

15-in. Planter Works Better, Costs Less Than Bean Drill

Doug Hochstedler's "piggyback" 11-row, 15-in. planter cost him about half what a new no-till drill would have and - most importantly - it puts beans in the ground the way he wants them, at a constant rate and depth.

"One of the main reasons we did it was that we'd rather use a planter than a drill," says Hochstedler. "We put Kinze brush units on the planters for more accurate planting. With the price of soybean seeds, we can plant fewer beans."

Hochstedler picked the 8-row Deere 7000 for its two lift cylinders. He knew he would need the lifting power by the time he attached a second planter - the 4-row 7000 series - on back. First he pulled two planter units off the front unit and added one to the rear unit. He then spread all units out by 30-in. spaces, offsetting the rear units by 15 in. from the front units.

Removing the insecticide applicators from both planters eliminated 10 to 12 in. and allowed him to position the rear planter toolbar over the front planter's press wheels. The rear toolbar is connected to the front toolbar by 2- by 6-in. steel tubing. Angle iron welded to the front and rear of the tubing allows them to be bolted to the toolbars for a rigid support.

"We had to lay four 100-lb. tractor weights on the planter tongue to counter balance the rear planter," recalls Hochstedler.

Other changes included putting no-till coulters on each row unit and using the row markers from the former 4-row planter instead of the 8-row markers, which were too long for the new planter.

"We also had to turn the transmission on the rear planter 45° to allow us to connect a drive sprocket from it to a sprocket on the



A new no-till drill could have cost \$10,000 or more, but Hochstedler spent only \$5,500 on this "piggyback" planter. "It also allows us to plant fewer beans, which saves money as well," he says.

front planter transmission," explains Hochstedler. "We had to change sprockets to get a 1-1 ratio so all units would operate at the same speed."

He also stripped off the planting monitors on the two units, trading them in for a 12-row monitor. All he had to do was remove

one bulb, and he had a new 11-row monitor. "A new no-till drill would have been about \$10,000. We have only around \$5,500 invested in this one," says Hochstedler.

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Easy Way To Dry A Stack Of Wet Bales

"Third crop hay can be hard to get off dry because it's later in the year and there's less drying time," says Ken Allison of Fairmount City, Pennsylvania.

Allison found a simple way to dry stacks of high moisture hay that he says would work well for any small operation like his.

Allison dries 120 to 130 square bales at a time on each of his "bale thrower wagons" by stacking them in such a way that a narrow one-bale empty strip is left down the center of the wagon, closing up the back and sides of the stack.

Then Allison sets a 20-in. dia. electric furnace fan in front of each of the open spaces on the wagons. With the air being forced into

the stacks, he walks around the outside of each wagon, feeling with his hands for air leaks. Whenever he finds one, he stuffs the holes with plastic mesh feed bags to block the air.

Once he's satisfied that the fans are blowing the air through the bales, Allison lets the fans run for several days, checking periodically with a moisture probe until the hay is dry. No heat is used. Just air. He built boxes on the ends of the fans to direct air into the hole.

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Wooden box on fans directs all air into stacked bales, drying them in a couple days without any source of artificial heat.



Sam Heitstuman converts 40-ft. long fuel storage tanks into round bale feeders.



He can make six round bale feeders and two water tanks out of each 40-ft. tank.

Indestructible Bale Feeders Made From Fuel Tanks

By using a plasma cutter to carve up 40-ft. long fuel and water storage tanks, Sam Heitstuman can make a bundle of round bale feeders and two water troughs that his herd of 80 Angus bulls could not destroy.

The Clarkston, Washington, man has made 14 feeders so far out of the 5/16-inch-thick metal tanks.

"I got tired of using regular round bale feeders because bulls tend to tear them up, so you only get a couple years out of them,"

Heitstuman says. "The ones I've been making are fantastic because they'll last you a lifetime and save you a lot of money."

He says it takes a couple of days to completely transform a 40-ft. tank. Each bale feeder takes about four hours.

First, Heitstuman cuts two feet off of each end of a storage tank, yielding two equally indestructible 1,100-gal. water tanks as byproducts.

He turns the remaining 36-ft. tube into 6

round bale feeders by slicing it into six equal pieces and cutting a series of 20 by 16-in. access holes around the outside of each piece.

"A salvage operation here at Clarkston had all these tanks sitting on their lot," Heitstuman says. "They virtually gave them to me because they had no use for them, and did not want to invest a lot of time and labor to cut them into scrap iron."

The ingenious rancher has sold two bale

feeders for \$500 and \$600 each, and plans to sell more, as he continues to make them.

"I still have two more tanks to cut up, and should get about 10 more feeders out of them to sell. After that, I plan to find more tanks to work with," he says.

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