

Drop-Down Panel Stops Mower Stone-Throwing

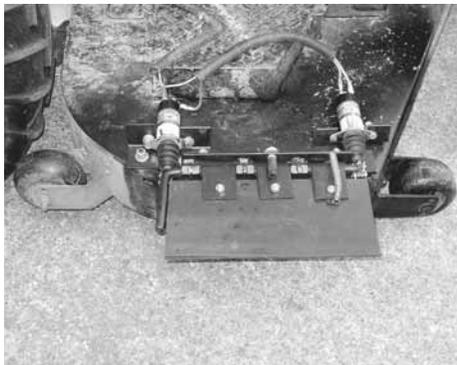
With the touch of a button, Logan Goldschmidt can stop his mower from throwing grass and stones. His powered drop-panel attachment drops down quickly to cover the chute opening as needed.

“When I ran a lawn service, it was always a problem when grass flew out across a sidewalk or rocks got thrown,” recalls Goldschmidt. “I wanted a way to close off the grass chute or to partially shut it down.”

After returning from a tour in Iraq, he and his father, Larry, came up with a solution. “We use two solenoids to close the panel and a spring to open it when the solenoids are turned off,” says Goldschmidt. “Initially, we used an internal hinge, but it took too much power for the solenoids to close it. The external hinge works better.”

Currently Goldschmidt has a switch for the solenoids by the mower ignition key. However, he plans to relocate it to the steering handle for faster reaction time by the operator.

“It will close in half a second, no matter how much grass is coming out,” he says. “The two solenoids have a total pull of about 60 lbs.”



Powered drop-panel attachment drops down quickly to cover mower's chute opening at the touch of a button. Photo shows panel in the open position.

Originally, he used a double layer of mud flap material for the 6-in. wide by 13-in. long panel. He is switching to ABS plastic to reduce grass buildup. Regardless of the material, Goldschmidt means for the panel to be the weak link in his attachment.

“I wanted the hinge really strong and the panel weak,” he says. “If the operator drives into something with the panel extended, it will give. The hinge and other components



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won't be damaged. Replacing the plastic is cheap and easy.”

Goldschmidt has attachments designed for Toro and Cub Cadet zero-turn mowers. He encourages interested zero-turn operators to call for pricing and availability.

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Exotic Oxen Rare In U.S.

If you like the idea of owning livestock that will amaze your friends and neighbors, a pair of Gayal oxen might just fit the bill. Because of their rarity, a 2-year-old pair sells for around \$12,000, according to Jurgen Schulz who runs the Kifaru Exotic Animal Auction House in Lampasas, Texas. He imported his Gayal oxen from Sweden many years ago.

“They're interesting because they're so rare,” Schulz says.

Gayal is a domestic gaur, the largest of the wild oxen, and the breed is common among hill tribes in Burma and India. Gayals forage in the wild during the day and are lured close to the villages at night. They aren't milked, but are butchered for meat.

Cows and bulls grow horns that are about 2 ft. wide. Gayals stand 55 to 63 in. tall at the shoulder. They have shorter legs and shorter, thicker horns than the wild gaur. They also lack the gaur's shoulder hump. Gayal bulls, however, maintain the wild mating call of the gaur, which is as loud and resonant as the bass notes of an organ.

Schulz feeds his Gayal herd the same kind of hay and pellets he feeds his other cattle. They do well in the Texas climate and can handle temperatures down to about 15 degrees without shelter. In colder climates they would require shelter during the winter,



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he says.

Some livestock owners crossbreed them with cattle. They are gentle, though it's always wise to be careful around bulls and cows with new calves. Gayals have a 20-year life expectancy.

Schulz holds several auction sales each year and has a variety of exotic animals on

his website including a Gayal pair up for sale.

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