

New Cornhead Gathering System Replaces Chains

Corn picker and cornhead gathering chains haven't changed much since mechanical harvesting was introduced 7 decades ago. Although current designs work well and get the job done when they're paired with hydraulic deck plates, their one major drawback is shelling kernels from ears when corn is below 20 percent moisture. Often those kernels are lost on the ground. In these conditions farmers know they can lose from 1 to 5 bu. an acre or more before corn even gets into the machine. Answers have been sought for years, and now an Illinois company just might have the solution.

In the fall of 2015, 360 Yield Center tested a new type of gathering system they call the 360 Yield Saver. It's a series of pliable paddles that replace metal gathering chains. The paddles run on sprockets just like a chain, intersecting to create a continuous and flexible platform that moves ears and loose kernels to the cornhead infeed auger. The horizontal flat paddles are easier on ears than metal fingers on a metal chain, and they also save loose kernels. The 360 Yield Saver is positioned on top of the deck plates and snapping rolls and moves ears and loose kernels up the row unit to the infeed auger.

The paddles are flexible enough to allow stalks to be pulled down through the deck plates and snapping rolls without letting kernels pass through.

Illinois farmer and 360 regional agronomy manager Matt Foes tested the Yield Saver in the fall of 2015. He was impressed with the results and says it was easier to create a 'bed' of ears moving up the head while running the head at a speed that effectively managed residue. Foes says big ears from better ground came in just as expected and the smaller ears were also brought in without slipping through the deck plates as they had before. Foes says the 360 Yield Saver wasn't affected by the size of the stalks or how well the stalks were standing in the field. In some instances there were a few more leaves brought into the machine, but he says kernel loss at the head was reduced by 75 percent compared to gathering chains.

Foes says using the 360 Yield Saver meant he didn't have to move the deck plates in and out to chase ears that could easily fall from the head. He added that the product automates a process that most farmers aren't always able to do well, especially in a year like 2015 when corn was exceptionally dry



The 360 Yield Saver uses a series of flat, pliable paddles that intersect to create a continuous and flexible platform. Stalks are pulled down through the deck plates and snapping rolls without letting kernels pass through.

in the field. He's excited to see how the 360 Yield Saver will perform on more acres in 2016.

360 Yield Center President Gregg Sauder says they were pleased with the 360 Yield Saver results in 2015 and plan to modify and improve the design before more testing is done in 2016. Sauder says their goal is to

capture all the kernels a plant produces and improve residue management at the head. No timetable has been set for general release of the product.

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He "Trains" Predators And Deer With Baited Fences

Steve Kenyon uses bacon to keep predators away from young calves. He hangs strips of bacon on a "hot" wire around calving pens and young pig yards. He calls the bacon his "guard pig".

"Everybody else has guard dogs or guard llamas, but I have my guard pig," says Kenyon. "If you kill predators attacking your calves or lambs, it just opens up a space and another predator moves in. The electrified bacon trains them to stay away."

With raw bacon hanging every 100 yards or so, hungry predators are eager to grab a strip. When they do, they get a powerful shock. Calf yards are near the farmyard with AC outlets for a more powerful fencer. Last year he used 3-strand barbed wire with 2 hot wires and a ground. If the predators tried to go through, they were guaranteed a good shock. Simply sniffing the bacon was just about as effective.

"Predators sniff the bacon or try to take a bite," says Kenyon. "Once they do, that's enough, and the smell keeps them away. By midsummer, most of the bacon is still hanging, but it is pretty well withered away."

Meanwhile, calves and cows have been turned out on pasture, and the coyotes and other predators have more options. They are no longer as hungry.



Steve Kenyon hangs strips of bacon on a "hot" wire around his calving pens. The electrified bacon trains predators to stay away.

"If you can train a predator that calves or lambs are not what they want to eat, it is more effective as they keep untrained predators out of the area.

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Peanut Butter Fence Works, Too

Yvonne Lawley, assistant professor of Agronomy and Cropping Systems at the University of Manitoba, uses much the same technique to reduce deer damage to research plots.

Lawley and research technician Eric Wallace use a 3-wire setup with posts on 30-ft. spacings. It's powered with a 12-volt deep cycle battery charged with a solar panel.

"We normally place a strip of aluminum foil on the top wire and smear it with peanut butter to attract deer in for a shock," explains Wallace. "Although it is not harmful to the deer, it needs to be strong enough to deter

them from coming near it a second time."

Lawley acknowledges that it is the interaction with the bait that keeps the deer out. They could easily jump the 4-ft. high ribbon.

"It is not a new idea, but the technology has changed," says Lawley. "The availability of solar-powered battery fencers has made the practice effective at remote locations."

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Forrest Robinson cuts beans down with a sicklebar mower and loads the vines into a windrow on clean pavement, then runs the windrow through a haybine.

He Shells Beans Without A Sheller

Anyone who's ever wanted to grow their own shell beans, but didn't want the hassle of shucking one pod at a time might want to try this idea submitted by Forrest Robinson of Westmoreland, N.H.

When beans are ready to harvest, he cuts them down with a sicklebar mower and loads the vines into a pickup, making sure they're dry. If they're not, he puts them undercover until they dry down.

To shell them, he lays the vines out in a windrow on clean pavement, then runs the

windrow through a haybine. After that he removes the plant stalks and discards them, then sweeps up the beans and cleans them.

"It takes most of the work out of shelling beans," says Robinson. "A pickup load of plant material will yield about 5 gal. of beans, and it takes only about one minute to shuck them," says Robinson.

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After running the beans through the haybine, he removes the plant stalks and discards them, then sweeps up the beans and cleans them.

