

Father And Son Build Custom-Mounted Toolbars

When Ohio farmer Gary Schmitz and his son wore out their anhydrous toolbar 10 years ago, they decided to take a big step and build their own replacement rather than buy a new one. "The old model was a pull-type, but we thought a mounted model would work better for our conditions," says the elder Schmitz. "We built a completely new 17-shank double-fold bar and also experimented with new rolling disk sealers that worked real well. Eventually we mounted those sealers on a smaller toolbar and used it for sidedressing."

That equipment was so successful that the Schmitz's were soon getting requests from neighbors and friends to supply tool bars and disk sealers. "We've incorporated many design changes on the bar and the disks, and now I believe we've got the most heavy-duty low maintenance units on the market today," Schmitz says. The disk sealers operate independent as a pair and are adjustable so the operator can widen, narrow or swivel them as needed.

The younger Schmitz thinks one of their reasons for success is that he and his dad are farmers building equipment for farmers. "We test all our equipment on our own land and

we make revisions and adjustments based on what we see and need," says Schmitz II. That philosophy helped the team revise and improve the closing coulters over 5 growing seasons so they could sidedress ammonia at high speeds. "The sealers hold the soil around the shank and keep it away from the young plants, even those just 2 to 3 in. tall, so we can apply ammonia at 4 to 7 mph," Schmitz II says. Another advantage of their sealers is the maintenance-free disk bearings.

While the Schmitzes love farming, they love building equipment even more. The engineering and heavy-duty construction of their toolbars and sealers is a major selling point. So is the fact they build sizes from 5 to 15 shanks and offer their equipment in any color the buyer wants. Their "standard" feature list includes a hydraulic folding system, complete flashing light package with reflectors, spring cushion 1 by 2-in. shanks, premium NH3 knives, adjustable gauge wheels and 18-in. sealing coulters. The bars and cross members are made of heavy-duty 4 by 6-in. rectangular tube steel. Convenience features include a safety step to access the top of the machine, a bracket to hold the hose in



Ohio farmers and manufacturers Gary Schmitz and his son build custom mounted NH3 application bars. Owners can choose the color of their implement.

place, and a heavy-duty parking stand.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Countryside Implements, 1220 St. Rt. 120,

Lyons, Ohio 43533 (ph 419 923-3961; toolbar53@yahoo.com).

Add-On Wheels "Self-Propel" Rototiller

Paul Watson never liked pushing his self-propelled rototiller all the way from his barn to his garden, a distance of about 600 ft. So he added a pair of big hard rubber wheels with homemade axles on front of the machine, allowing the tines to clear the ground. The wheels' axles lock onto the rototiller axles that support the tines, allowing him to drive the machine under its own power without digging anything up.

The original 1972 Senator rototiller came equipped with two 9-in. high rubber wheels on back. Watson installed a pair of 14-in. high hard rubber wheels on front, mounting

the wheels on threaded axles that lock into the machine's existing axles.

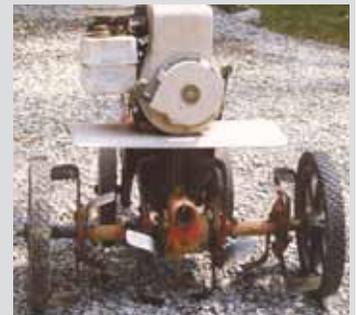
"The add-on wheels propel the rototiller forward and take all the work out of driving it around," says Watson. "The tines clear the ground by about one inch. As the tines rotate, the wheels rotate with them.

"In the past I had to pull back on the handlebars in order to lift the tines up off the ground, and then push the machine by hand without any power. Now I just start the rototiller and let the front wheels pull the machine forward. Once I reach the garden I pull the pin out of the axles and drop the

wheels and axles off to the side. When I'm done working the garden I slide the wheels and axles back on, re-insert the pins, and drive the machine home."

A pair of 8-in. long threaded rods serve as the wheels' axles and slide inside the rototiller's 2 hollow axles. Watson drilled a hole through each rototiller axle and also through each threaded rod, allowing him to pin the 2 axles together. A pair of nuts hold each threaded rod axle tight onto the wheel.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul W. Watson, 3124 E. Co. Rd. 250 South, Dillsboro, Ind. 47018 (ph 812 689-5432).



Add-on wheels propel rototiller forward and take all the work out of driving it around.



Nichols started with the front axle and wheels off an MTD garden tractor to build this mini wagon running gear. It looks and works like an actual farm wagon running gear.

Mini Wagon Running Gear

"I built a wagon gear that looks and works like an actual farm wagon running gear, but is scaled down to garden tractor size," says Steve Nichols, Galesburg, Ill.

He started with the front axle and wheels off an MTD garden tractor and fabricated the rest of the wagon, which rides on 15 by 6.50 by 6 wheels.

"The wagon pivots at the waist and has rocking bolsters, just like on real farm wagons," says Nichols. "I've built and sold 3 of these wagons and let the buyer make his own hay rack or box.

"I found the decal that's on the axle at a local swap meet, and since I had obtained the white painted wheels at a garage sale I

decided to make this running gear a 'Case' brand and painted it orange. All my running gears are scaled down to the size of an average lawn tractor."

Nichols says he has started working on another running gear using the cast iron front axle from a Huskee garden tractor. "It will be more on the scale of my Deere 318, with larger flotation tires. Since the wheels I have are painted silver, it will likely become a 'Case IH' wagon," he notes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Steve Nichols, 1248 N. Seminary St., Galesburg, Ill. 61401 (ph 309 337-7141; stvelola77@gmail.com).

Colorful Water Level Indicator

"It's an easy way to check the water level in my stock tank," says retired cattleman Brian Vigar, Lancer, Sask., about his homemade water level indicator.

He uses it in a big rubber tire tank located next to a wooden fence. It consists of a float made from an empty 40-oz. plastic (or glass) bottle with a 1/2-in. dia. wooden dowel attached to it, which rides up or down inside a 5-in. dia. plastic pipe that's U-bolted to a wooden board. The dowel fits through a plastic cap on top of the pipe, which keeps the dowel running straight up and down.

The bottom end of the dowel fits inside the neck of the bottle and is glued to the bottom so it can't move around. Vigar siliconed the neck to make sure water can't get inside the bottle.

The dowel has an orange cap on top of it that's visible from a road 1/4 mile away. He also painted yellow and black marks on the dowel just below the orange cap that let him know exactly how full the tank is at all times.

"I can drive down the road at 60 mph and tell by looking by the color showing on the dowel exactly where the water level is," says Vigar. "The yellow and black colors indicate how much full the tank is, but if I only see orange I know the tank is out of water."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brian Vigar, P.O. Box 40, Lancer, Sask., Canada S0N 1G0 (ph 306 689-2888).



Float attaches to wooden dowel with orange cap on top. Yellow and black marks show exactly how full the tank is at all times.