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Mauck planted soybeans between strips of wheat in twin rows at 15-in. spacing, leaving gaps to be filled with soybeans.

Relay Cropping With Simple Add-Ons

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Harvesting wheat while releasing soybeans to canopy and thrive is easy for Jason Mauck, thanks to a few simple attachments. The customized fenders push down alternating strips of soybeans, while the draper head harvests the winter wheat.

"I use Flexxifinger Crop Lifter brackets on the header with two types of attachments to push down the soybeans," says Mauck. "They let me cut the wheat at 8 to 10 in. heights when the beans are already about 18 in. high. This really opens up the soybeans to sunlight."

This spring, Mauck planted soybeans between strips of wheat planted the previous fall. The wheat was planted in twin rows with 15 in. spacing, leaving gaps to be filled with soybeans.

When spring arrived, he set the row spacing on his Hiner air seeder to deliver twin rows at either end of the toolbar, two sets of five rows in the center, and three sets of triple rows in between.

"The two sets of five rows with wheat between them are set inside the wheel spacing of the combine," explains Mauck. "We plant

the soybeans early, when the wheat is only about 8 in. tall, so even if we run over some, it recovers fine."

His strategy is to plant wheat thin and wide, then cram as many soybeans as he can into the gaps. He uses a quarter of the wheat seed and half the soybeans he normally uses for double-crop soybeans.

"I want to leave 8 in. between the bean seeds and the wheat root ball," he says. "We want to get substantial soybean root mass so it can compete with the wheat at grain fill, when it gets really thirsty."



Mauck fabricated PVC deflectors by mounting a smaller pipe between Flexxifinger crop lifter brackets with a slightly larger PVC pipe on it.

Historic Mill Has Allis-Chalmers Connections

Before Allis-Chalmers, there was Reliance Works, owned by Edward P. Allis. Before building farm equipment, Allis built milling equipment. A great place to see this equipment is Richfield, Wis. The Richfield Historical Society owns and is restoring an 1871 three-story grist (grain) mill equipped with Reliance milling equipment.

Built by Andrew Messer, a German emigrant, the grist mill was originally water-powered. Messer's father, Johann, had built a sawmill on the site in 1856. The new grist mill went up alongside the sawmill.

According to the Historical Society, Messer is believed to have turned to Allis in nearby Milwaukee for a general designer or millwright. While the lumber came from the Meyer sawmill, virtually all the milling equipment he ordered came from Reliance.

In 1860, Allis bought Reliance Works, a bankrupt firm that manufactured milling equipment. Only 2 years after supplying equipment for the Messer mill, Reliance went into bankruptcy, and Allis reorganized it as the Edward P. Allis Company.

Under his management, the Allis company became one of the world's leading manufacturers of milling equipment. The milling industry's interest in steam power led Allis to expand into steam engines. By 1900, while still a major milling equipment manufacturer, his company was also among the largest makers of steam engines.

The mill remained in the Messer family, passing first to Andrew's uncle Johann Mayer and then to his descendants. Over the years, the mill's power source changed from a 25-

hp water turbine to an internal combustion engine and, finally, to electricity.

Aside from the addition of roller mills, very little else changed. The complex three-story mill remains a living showcase of Allis technology from that era.

Originally installed equipment includes two sets of grinding wheels, sifting machinery (bolting machines), elevators to move grain and flour between floors, operations, storage bins and bagging equipment.

The family operated the mill until 1954, when it closed. After the last Mayer owner died in 1973, the mill was sold but left untouched. In 1998, the Town of Richfield purchased the site and leased it to the Richfield Historical Society.

Reopening the mill required extensive restoration by local volunteers because the building was in poor condition. It was reroofed, and the siding was replaced and painted to match the period when the mill was built. Windows were rebuilt with wood frames, and old-fashioned glass with swirls was installed.

As when the mill was built, lumber to replace the rotted flooring was milled from trees on the property. A second set of stairs for tours was added, and the foundation was also restored.

The original water turbine remains in place, awaiting the restoration of the dam and mill pond. In the meantime, the Society has restored a 1913 Superior engine and plans to install it. It's believed to be similar to the engine the Mayers used from the early 1900s through the transition to electricity in

Mauck explains that wheat pulls out excess moisture and shades competing weeds. His goal is not to maximize wheat or soybean yields but to maximize profit per acre. Sometimes he does both.

"We shoot for 60 to 80% of expected double-crop wheat yields and full or higher soybean yields," says Mauck. "Last year, our relay soybeans beat our monocrop beans by two bushels per acre across our farm."

Mauck used Flexxifinger bean shields over the soybean rows between the combine wheel tracks and over the end rows. Remaining soybean rows were pushed below the draper bed cutting bar using shop-made PVC pipe.

"The bean shields were left over from a 2018 investment, but I didn't want to spend the money on more of them," says Mauck. "I fabricated the PVC deflectors by mounting a smaller pipe between Flexxifinger crop lifter brackets with a slightly larger PVC pipe on it. The larger pipe rolls free on the bracketed one to take the friction out."

When it came time to harvest the wheat, Mauck hosted his annual Farm Weird field day for other farmers interested in relay cropping. Attendees saw firsthand how the deflectors worked and walked through the harvested wheat strips, which yielded 83 bushels per acre.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mauck Farms, 5101 800 N., Gaston, Ind. 47342 (ph 765-215-4528).



Richfield Historical Society grist mill.

the late 1920s.

Work continues, and a list of projects is posted on the Society's website. Equipment still needs to be cleaned, refurbished and restored. The end goal is to get the mill grinding.

Interested readers are encouraged to visit the mill to see the original Allis equipment, donate and volunteer.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 268, Richfield, Wis. 53076 (www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org).