

Custom Business Rebuilds Planters And Also Builds New

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Gideon Stoltzfus built his first corn planter in 1977 because he needed a better one for his own farm. When he built a better one the next year and sold the first, it was the start of a new business. Pequea Planter was soon building and customizing planters to meet other farmers needs as well as his own.

“Our first planter was a 2-row, horse-drawn, lever lift, long tongue planter using Deere 1240 row units,” says Stoltzfus. “In the late 1970’s and early 80’s, we converted hundreds of old horse-drawn planters to plateless with Deere 7000 meters.”

In the early 1980’s Pequea Planter started building 2-row, 3-pt. and pull-type planters using 7000 row units. That soon evolved into larger planters for tractor users, as well as horse farmers. In recent years, he and sons Daniel and Omar have built and sold from 100 to 150 planters a year. They refurbish older planters to better than new status with options not available when the planter was originally built. An example of that is reconfiguring 8-row Deere 7000 planters to 6-row no-till.

“The 8-row has a heavier frame and hitch, making our 6-row heavier and stronger for an even better no-till planter than the Deere 6-row 7000 Conservation Planter,” says Stoltzfus.

Since 2013 they have also been building complete 4 and 6-row planters under their Plant Master brand, using their own heavier frame and hitch with Shoup Manufacturing row units similar to the Deere MaxEmerge Plus row units. New and refurbished planters range from 1-row to 15-row, horse-drawn to tractor, and conventional to no-till.

“A big part of our business is designing and

fabricating parts and attachments to convert and update older 7000 and 7200 planters with no-till coulters, row cleaners, row markers, wheel frames, drive systems and more,” says Stoltzfus. “We either fabricate or buy parts from other after market companies. For example, we offer contact drive wheel kits for all 4, 6 and 8-row Deere planters and some 12-rows that eliminate the need for existing sprockets, chains, shafts and clutches.”

They also custom build planters for specialty needs, such as 15, 20, 24 and 28-in. row spacing, splitter planters for twin-row beans, folding planters and more. Produce planter customers can choose from more than 20 attachments.

Pequea Planter customers still benefit from the needs of the Stoltzfus family. In addition to the 2 sons in business with him, 3 other sons farm in the area. Pequea also rents out planters.

“Over the years a lot of updates and improvements have been from our own experiences, as well as from what other farmers tell us they need,” says Stoltzfus. “We try them out on rental units before recommending them to our customers.”

A good example of need-based innovation is the Pequea Pumpkin Planter. The Stoltzfus family has planted pumpkins for more than 20 years, initially with only slightly modified corn planters. The first improvement was to use vacuum to place the seed. Then a series of improvements were made to facilitate planting pumpkins into heavy covers such as cereal rye.

“A heavy cover crop lets you pull into the field at picking time and load out clean pumpkins no matter what the weather has



Pequea Planter refurbishes older planters to better than new status, offering options not available when the planter was originally built.

been,” explains Stoltzfus. “We put on no-till coulters, but they produced too much hair pinning. So we added row cleaners, but the only type available were spiked and the rye wrapped around and jammed them up.”

The solution was a solid blade row cleaner with 2 blades running in a V mounted on the front bar with a gauge wheel, parallel linkage and down pressure. While that was an improvement, they decided a residue slicer would be a good addition.

“We developed a straight blade with a rubber wheel on each side to hold the residue while it was being cut,” says Stoltzfus. “Then the row cleaner and coulters could do their job. Now our planter can handle almost any cover crop residue we have. We can even roll 5 to 6-ft. rye in one direction and plant at an angle across it.”

The no-till pumpkin planter has proven popular with customers and the innovative row cleaner and slicer have been adapted to

other planters as well. Stoltzfus estimates they have around 50 of the pumpkin planters in the market, with 5 or 6 sold in the past year alone.

Prices depend on what needs the customer has. The pumpkin planter with slicer, row cleaner, no-till coulters and vacuum can run from \$6,000 to \$7,000 per row unit with a foam marker system.

“We’ve done 2 and 3-row pumpkin planters, but a 1-row is the most popular,” says Stoltzfus. “It lets the customer set his own row spacing.”

Prices on new and rebuilt planters vary depending on the buyer’s preferences. The Pequea Planter catalog provides an overview of options available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pequea Planter, 561 White Horse Rd., Gap, Penn. 17527 (ph 717 442-4406; www.pequeaplanner.com).



Sprayer cart is equipped with a 50-gal. poly drum and a 4-ft. wide spray boom mounted on back.

Yard Sprayer Made From Salvaged Parts

Chris Nielsen says he didn’t want to spend a lot of money on a store-bought yard sprayer that wasn’t made very well, so he built one from spare parts he found around his shop.

“I want equipment that’s made to last rather than break the first time I use it, and this sprayer fits the bill,” Nielsen says. He built a tough box frame out of 2-in. tube steel with angle iron on top of the entire perimeter, creating a tray for the bottom and sides, which are lined with 2 by 10 planks. A ball hitch on the tongue attaches behind his lawn mower or a 4-wheeler. The 2-in. axle welded to the frame on V-bracing carries 10-in. tires mounted outside the frame to provide plenty of stability when the spray tank is full. A 4-ft. wide spray bar made of 1-in. tube steel is mounted on the back of the cart frame.

“My spray tank is a 50-gal. poly drum that was just sitting around taking up space,” Nielsen says. “I plumbed a line in the bottom, hooked up 1-in. tubing through a small filter and pump, and put four nozzles on the spray bar. The pump gets power from a 12-volt deep cycle battery that recharges with a small solar panel that I mounted on top left corner of the trailer box.”

Nielsen controls the pump and flow regulator with a wiring harness that extends to his mower or 4-wheeler operator seat. “This isn’t the prettiest sprayer around, but it really works well and is going to last a long time,” Nielsen says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nielsen Repair, 25756 Galaxie Ave. West, Farmington, Minn. 55024.



Sprayer pump is powered by a 12-volt battery that is recharged by a solar panel.

Hot Water Heat For Poultry And Swine

Multiheat International delivers the dry heat preferred in poultry and swine buildings, a heat only available from hot water heating systems. The Dutch company’s heat exchangers and fans distribute it evenly and economically from exterior boilers. Adjustable outlets can handle buildings up to 100 ft. wide.

“Everybody likes hot water heat, but you have to have air movement,” says Brandon Gleeson, Gleeson Plumbing. “The Multiheat units have both.”

The Dutch system consists of a high efficiency air exchanger on the side of the building to warm incoming air. Hot water supplied by an exterior boiler is piped to individual heat exchange units inside the poultry building. Fans in the units pull ambient air from inside the building through the heat exchanger and distribute the warmed air in a horizontal flow over the birds.

Gleeson, based in Ontario, became the Canadian and U.S. distributor after seeing Multiheat units at a poultry show. He was attracted by the design and customer service.

“We were building a poultry barn for ourselves and for another fellow nearby,” says Gleeson. “We learned that there was a lot of interest, but people didn’t like buying and shipping them individually from the Netherlands. We can import them by the container load.”

In 5 years Gleeson has installed Multiheat systems in more than 20 barns. Prices range from \$3,600 to \$5,200 (Canadian). He notes that the company offers a variety of systems based on standard-sized buildings.

“If the building is an unusual size, they will



Hot water supplied by an exterior boiler is piped to individual heat exchange units inside poultry and swine buildings.

size it for us and recommend a system that fits,” says Gleeson.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gleeson Plumbing Inc., 8240 Wellington Road 8, Moorefield, Ont. Canada N0G 2K0 (ph 226 818-4378; brandon.gleeson@hotmail.com).