

Low-Cost Aftermarket Chainsaw Parts

Farmertec.com is an online store that specializes in gas chainsaws. It's a leading manufacturer of aftermarket parts and saw repair kits for top brands, including Stihl, Husqvarna, Honda, Echo, Kohler, Kawasaki, Oleo-Mac, and others.

Dave Bergey of Meridian, Idaho, says, "They sell chainsaws and aftermarket parts for Stihl chainsaws. You can get huge savings over the original equipment manufacturer. I've had good luck with them."

Farmertec.com sells two of its own brands (Holzfirma and JonCutter). The HolzForma Blue Thunder G660 chainsaw retails for \$261. This 92cc chainsaw is compatible with Farmertec interchangeable parts and has a 6-mo. warranty. On Amazon, it has earned 3.7/5 stars after 70-plus ratings. Many customers share that the chainsaw is worth the price, so long as you keep your expectations realistic. Some share that the saw worked well for multiple seasons but that it showed its age quickly, and customer service wasn't helpful once it began to break down. Others found it difficult to assemble and noted that it leaked bar oil when not in use. Overall, most found the chainsaw useful



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for the short term but didn't consider it an investment they could rely on for years.

The company offers shipping to over 60 countries. Beyond chainsaws, it's possible to purchase protective hard hats and eyewear, padded hearing protectors, chainsaw winches, and other workday accessories. Also available is a line of brush cutters, ranging in cost from \$189 to \$300.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Farmertec.com (service@huztl.net; www.farmertec.com).



Robotic spot sprayer is powered by four solar panels and can spray up to 500 acres per day, reducing chemical use and spray drift.

Robotic Spot Sprayer Reduces Herbicide Use

Solintec, a Brazilian company and global leader in artificial intelligence and robotics for agribusiness, recently announced its Solix AG Robotic platform would be starting operations in the American Midwest.

The platform holds several modules, including the autonomous Spot Sprayer Robot which, by using Solintec's ALICE AI program, can provide crop reports, identify weeds and insect densities, nutrient deficiencies, and supply layers of maps for data analysis 24/7, 365 days a year.

The 6 by 7 1/2-ft. spot sprayer features up to 39 ft. of booms. It's powered by four upper solar panels that control the drive and spray system. Technology detects and manages weeds by spot spraying directly into plants rather than from above, reducing the amount of chemical needed. Spray drift is controlled due to the robot's light weight, stability, and lower field speeds.

The AI program also provides appropriate weather recommendations for spraying. It can service up to about 500 acres per day, depending on the terrain by using 20-in. spacing between nozzles.

More than 20 Solix Sprayer AG Robotics

platforms were delivered during March and April to the main production groups in the grain belt and are already producing a significant reduction in herbicide application.

"About 300 American producers are on the waiting list," says Guilherme Guiné, Head of Operations at Solintec for North America. "Canada will be the next country to begin operations."

He explains that on one of their client's properties, a 97 percent reduction in herbicide volume was already noticed where there was strong weed pressure.

"This reinforces the ability of our technology to offer an assertive application, only where it's needed," he says.

The Spot Sprayer Robots will be manufactured by Indiana-based McKinney Corporation.

For more information, Solintec recommends visiting their website for details, availability, and pricing.

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Easy Ways To Start A Chainsaw

"After two back surgeries and a bit of advancing age, I got tired of trying to ground-start a heavy chainsaw that only gets used occasionally - which means it might need a few extra yanks," says Alan Linda, New York Mills, Minn.

Instead, he lays the saw on its side on a table with a metal bracket over the blade and ties a heavy bungee cord to the handle so the saw is held securely in place.



Metal bracket over blade holds saw in place with a bungee cord in the handle.



Starter rope extension made from clothesline with a wooden handle on the end helps to start saw while standing.

"Makes it easy to yank on the starter rope so I can get it going and warmed up. Once I go out to use it, I have a starter rope extension that makes it easier to start the warmed-up saw while it's lying on the ground. I made a cord out of clothesline with a wooden handle on one end and a choke knot on the other to go over the handle on the starter rope. It lets me start the saw while standing erect with my foot on the saw handle."

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Microalgae A New High-Value "Crop"

William Padilla-Brown believes algae often receives a bad rap from the public because toxic blooms in nature are perceived as normal. He explains many of these unhealthy situations are caused by mistreatment of water sources.

Taking it a step further, he founded MycoSymbiotics, a permaculture research and production business that grows and markets microalgae for human consumption as a health supplement or whole food additive.

For his own production unit of microalgae, he starts by acquiring a small vial or bottle containing living cells found in nature, or online from a culture bank. He recommends new growers start with spirulina algae, keeping some of the culture separate indoors in case of issues and a need to start over with outdoor growth.

Producers can begin growing microalgae in glass bottles, eventually expanding to small backyard pools. The water needs to be agitated, and nitrogen and phosphorus salts added.

"Normally, I do small scale, a couple of pounds of fresh, dry material a week," Padilla-Brown says. "Microalgae is nutrient-dense, so you don't need a lot. The World Health Organization shows that 1 to 3 grams of dried spirulina helps maintain nutritional fitness and helps reverse malnutrition. Many algae also contain central fatty acids and amino acids."

Padilla-Brown has an online e-book and YouTube videos showing how to set up a small-scale microalgae system using food-grade plastic liners, sunlight, and nutrient-rich water.



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"Large amounts of algae can be grown in outdoor spaces like rooftops, driveways, or sidewalks," he says. "It doesn't require fertile land, and once people get a feel for growing it around the house or in small pools, the yields at greenhouse scale become large enough to support livelihoods."

Fresh spirulina algae have about a 5-day shelf life and are excellent for use in restaurant meals. Dehydrated powders, capsules, and freeze-dried portions last for years.

Padilla-Brown says fresh algae sells for about \$100 a pound or \$25 for 4 oz. at markets. He estimates the cost of a small-scale farm start-up at around \$2,500.

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ATV, Pickup Pull Bale Unroller

Stuart and Robert Mitchell of Whitriggs Farm, Scotland, were looking for a bale unroller that could be pulled by an ATV/UTV or even a pickup but couldn't find anything available in the UK, so they designed and built their own. It was awarded the Royal Highland Show's Silver Innovation Award in June 2023.

Designed to be easily operated by one person, the unroller can carry and unroll 4 and 5-ft. bales right to the core. The tool allows the Mitchells to safely control the unrolling of bales for cattle on pasture without the use of heavy tractors, which reduces soil compaction.

The Whitriggs Bale Unroller distributes hay, straw, or silage across the field, allowing cattle adequate space to spread out and eliminating poaching and bullying at the ring feeder. It also helps to evenly distribute dung,



UK farmers built a bale unroller that can handle a full bale and be moved using an ATV/UTV.

increasing organic matter in the soil.

The Mitchells have manufactured and sold seven units and have 10 more on order.

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