



"It's amazing how fast it gathers in rocks," says Ralph Mueller about his home-built rock picker bucket. It's equipped with a rotating reel that pulls rocks into bucket.

Build-It-Yourself Rock Picker

"It's the fastest and easiest way we've ever found to pick rocks," says Ralph Mueller, Endeavor, Wis., about his home-built rock bucket equipped with a rotating reel that pulls rocks into the bucket.

The bucket picks up rocks ranging from 4 in. dia. up to as big as 18 in.

Mueller, of Endeavor, Wis., built the rock picker to mount on his Case skid steer loader. The 52-in. wide rock bucket has evenly spaced steel rod teeth across the front lip that are angled into the ground. They scoop up rocks, letting dirt drop out as the rocks slide into the back of the bucket. When needed, a rotating reel mounted above the front edge of the bucket can be activated to help pull rocks out of the field and knock them into the back of the bucket. The reel runs in either direction so if it gets stuck, Mueller just reverses direction.

A cage over the bucket made from heavy gauge expanded metal protects the operator from flying rocks. Power is provided by a hydraulic motor that operates off auxiliary hydraulics.

"It can haul up to 1,000 lbs. of rocks at a time. The machine's 52-in. width matches the width of the bucket that I use on my skid loader.

"It works fast and is the handiest thing I've

ever built," says Mueller. "It's amazing how fast it gathers in rocks. Skid steer loaders are so much more maneuverable than a tractor that I can clear a field with this rig in the fraction of the time of any other rock picker I know of. If the rocks are on top of the ground I just scoop them in without stopping. When the bucket is full, I dump the rocks into a dump truck that I converted into a trailer, or pile them up at the edge of the field. I can fill the 5-yard dump truck with head-size rocks in only about an hour.

"I already had the hydraulic motor and spent about \$400 for steel and other materials. I used 5/16-in. thick steel plate to make the back and sides of the bucket.

"The front tines are made out of 6-sided, 1 1/4-in. steel that I already had and are welded to a length of 3 by 4-in. sq. tubing. The rotating tines are made out of 1 1/8-in. sq. stock, and after three years of use I've broken only one tine off. The bucket floor is made out of 1-in. sq. tubing. The floor is about 4 in. below the front tines so once rocks are in there they stay put."

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Chaff Spreader "Blades" Chop Up Weed Seeds

Weed seeds won't germinate after they go through these new "Rotto Chip" blades that "chip" seeds as they come out the back of the combine.

Rotto Chip blades bolt onto your combine's existing chaff spreaders in place of the original deflectors. They're made from titanium alloy and have a series of upward-pointed teeth that are carbide-milled to a super sharp edge.

"We've tested them for three years on three Deere 9600 combines and noticed a big difference in fewer weeds and less volunteer wheat, especially with rotation crops such as wheat followed by durum," says John Strom, Custom Marketing Co., Inc., West Fargo, N. Dak. "There's very little seed germination in fields after harvest. The blades won't chip every single weed seed, but they will save you one or more trips to the field for chemicals or tillage. Another advantage is that chaff is spread evenly and farther than



Rotto Chip blades bolt onto existing chaff spreaders in place of original deflectors. A series of upward-pointed teeth on blades are used to "chip" weed seeds.

with conventional spreaders because of the aggressive action of these blades. "

Rotto Chip blades are available to fit a wide variety of chaff spreaders. They sell for \$529 to \$689 depending on the combine model.

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Portable Waste Treatment System

A Minnesota company recently announced what it calls "the most advanced treatment system for liquid manure on the market". It's a trailer-mounted portable system that travels from farm to farm.

The idea is to create large amounts of intense forms of bacteria on site to treat raw manure, reducing odor while preserving vital nutrients. The system generates hundreds of pounds of active bacteria per day, which is mixed into the manure, killing pathogens, disease and odors and rapidly breaking down manure solids. After several days of treatment, a pit or lagoon will be converted into layers of free-flowing liquid which can then be more easily handled by a greater variety of equipment. Odors are reduced 90 to 95 percent and 70 percent of the nutrients which are normally lost to the atmosphere are preserved, according to Engineering Concepts, the St. Paul, Minn., firm which developed the system.

Called TOAST (Tertiary Oxygen Activated Sludge Treatment), the process does not require chemicals or other additives. It's geared to large lagoons, pits and wastewater treatment plants.

The system has been in development for 8 years. Engineering Concepts says the equipment has a life expectancy of 20 to 30 years and could be purchased by custom applicators, or by a group of producers.

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Hydraulic-powered pto adapter gives you the choice of using either hydraulic or pto power with your skid loader to operate a wide variety of attachments.

Add-On PTO For Skid Steers

"It lets you do the work of a chore tractor with a skid steer loader. Works great for operating grain augers, mowers, mix mills, cement mixers, generators, post hole augers, and snowblowers, etc." says Dave Heaton, Conterra Industries, Rockyford, Alberta, about the company's new add-on pto.

The hydraulic-powered pto adapter is equipped with a universal quick-tach plate that hooks up to most major brands of skid steers. The pto operates at 540 rpm's. The attachment is also fitted with 3-pt. hitch lift arms.

Three models are available to fit all types of skid steers. They range from 17 to 40 hp.

"It lets you operate almost any 3-pt. attachment that's designed to be pto-operated and makes your skid loader much more versatile," says Heaton. "If you already have a 3-pt., pto-driven attachment for your tractor, in most cases you can also use it on your skid loader. Bobcat offers more than 100 skid steer attachments, but no one has ever offered an attachment to power pto-driven components.

"Because there are so many more attachments available for skid loaders than for front-end loaders on tractors, we think skid loaders will become even more popular on farms and ranches than they already are. We're working on models that will deliver up to 60 hp for the new high horsepower, high flow skid loaders that are coming on the market. Some of these skid loaders have more than 100 hp. Dairy farmers can use this kind of power to pto-drive their backup generators. Irrigators can use them to power water pumps. We're also working on a universal attachment plate that will allow all tractors on the market to operate attachments designed for skid loaders."

The 17 hp model weighs 230 lbs. and sells for \$3,200 (Canadian) plus S&H.

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