



Reuben Zimmerman buys used New Idea corn pickers from farmers and rebuilds them, converting wide row models to narrow row.



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## Corn Picker Expert Rebuilds Machines, Makes Parts

Even in this age of high-tech farms and big, expensive combines, there are still some farmers harvesting with ear corn pickers.

But finding machines in good condition can be a problem. New Idea, the biggest manufacturer of ear corn pickers, stopped building units in the late 1970's. No manufacturer makes a new corn picker and most used pickers are set up for 40-in. rows. Finding a narrower machine to match today's row spacings isn't easy.

Reuben Zimmerman, Barnett, Mo., saw the market for rebuilt corn pickers and parts about 10 years ago so he started a business called "Picker Paradise". He buys used New Idea corn pickers from farmers across the U.S. and rebuilds them, converting wide row models to narrow row. If he needs parts that aren't available, he builds his own.

"I've always harvested with corn pickers, because I like feeding ground-up ear corn. It makes great feed for dairy cows," says Zimmerman. "The percentage of farmers

who use corn pickers today isn't very high, but I'm in business because I think there will always be some farmers who use them."

He has buyers in several states looking for machines. "There are still some pickers on farms that haven't been used for a long time, and eventually people get tired of keeping them in storage and put them up for sale. I also buy pickers sometimes just for the parts."

When Zimmerman first got started, he had to figure out how to convert a wide row model to narrow. "It's quite an involved process. Halfway through my first one I wasn't sure if I'd ever get it finished, but it turned out good," he says. He converted a few more models and sold them to area farmers.

"Over the years I've sold 50 pickers. Most of them sell for \$3,000 to \$4,000," says Zimmerman. "I work on models with both 8 and 12-roll husking beds. I even have some Amish customers who use horses to pull their corn pickers. They hitch the horses to

a power unit, which is then hitched to the picker."

Finding replacement parts for corn pickers is getting to be a problem, he says. "A lot of parts aren't available through New Idea any more, which is why I started manufacturing hard-to-find parts. I figured someone has to make the parts, or else there will be a lot of disabled machines out there."

One of the most popular parts that he builds are rubber paddle wheels, which replace the original rubber finger wheels on the picker's husking unit. "The original rubber finger wheels get brittle and break off, and they're very expensive to replace. My replacement paddle wheels sell for only about one fourth as much as the finger wheels."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Reuben Zimmerman, 64757 Hwy. C, Barnett, Mo. 65011 (ph 573 378-4172).

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## Heated Wiper Blades

Everblades heated wiper blades have been around for more than 20 years. Recent product improvements make them even more effective, says Jim Weiler, W.N. Miller Co., owner of the Everblades brand.

"The blades now use a silicone rubber material. This material change, along with a change to the squeegee profile (adding a hinge so that the wiping edge flips back and forth), has given us blades that wipe exceptionally clean."

The specially designed blades have a heating element inside the squeegee and are designed to heat up to about 200 degrees F. There is also an extra cost option which was developed at the request of a lot of customers where the blade structure is heated as well. Other prior improvements to the product include a heavy-duty LED toggle switch instead of the original

toggle switch and automotive grade 18-gauge wiring that is designed to remain flexible down to minus 60 degrees F. Installation is about a half hour task. Once installed, simply light the switch and accumulated snow and ice on the blades is melted, or prevented from building up in the first place.

Everblades are more expensive than regular wiper blades but the improvements in vision, productivity, and safety make them well worth the extra cost. Everblades range in price from \$100 to \$140 depending



Everblades kits come complete with all the required wiring, fuse and switch.

on size and model. Refills and replacement blade assemblies run from \$30 to \$55.00.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, W. N. Miller Company, Inc., P.O. Box 113, Houghton, Mich. 49931 (ph 906 482-3172; toll free 800 746-0428; Jim@everblades.com; www.everblades.com).

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