

# Rubber-Tired Weed Puller Now Works Better Than Ever

By C.F. Marley, Contributing Editor

"It's aggressive enough to pull the biggest weeds in the most severe conditions," says Dan Bourquin about the update kit he recently introduced for his rubber-tired mechanical weed puller, which was first featured in FARM SHOW back in 1978 - our second year of publication.

The Bourquin weed puller's tires pull tall-growing weeds from low growing crops. The machine went out of production in the 1980's when Roundup-ready crops caught on. It was re-introduced a few years ago when Roundup resistant weeds started developing. A row of wheels, which are driven hydraulically, rotate against each other, grabbing weeds which extend above the crop row.

The original machine used rubber-tired wheels only, but the re-introduced machine combined a rubber-tired wheel with a metal roller that was covered by a rubber mesh material.

According to Bourquin, the new Pos-i-Pull disc kit makes the weed puller work even better. "It's designed to handle the problem of Roundup resistant weeds, which can get big fast and are very hard to pull out," says Bourquin. "We tested the machine last year on an Arkansas farm and it worked even better than expected."

The kit uses notched metal discs that bolt on in pairs on back of the rubber wheels. One disc is flat, and the other one is curved and faces backward so that it doesn't cut the weed's stem. The curved disc is bigger than

the rubber wheel, so that the two discs overlap each other by about a half inch.

The machine's rubber wheels and rollers grab the weed, and then the weed gets caught in the notches between the 2 discs and pops out of the ground.

"As the weed gets caught in the notches between the 2 discs it gets shoved sideways, which results in more pulling pressure," says Bourquin. "The forward motion of the tractor also helps because it causes the weed to develop a twisting action in the soil that does a better job of thoroughly dislodging the roots from the ground.

"It'll pull out weeds with stalks up to 1 1/2 in. in diameter. With such big weeds the discs might stop rotating briefly, but with the forward motion of the machine once the weeds get caught between the notches the discs will start to turn again."

Installation requires removing the hub nuts from the rubber wheels. "Some weed pullers require extended stud bolts," notes Bourquin.

Bourquin says his 4-row weed puller equipped with the Pos-i-Pull kit sells for \$11,900. If you already have the weed puller and want to update it, the kit sells for \$250 per row.

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## Turkey Litter Burner Heats Brooder House

Glenn Rodes used to spread turkey litter on his fields, but he found a "higher use" for it. He burns it and uses the heat to keep turkey chicks warm and healthy. The experimental system goes through 180 lbs. of litter per hour, leaving behind about two 55-gal. drums of ash each day.

"When I built the brooder house in 2002, I bought a corn burner I read about in FARM SHOW," recalls Rodes. "I was looking for an alternative energy supply to use instead of propane for supplemental heat. Burning litter had been tried but was cost prohibitive."

When the price of corn shot up, burning it was no longer economical, and Rodes returned to using propane as supplemental heat to a wood-fired boiler. He needs a lot of heat. The brooder house is 50 ft. wide by 624 ft. long.

In recent years, concern over pollution of the Chesapeake Bay has put pressure on livestock farmers like Rodes. Excess phosphorous due to repeated spreading of manure has limited what he can spread each year. When the local Natural Resources Conservation Service conservationist told him about grant money to try a turkey litter burner, Rodes agreed. He needed the heat and a way to dispose of about 1,560 tons of litter produced yearly.

"I agreed to build a shed to house it, and they provided the burner," says Rodes. "We need the heat, even in the summer because young birds must stay warm. We plan to ramp up its use this fall and winter."

The PLF-500 Global ReFuel furnace is a new production model from Wayne Combustion Systems. It's designed to burn poultry litter at a fairly low temperature. The goal is to use the energy while retaining more nutrients in the ash for use as plant food.

"We hope to use some on our fields, but if there is excess, the ash will be easier to ship outside the area than turkey litter," says Rodes.

The attached 2 1/2-ton hopper is loaded daily. The litter is augered into the furnace automatically. When the furnace is started, propane burners preheat the burn chamber. They shut down as the litter is introduced. Ash is augered out automatically as well, and hot air is distributed down the center roofline of the brooder house.

Rodes estimates the full cost of the system at between \$100,000 and \$125,000. With 8 flocks of 35,000 chicks moving through the brooder house each year, he figures the system would pay for itself in 3 to 5 years. While the turkey litter could be sold for roughly \$13/ton, Rodes estimates the savings



Glenn Rodes burns turkey litter and uses the heat to keep turkey chicks warm and healthy.

in purchased fuel at roughly \$160/ton.

"Burners like this may not be the answer," says Rodes. "I do hope it will be a piece of the puzzle to help us manage our manure."

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## Pallet Fork "Extenders"

"I made these extenders for my loader-mounted forklift. It really helps whenever I want to move material that the forklift can't otherwise reach," says Earl Beard, Gladstone, New Mexico.

He made the extenders out of a pair of 18-in. long, 4-in. dia. pipes that are welded shut on one end and slide over the forks. A chain hook is welded to the front of each pipe, with a chain that's used to move the load wrapped around both hooks.

A third hook is welded to the back end of one pipe, while a slotted, adjustable bar is welded on back of the other pipe. A chain

runs back to the frame of the forklift to hold the extenders in place.

"The two hooks on front have a hole at the top. If I'm ever worried that the chain might jump off the hooks I can tie a wire in each hole and twist it through the chains to tighten them up.

"The pipes fit tight on the forks. In fact, sometimes I have to hammer them on but I like that because then I know that the pipes won't turn sideways around the forks."

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"My pallet fork extenders work great to move material that the forks otherwise could not reach," says Earl Beard.