut off the top half of the cab. The original steel roof makes a good weather cover to protect the operator's station when it's not in use.

Once he had the old combine cut down, he made a sturdy dozer blade from wood 4 by 4's and attached it to the header lift. "It makes a good dozer that I can use to push sand and even rocks," he says. "It does a good job of leveling, but it doesn't dig because there's no down-pressure on the header lift."

Another use for the Beach Monster is to launch a 20-ft. Sea Ray boat, which he transports on a single axle trailer. It's a half-hour drive from his cottage to the nearest ramp where he must pay to launch his boat. With the old combine engine mounted several feet up in the air, he figured he'd be able to get far enough out in the water to launch his boat right by his cottage without a ramp or boat hoist.

To make the old combine more sure-footed on sand, he inflates the drive tires to only about 5 psi. He also filled the wagon box with



"It makes a good dozer that I can use to push sand and even rocks," says Tom Nelson, who made a dozer blade from wood 4 by 4's and attached it to the header lift on an old combine.

rocks for added traction.

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With the combine engine mounted several feet up in the air, he can get far enough out in the water to level the bottom and also to launch his 20-ft. Sea Ray boat. Box on back is filled with rocks for added traction.



Bale Feeder Bus Ideal For Longhorns

Coffee shop talk can be productive. Just ask Kevin Nelson, Canton, Minn.

He'd been trying to come up with a hay feeder for his herd of 60 purebred Longhorn cattle "Most of the feeders I'd looked at wouldn't work with my cows because of their horns. And if the openings were large enough to accommodate their horns, they were big enough that the cattle could walk right through them into the feeder," he says.

Over a cup of coffee last winter, he and Sverre Dahl, Jr., Hesper, Iowa, hatched a plan to convert an old Ford school bus into a hay feeder.

"We decided if we cut the sides out of an old school bus, it would be just about right," Nelson continues. "It's high enough so the cattle can't get in. And the calves could crawl under it to get out of the rain and snow."

Nelson bought the 1985 Ford school bus for \$500. The engine was good, but the brakes didn't work.

With the help of his sons and wife, he removed all the bus seats and then used an air chisel to remove rivets from the sheet metal panels in the sides of the bus. He left the windows intact. The U-shaped supports in the bus body that had held the sheet metal were spaced just right to allow the Longhorns to reach in and eat.

He cut off the back end of the bus so he



Kevin Nelson's 25 head of cattle can eat at once from his home-built bale feeder, which he made by cutting the sides out of an old school bus. He slides round bales into the bus from the back.

can slide round bales into the bus from the back. It holds five bales.

To make the bales slide in straight into the bus, he made rails out of two 20-ft. long 2 by 6 pine boards spaced about 3 ft. apart at the center of the bus floor.

He 25 head can eat at once from the bus feeder. There are 11 spaces down each side, and another two or three cattle can eat from the back end.

Nelson can load the bus at his bale stack and then drive it to the pasture. When it gets muddy around the feeder, he just drives to a new location.

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How To Compact A Trench

Did you ever dig a ditch for a pipe or wire and find that by the next year the ground had settled, leaving a trench across your yard?

After Lyle Dawson, Wheatley, Ontario, dug a 150-ft. long, 2 by 5-ft. ditch for a water drain, he totally eliminated the "year later trench problem" by using water to compact the soil immediately after the ditch was back-filled.

His "soil compactor" consists of a 4-ft. long hollow metal tube with an elbow at one end fitted with a short length of metal tubing. A short piece of garden hose fits over the pipe. It hooks up to a garden hose. A metal rod welded to the pipe serves as a handle.

Dawson starts at one end of the excavated area and slowly works his way along it, inserting the 4-ft. long pipe into the ground at 4 to 6 in. intervals. Water exiting from the end of the pipe saturates the soil, penetrating to the bottom of the trench.

"The idea is to get the entire contents of the trench very wet and muddy. Once that happens there will be very little settling of the soil later, especially if I wait for the muddy soil to solidify and then further compact it before it has dried out by walking on it or by driving over it with a truck," says Dawson. "When the hose fitting is attached to the hose, the hose washer will compress and grip onto



Lyle Dawson's "soil compactor" is a 4-ft. long hollow metal tube that hooks up to a garden hose. Water exiting from the end of pipe saturates the soil, penetrating to bottom of trench.

the pipe without leaking."

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