



## Cheap Way To Take Aerial Photos

Mounting a camera on a remote control model helicopter is a cheap way to take aerial photos of crops, says British farmer Geoff Soden of Huntingdon, England, who says he came up with the idea to save the hundreds of dollars charged by aerial photographers to take aerial pictures that show patterns of yields and weed problems in fields.

Soden got the idea of sending up his own camera 5 years ago and has been experimenting ever since to eliminate problems with vibration and getting the correct film exposure. Now he mounts a Nikon 35mm automatic camera with a wide angle lens in the nose of the mini chopper and has automated the controls to the point where he simply pushes a single button on his handheld control box to snap the shutter. The film advances automatically. He shoots off a series of photos as the chopper rises for a

good variety of angles and perspectives on the field.

Soden has been flying model helicopters for more than 10 years and was part of the first team to fly a model helicopter across the English Channel. He has started a business supplying aerial photos to other farmers at a fraction of the cost charged by conventional piloted photographers. The only drawback to using models is that they cannot fly as high as regular planes but Soden says results are reliable enough to get the job done. He's now working on mounting a video camera on a helicopter so farmers can get instant results from the aerial flights.

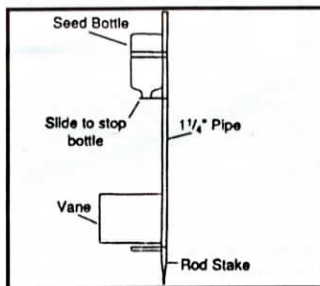
Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hi-Eye Photographics, Geoff Soden, 18 Pettis Road, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs. England (0480-62480). (Farmer's Weekly)

## "Johnny Appleseed" Steers Plant Seed On Remote Rangeland

Range researchers in the Western U.S. have come up with a new way to reseed remote rangelands that have deteriorated due to overgrazing. Kris Havstad and Jerry Barrow, USDA researchers, put grass and other seed into gelatin capsules which they then feed to young steers. The capsules eventually dissolve in the animals' stomachs and then pass through their systems unharmed.

Using animals to reseed barren range eliminates the need to use conventional methods of cultivation in remote areas, which causes too much disturbance and is costly. It takes advantage of the way seed is naturally spread by animals and birds but gets the job done faster. Areas to be seeded can be selected by the placement of fences, salt licks and water supply. The researchers determined which seeds work best through extensive testing and found that seeds with hard coats proved the most successful. They came up with a variety of grasses and brush.

Havstad and Barrow have also been testing "gully seeders" which are placed at the upper end of washed out gully areas and are



activated by a heavy flow of water. They consist of a seed bottle mounted upside down on a 1/4-in. pipe with a slide over the mouth of the seed bottle. In a heavy rain, water flow pushes against a vane at the bottom of the pole, which rotates the slide away from the mouth of the bottle, allowing all the seed to drop into the flowing water. Seed is carried down into the gully and is buried silt and debris. The presence of moisture initially ensures rapid germination.

## Rent-A-Tree Idea Catches On

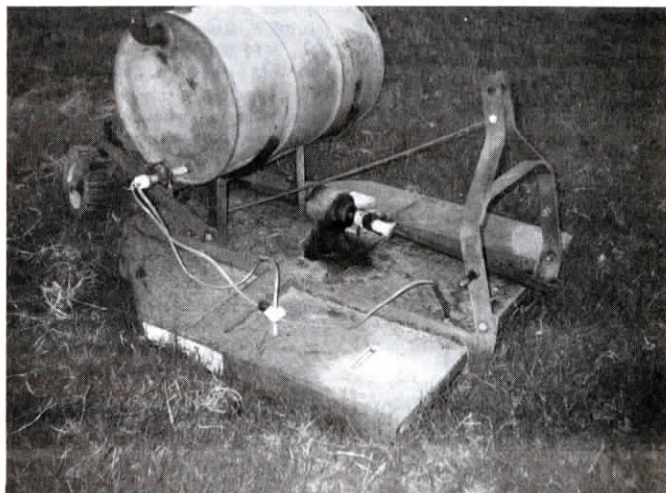
Ontario apple growers Philip and Loretto Bender are one of a growing number of fruit growers succeeding with a "rent-a-tree" operation, according to a recent report in Ontario Farmer.

The Benders got the idea from friends who had successfully tried the idea with a cherry orchard. They say city people like the idea of having something they can call their own so that when they go for a drive in the country in the fall, they can feel like they have a special place to go to. It also makes

a good gift, they say. Renters, who pick their own apples, are guaranteed a minimum of 2 bu. of apples. This year, with a light crop, Philip says in most cases it took two trees to fill each customer's quota.

The rental charge is \$25 per tree. Renters receive a farm club membership which also entitles them to a 10 percent discount on cider and crafts in the farm's country store and use of a picnic table area as well as access to the Bender's 17 miniature horses.

# "Best Ideas"



## He "Sprays" Weeds As He Mows Them

Here's a nifty new way to do two jobs at once. Pittsburg, Texas, farmer Ed Hammond mounted a 55-gal. drum on the back end of his pto-powered rotary mower so he can kill weeds with herbicides as he mows them.

"I fill the barrel with 2-4-D and add a little detergent to the water. The liquid flows out by gravity through two clear plastic tubes to pipe nipples which I drilled and tapped at 1 and 3 o'clock (looking at the mower from the rear). I installed 'T's' on the underside of the deck to help distribute the liquid onto the blades. One line passes through a 90° elbow which acts as a 'view meter'. When

I see bubbles in there, I know the tank is almost empty," says Hammond.

When the tank is full, he says he mows in 3rd gear but as the tank empties, and the flow of liquid slows down, he switches to 2nd gear. "It takes about an hour to empty the tank which lets me treat 1 to 2 acres. It works best in the morning when there's some dew on the weeds, which creates a slight fog under the mower," says Hammond, who spent only about \$10 to add the spray system to his mower.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ed Hammond, Rt. 4, Box 216, Pittsburg, Texas 75686.

## Stalk-Chopping With Tires Catches On Fast

Since our first report on "chopping" stalks with old truck tires two years ago (Vol. 14, No. 3), farmers all over the upper Midwest have picked up on the idea. One farmer who's used the idea on over 8,000 acres, Erwin Henderson of Independence, Iowa, says it works much better than traditional stalk chopping and costs less. "I like the fact that it breaks stalks off at ground level. No powered stalk chopper can do that. You can also get the job done much faster and with less horsepower," he notes. Henderson pulls two rows of 22-in. dia. truck tires behind a 40-ft. wide straight bar. The best time to chop stalks with the tire drag is after temperatures drop below freezing because then the stalks tend to "burst" apart, spreading the residue out evenly over the field. Henderson says he's found that the ideal temperature is about 15° and that it works best if he does it in the dark so the sun



doesn't "warm up the stalks" and make them tougher to break up. He says you can work as fast as your tractor will travel and notes that the idea is particularly ideal for ridge-till because it chops stalks without knocking down ridges. He thinks any size tire would work.