

Giant Erosion Control Blanket

We spotted these giant erosion-control blankets at the recent Ohio Farm Science Review Show.

Carl Hamman operates a business called Watershed Management, and part of his work involves building waterways in farm fields. His big 16-ft. wide by 562-ft. long straw mats are made by ErosionControlBlanket.com Inc. of St. Andrews, Manitoba, and Hamman is the Ohio distributor. He sells the mats to do-it-yourselfers and will also install them.

Each mat is wound around a cardboard tube and consists of a layer of barley straw held in place between a biodegradable polypropylene net on bottom and white stitching on top.

Once the mat is rolled out, metal pins are used to hold it down. Five equally spaced black lines extend across the width of the rolled-out mat to mark where the pins should go. You can get down on your hands and knees and use a hammer to pound the pins into the ground, or use a \$600 staple gun offered by the company.

Hamman invented his own patented "pounder" that consists of a lightweight wooden rod equipped with a round magnet at the bottom. It simply punches pins through the mat and into the ground. The pins last 1 1/2 to 2 years and will eventually disintegrate.

"Once the mat is on the ground it stays put.

"Add-A-Grapple" For Compact Tractor Buckets

"Our new add-on grapple fork can turn any compact tractor's loader bucket into an inexpensive grapple that works great for removing brush, debris, and other hard-to-handle material. It can quickly be removed, allowing you to use the bucket for other jobs," says Bill Reed, Precision Mfg., Sedalia, Mo.

The grapple fork is designed for compact tractors equipped with either a 5 or 6-ft. wide bucket. It comes with a telescoping mounting frame that attaches to each side of the bucket with four bolts. The frame is designed to accept either single or double grapples. A single grapple measures 28 in. wide. A pair of 2 by 6 hydraulic cylinders are supplied.

The grapple can be quickly detached from the mounting frame by removing a couple of hitch pins. It works great for piling tree limbs

and brush. "The grapple fork has curved teeth for a wider grip and easy release," says Reed. "If you're just picking up some logs a single grapple is all you need. However, if you want to pick up loose brush or restack loose hay, you'll want a double grapple because it can grab more material," he notes.

A single grapple fork sells for \$500; a double, \$850. An optional selector valve kit is available for tractors without an extra set of hydraulic outlets. It sells for \$450.

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The cost to lay down a 16-ft. wide by 562-ft. long mat is \$450, which comes out to 45 cents per square yard. "Government cost sharing help is often available," notes Hamman.

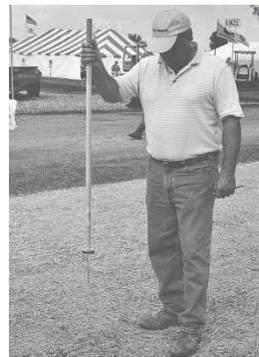
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"Once the mat is on the ground, it stays put. You won't have to worry about it ever washing away," says Carl Hamman.



"Pounder" is a lightweight wooden rod with a round magnet at the bottom. It punches through the mat into the ground. The pins disintegrate in 1 1/2 to 2 years.



Grapple fork fits compact tractors with a 5 or 6-ft. wide bucket. It comes with a telescoping mounting frame that attaches to each side of the bucket. The frame is designed to accept either single or double grapples. A single grapple sells for \$500; a double for \$850.

Barrel Converted To Snow Blade

Brian Hoadley, Stonington, Conn., converted a 55-gal. plastic barrel and an old semi truck tire into a low-cost, 7-ft. wide snow blade that he uses behind his 4-WD Chevrolet Astro van. It attaches to the van's receiver hitch.

He simply moves snow driving in reverse. "Almost everything I used I picked up along local highways as lost junk. My total cost, including nuts, bolts and other materials, was \$10 at most."

He cut the barrel vertically into three equal pieces and bolted them together end to end, using the top and bottom parts of the barrel for the blade ends. The middle section overlaps the other two sections. He cut out the tread of the tire making a 7-in. strip that he bolted onto the bottom edge of the blade, to make it flexible for following close to the ground. An angle iron bracket extends across the back of the blade for support. A piece of 2-in. sq. steel tubing fits into the receiver hitch.

The blade sets at a slight angle to move snow off to one side. A 3-in. high curved strip of old tire is bolted to the top of the blade to keep snow from rolling over the blade. A vertical tube at one end of the blade provides reinforcement.



"The right side of the blade is even with the van. The left side sticks out to the side a little, so as I back up I can look in the driver's rear view mirror and see the snow flying out. The right side of the blade makes a nice clean cut out against the curb or driveway," says Brian Hoadley.

"It works great on any kind of slush or snow," says Hoadley. "The plastic is lightweight and super flexible and won't break no matter how cold the weather. It's so slick that even wet snow doesn't stick to it."

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Convert Your Chisel Plow Into A "Coulter Machine"

Your chisel plow can chop stalks thanks to a new conversion kit which converts it into a stalk-chopping "coulter machine".

Inventor Ron Tschetter, who farms near Carpenter, S. Dak., says his patent pending "coulter machine" kit can be used to shred everything from corn stalks to soybean residue to wheat stubble. In some cases it leaves your field ready to plant the following spring.

The kit for each shank consists of two 18 or 20-in. dia. waffle coulters and the mounting hardware needed to bolt them onto the shank. You simply unbolt the sweep and bolt the coulters on. The coulters are spaced 6 in. apart. To switch back to a chisel plow you unbolt the coulters and reattach the sweeps.

"It works on any brand of chisel plow and in some cases may save you the cost of buying a new stalk chopper," says Tschetter. "You can buy old chisel plows cheap. My conversion kit sells for \$350 per shank, so a 20-ft. wide chisel plow can be converted for \$7,000 plus tax. A new comparable size coulter cart machine costs about \$22,000."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron's



"It works on any brand of chisel plow and in some cases may save you the cost of buying a new stalk chopper," says Ron Tschetter. The kit for each shank consists of two 18 or 20-in. dia. waffle coulters and the mounting hardware needed to bolt them onto the shank.

Manufacturing, 40582 - 187th St., Carpenter, S. Dak. 57322 (ph 605 266-2177; rtchetshop@nrctv.com; www.ronsmfg.com).