Mechanical Stalk Chopper Saves Fuel, Works Fast

“Chopping corn stalks or other root crop stalks doesn’t have to be done with a powered hungry, pto-driven machine,” says Drew Lloyd of DL Industries. Lloyd invented a mechanical device called the Chopper Stalker that uses razor sharp blades and rolling disks to cut and size stalks.

Lloyd says the key to the Chopper Stalker operation is maintaining a field speed of 8 to 10 mph so the rolling blades can cut, tear and chum stalks into tiny pieces. Most pto-driven stalk choppers travel at 3 to 4 mph, so the Chopper Stalker has the potential to cover twice as much acreage.

Lloyd says he designed the machine with strip-till farmers in mind, people who want to cut and size their stalks, but not work up all the ground between the rows. The parallel linkage for each row unit is mounted on a rugged 6 by 6-in. rigid main frame. The Chopper Stalker hooks to a tractor with a 3-pt. hitch. Gauge wheels 18 in. from each end of the frame maintain the cutting depth.

Each row unit is a ‘gang’, which includes a 12-in. wide cutting reel in front with ultra-sharp blades. The reel is followed by two rolling disks angled to a “V”. Each disk has 12 sharpened metal cutting blades on the outside. Blades on the reel and the disks are replaceable. Two spokes on each row unit and parallel linkage provide consistent down pressure and allow the disks to travel up and over rocks without damaging the machine. A rolling basket at the back of each gang breaks up soil clumps and smooths the surface so moisture can penetrate evenly into the soil.

Lloyd used sealed bearings on the blade reels, disks and rolling baskets to provide long life and dependable service. The Chopper Stalker can be set to any common row crop width from 20 in. to 40 in. It’s available in 16-ft. and 20-ft. solid bar frames and folding frame models up to 40 ft. wide.

“We’ve had real good response to this machine in corn stalks and cotton ground,” Lloyd says. “It doesn’t pull nearly as hard as a pto machine and it does just as nice a job cutting up stalks and residue.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Drew Lloyd, DL Industries, FM 1958, Floydada, Texas 79235 (ph 806-983-5626; dlinustries@sbcglobal.net).

Lessons Learned From An Air Compressor Explosion

James Kelley does what many FARM SHOW readers do – take a piece of equipment and modify it. He recently learned you have to be very careful if that piece of equipment is an air compressor.

At 5:53 a.m. one January morning Kelley heard a “sonic boom”. Later, returning from morning coffee with friends, he discovered the source of the noise when he noticed a hole ripped through the steel metal siding on his farm shop. All the windows were blown out, welding helmet view lenses blown to pieces, tools destroyed, metal posts and braces bent, and there was debris everywhere.

The volume tank he had added to his 42-gal. air compressor had blown up.

“The cause for the explosion was not having a popoff valve and not having a magnetic starter on the tank,” Kelley says. He explains that he had put a new motor on the air compressor and didn’t realize that 5 hp and larger motors carry 22 amps, and that ordinary pressure switch points wouldn’t be able to handle that. The higher amps require a magnetic contact on the starter.

It appears that on the points of the pressure switch melted down so the compressor didn’t shut down, blowing the tank. The air compressor gauge was frozen at 600 psi after the explosion.

Though he had repairs to make and a mess to clean up, Kelley felt very fortunate. Just the rolling disks angled to a “V”. Each disk has 12 sharpened metal cutting blades on the outside. Blades on the reel and the disks are replaceable. Two spokes on each row unit and parallel linkage provide consistent down pressure and allow the disks to travel up and over rocks without damaging the machine. A rolling basket at the back of each gang breaks up soil clumps and smooths the surface so moisture can penetrate evenly into the soil.

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Heavy-Duty Drill Hitch Ideal For Roller

Farmers wanting to roll fields behind their drills can get help from Adelmeyer Welding Services. Robert (Fuzzy) Adelmeyer and his dad, Robert Sr., fabricate heavy-duty hitches to match drill frames.

“The hitch is designed to match the height of the drill frame,” explains the younger Adelmeyer. “We just did one where we had to drop the hitch height a couple of feet from the drill frame. The main beam on the drill was about 4 ft. off the ground, and the owner wanted the hitch at 20 in.”

While the design may change, the heavy-duty nature stays the same. All members are made with 1/4-in. thick steel except for the actual hitch plate, which is 3/4-in. A 4-ft. long, 4 by 4 or 8 by 8-in. channel iron beam (depending on the drill) extends perpendicularly from the main support beam on the drill to a vertical faceplate where the hitch plate mounts. The faceplate varies in length depending on how much drop is needed. Gussets reinforce the joint between the beam and faceplate, while 2 by 4 or 4 by 4-in. channel irons angle back from the sides of the drill’s rear cross frame to reinforce the faceplate at the hitch. A fourth channel iron beam adds vertical support over the hitch’s main beam from the top of the faceplate to an upper cross member on the drill.

“We do whatever is needed to stiffen and reinforce the hitch,” says Adelmeyer. “All the connecting members end in flanges so the hitch can be unbolted as needed.”

Hitches vary in cost from $700 to $1,000, depending on the drill and modifications needed. A recent job where the customer provided all the steel came in at only $440.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Adelmeyer Welding Services, 1025 N. Water St., Lomira, Wis. 53048 (ph 920-269-4357).