

Finnish-Built Wheel Hoe Speeds Weeding

Frank Hunter can get his vegetable beds weeded quickly with the Weed Master from Finland that he has used extensively on his organic CSA farm.

"The Weed Master is a great tool for a small acre vegetable farm," says Hunter. "We're an organic farm, so mechanical weeding is a crucial part of the business. I've used the Weed Master with the finger weeder, goosefoot hoe and single disk hiller attachment, and they all worked great."

Hunter credits the parallel linkage design for mounting tillage tools. It allows the operator to easily adjust depth and drag on the tools, making it easy to walk at a normal pace.

"The parallel linkage lets you roll the tool forward without stopping like other wheel hoes," says Hunter. "With others, you're constantly readjusting the depth. With the Weed Master, you set the depth and it stays there."

Eric Gallandt, associate professor, School of Food and Agriculture, University of Maine,

was introduced to the Weed Master while on sabbatical in Denmark. "We've gotten very positive feedback," says Gallandt. "I am surprised but no one has started importing it yet. Looking at the improved work rate versus other hand weeding tools, it should pay for its \$2,000 cost in pretty short order."

Gallandt says the Weed Master with all tillage tools and the flamer sells for about \$5,190, about half of that being the flamer unit. He notes that Petri Leinonen, the designer of the Weed Master, also attaches an Earthway Seeder to the toolbar.

"It's very intuitive," says Gallandt. "You can pull up to a bed and quickly adjust the tools to match the row. It's easy to do. I suggest growers make a few passes with the Weed Master before doing any hand weeding."

After extensive testing of the Weed Master, Hunter says he and his partner are considering a purchase. However, the cost plus importation expenses of almost \$1,000 make it a difficult decision.



Weed Master's parallel linkage design makes it easy to use a variety of tillage tools, such as this hiller attachment.

"We have 100 families in our 2 1/2 to 3-acre CSA," says Hunter. "Imported from Finland, it would cost almost \$3,000. That is a pretty significant investment for an operation like ours."

You can check out a video of the Weed Master in action at FARMSHOW.COM.

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"Catcher" Makes Calf Work Easier

If you own an ATV or UTV and have cattle, Dan Leo has an attachment to make working with young calves safer and easier.

"Safety is the number one goal of our well-designed and time-tested catchers," says Leo, president of Safety Zone Calf Catchers. "The traditional way to tag and process calves can be dangerous and often takes more than one person to do the job. With our calf catcher it's easier on the producer, the cow and the calf. One person, who can operate an ATV or UTV, can safely work calves."

The calf catcher is a 310-lb. all-welded, durably constructed steel cage that mounts with ball hitches on the front and back. It works well in all types of terrains and conditions. With the front gate locked open, the driver approaches the calf and captures it in the 4 by 6-ft. cage by shutting the spring-loaded gate. The producer enters the pen through the open side by stepping from the ATV or UTV and moves the calf to the rear holding area where he can tag, vaccinate, weigh and even band the babies while protected from the mother cow. When finished the producer releases the calf out the back to its mother.

"Traditionally, producers have to get to the calves early after birth otherwise it can be difficult to catch and even hang on to them, and then it can require two or more people depending on the behavior of the mother cow while the processing takes place," Leo notes. "With our calf catcher unit, one person can catch calves, even if they are a week or older when they have plenty of run in them. Another benefit is the calf holder located at the back of the catcher. It not only secures the calf for processing, but works very well for pairing out, as the cow can see and smell her baby and will then easily follow to another pasture or calving barn in inclement weather."

The catchers sell for \$1,995 plus freight shipping. Catchers designed for UTVs are an additional \$450. Another option - a waterproof, digital scale - is especially useful to seedstock producers. The company sells directly to cattlemen but welcomes dealership inquiries.

"Built in both Nebraska and South Dakota plants, the calf catcher will last for generations," Leo adds.

To see it in action, check out the video on the company's website.



One person driving an ATV can safely and easily work calves with Dan Leo's calf Catcher.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Safety Zone Calf Catchers, LLC, 1146 7th Ave, Dannebrog, Neb. 68831 (ph 877 505-0914; www.safetyzonecalfcatchers.com).

Box Blade Converted To "Ripper-Grader"

Dex Brouillette needed something heavy to rip the hard clay on his North Carolina farm, so he went on Craigslist and bought a standard-duty 6-ft. box blade, then converted it into a heavy-duty box blade equipped with 11 rippers.

"I use my Massey Ferguson 38 hp tractor to pull it. It lets me rip and grade the ground at the same time," he says.

The box blade was originally equipped with 5 rippers, and Brouillette added 6 more. He welded a length of 4-in. angle iron across the front part of the box blade, behind a beam that supported the original rippers. The rippers fit between the 2 beams and are held on by a clevis-type, pin-mount system. Pairs of welded-on steel rods, welded on between the beams and spaced about 1 in. apart, form pockets to hold the rippers tightly in place.

He needed more weight for the rippers to dig into the ground, so he welded a 3-ft. long I-beam on back of the box blade. He

also bolted two 25-lb. round lead weights on top at each corner, and added two 25-lb., rectangular cast iron weights on back.

The box blade hooks up to a commercial 3-pt. hitch. Brouillette welded on steel brackets where the hitch and box blade meet to keep from bending or breaking anything.

"I use it around our house and outbuildings. It does a great job of cutting through sod and hard-packed clay," says Brouillette. "With the rippers and extra weights it tops out at about 600 lbs., which allows it to penetrate hard ground with very little vibration."

"The rippers come with a series of holes in them, so if I want to adjust their depth I remove the pin and move the ripper up or down. My total cost including the rippers, welding rods and paint came to about \$450."

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Dex Brouillette converted a standard 6-ft. box blade into this heavy-duty unit equipped with 11 rippers.

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