

## New Paint “Restorer” Adds Value To Equipment

A shiny new paint job adds value to any piece of equipment. However, buyers sometimes wonder what a new paint job is covering up and how long it will last. Dakota Shine brings back luster to even an old paint job without repainting or raising questions, says Lynn Odland, Dakota Ag Innovations.

“We buy used equipment out of the South as well as local equipment and it often has that proverbial sun bake,” explains Odland. “Dealers told us equipment is penalized 12 to 15 percent in value for appearance even though it’s in good shape mechanically.”

Odland and his partners looked for an alternative to sandblasting and repainting to restore value. When they couldn’t find anything, they started experimenting with soy derivatives and paint additives. Dakota Shine was the result.

“All you need is an air compressor, a paint gun and a water hose,” says Odland. “It goes on right over decals or fresh paint. It eliminates the ghost from the decal and blends fresh paint luster with the old paint.”

The first step is washing and degreasing with a power washer. Dakota Prep solution at a rate of 8 to 10 oz./gal. of water is then applied to the surface with a special no scratch pad, scrubbing and rinsing as it goes. This buffs the oxidation and grime off the surface, leaving the old paint job looking uniformly dull. “Cleaning a half ton pickup will only take about 15 to 20 minutes,” says Odland. This point is a good opportunity to do any repainting or touch up that may be needed, he adds.

Once the cleaned surface is dry, Dakota Shine is applied. Odland suggests loading it in a paint gun or conventional spray gun with a 1.4 to 1.6 tip.

“Apply a light mist over the machine,” says Odland. “As soon as it hits, you see the reaction. Once you give it a light coating, walk away and let it dry. Shoot it today, and you can use it tomorrow.”

Odland says the same process can be used on any painted or embedded pigment product from toys to fiberglass boats. One customer even uses it on portable toilets.



Dakota Shine brings back luster to old paint jobs without repainting or raising questions from buyers, says Dakota Ag Innovations. Photos show “before” and “after” effects.

A starter kit with everything needed, including instructions and a short training video, is priced at \$215.95. Odland estimates that would be enough to treat a farm combine. A Deere 7000 Series tractor would require about \$60 worth of the product.

Establishing the product on the market has been slow due to disbelief that such a simple product could work so well, he says. However, a number of major equipment manufacturers, including Caterpillar, JLG and Volvo construction, have tested and approved Dakota Shine. JLG is selling it through their outlets, and it’s being private labeled for Volvo and Cat outlets.

Odland gives a lot of the credit for Dakota Shine’s ability to pull out contaminants to the corn and soy ingredients. They have since developed a parts wash solution for Cat that outperforms solvent based cleaners.

“The parts wash solution can also be used to clean cab interiors and air ride seats,” says Odland. “Mechanics tell us even their hands come out cleaner, and they have a better grip.”

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## World’s Lowest-Priced Truck

A low-cost Chinese-made truck got a lot of attention at the recent Farm Science Review Show near London, Ohio.

“It sells for \$5,495. You can’t buy a new 4-WD ATV for that price,” says Chris Lough, Wildfire Motors, Steubenville, Ohio. “It’s built on some of the same principles of aircraft construction, so it has great strength yet is lightweight. Best of all, it gets up to 72 mpg.”

The 2-passenger mini truck is equipped with a cargo box with collapsible sides. It has a top cruising speed of up to 45 mph and is powered by a 248 cc, 17 hp liquid cooled engine with a 5-speed manual transmission. Load capacity is 550 lbs. It rides on 12-in. tires. An AM/FM radio and spare tire with jack are included.

“You can’t drive it on the highway, but it works great around the farm or in town on residential streets,” says Lough.

According to Lough, the vehicle’s single front wheel makes it street legal. “It’s classified the same as a motorcycle so it doesn’t

have to meet Department of Transportation auto standards. If it had four wheels it would be classified as a car and would need air bags and other safety equipment. Some states require a motorcycle license to drive it, while others require just a regular driver’s license.”

Gear shifting is similar to a motorcycle. “The gears are in a straight line instead of an H pattern like they are in a car or pickup. You pull straight back or straight forward every time you shift gears.”

He says the 3-wheeled vehicle works great for small companies that want to advertise their business. “One company that delivers farm machinery parts painted their vehicle Deere green and yellow and put their address and phone number on both sides. I’ve sold two vehicles to NAPA store stores in Kentucky, which painted the vehicles to look like a race truck. Feed stores can use them to deliver feed and to advertise themselves at the same time. We plan to add a manual dump bed on the 2-passenger model.”

Safety with a 3-wheeled vehicle can be an



Chinese-made 2-passenger mini truck is powered by a 17 hp liquid-cooled engine with a 5-speed manual transmission. It has a single front wheel and sells for just \$5,495.

issue, says Lough. “You don’t want to drive this vehicle on big hills or make sharp turns. You’ve got to drive carefully.”

A 4-passenger model without a cargo box is also available.

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## Side-Mount Mower Trims Hedges And Road Sides

Steve Flowers likes tall hedges along his property line for privacy, but trimming them used to be quite a job. His side-mount mower now makes trimming a snap and makes cleaning up road ditch sides easy, too. Simple hydraulics let him select the proper angle to cut across a 110° arc.

“I can tip the mower to a vertical position away from me or at a 20 degree angle facing me or anywhere in between,” says Flowers. “It extends out about seven feet from the side of the tractor, and the arm raises the mower to five feet above the ground or lowers it to two feet below the tractor wheel if trimming a ditch bank.”

Flowers used the existing front-end loader mount to support the mower arm. The loader joystick controls the two cylinders that raise and lower the arm and adjust the angle of the cut. An auxiliary hydraulic outlet at the back of the tractor runs the motor. While his initial design doesn’t fold, Flowers is confident it would be easy to modify. However, he

didn’t want to add a third valve to the joystick at the time.

“The hydraulics, including the two cylinders, hoses and a motor to run the mower, were the most expensive part of the project,” says Flowers. “I have about \$700 in it. I had a lot of the other stuff, like the 30-in. mower deck. It’s off an old riding lawn mower.”

To unhook the side mount unit, Flowers drives up to two T-posts and lowers the arm between the posts until the mower rests on the ground. He then runs a chain under the arm, removes the single pin that locks the arm in the loader mount and sets the lightweight arm on the chain. All that’s left at that point is to detach the 6 hydraulic hoses.

“I didn’t want to have to counter weight it, so I designed it to be lightweight,” says Flowers. “It only weighs about 300 lbs., and most of that is resting on the ground when hooking it up or unhooking.”

The compact tractor Flowers uses for hedge and ditch trimming only puts out 8 gpm hy-



Side-mount mower extends about 7 ft. out from side of tractor. The arm it’s mounted on raises mower to 5 ft. above the ground or lowers it to 2 ft. below the tractor wheels.

draulic flow. To get the mower blades up to speed, he had to play with different size pulleys between the hydraulic motor and the mower driveshaft.

“When I had it humming like a regular lawn mower, I knew I had it going fast enough,” says Flowers. “It isn’t built to use all day or on big bushes and trees, but it works

great on small trees, hedges and big weeds.” Flowers likes his design so much, he is looking for a company that might be interested in manufacturing it.

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