



Developed in Ireland, the Samco planting system applies herbicide and plants the corn under 55-in. swaths of specially designed, degradable plastic.



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New System Plants Corn Under Plastic

You can plant corn weeks earlier, harvest a month sooner, and get higher yields with the Samco planting system. Developed in Ireland, the system applies herbicide, plants the corn and covers two row, 55-in. swaths under a specially designed, degradable plastic.

"We have a patented pinhole design that allows the plants to grow up under and eventually push their way through the plastic," explains Samuel Shine, Samco Agricultural Manufacturing Ltd.

The plastic warms the ground faster to encourage emergence up to three weeks early while protecting seedlings from adverse weather. The same heat that encourages the corn to emerge quickly also flushes all the weed seeds while the herbicide is most active for more complete control.

"The pinholes allow enough air movement to prevent problems with fungus or molds, but still reduce evaporation," says Shine. "The plastic also has drainage holes in the middle of the sheet to allow rain water to move through and into the soil."

Shine has sold 15 systems to farmers in Newfoundland, Canada, for corn silage production and others to sweet corn producers in Alberta and around the Great Lakes. He says farmers in Ireland couldn't produce corn for grain in that climate before he introduced his equipment. Farmers in northern Germany are using it to plant corn for biogas production. Meanwhile, farmers in France are planting corn for grain 6 weeks earlier than normal and harvesting an extra 36 bu. per acre.

"By planting earlier, they take advantage

of late winter rains and reduce their need for irrigation," says Shine.

Samco offers 2, 4 and 6-row packages, priced at around \$13,800, \$45,700 and \$61,000, not including shipping. The packages include the planter, herbicide tank, spray system and plastic laying system. The 16-ft. wide, 6-row planter folds to less than 10 ft.

"All packages come with a two-year warranty and a selection of spare parts when delivered," says Shine.

Samco sells the patented design, degradable plastic in 30-kilo rolls. Each roll is enough to cover a little more than an acre at a cost of about \$1.70. The plastic comes in three colors and three different breakdown rates.

"The earlier the planting and the darker the soils, the faster the plastic will degrade," says Shine. "We guarantee that no visual trace of plastic can be found in the soil after two years. In the first season, 90 percent will degrade, while plastic buried in the soil will take longer."

North American sales of equipment and plastic are currently done by direct sales from Samco. Shine says he is looking for a distributor to sell into both the sweet corn and field corn markets.

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Bale handler's frame is designed with a spike that holds bale at an angle.

"Angled" Bale Handler Makes Rollout A Snap

Unrolling a big round bale couldn't be easier with Peter Robinson's Bale Handler. The Australian put his industrial design training to work when his 70-year old father needed a better way to feed round bales. "I wanted a 3-pt. mounted handler that included a bale spear," recalls Robinson. "The key was designing the frame holding the spike to hold the bale at an angle."

With Robinson's design, the operator backs into the bale with the spear, picks up the bale and carries it to the spot where unrolling should begin. For smoothest unrolling, insert the spear in the clockwise end. Remove twine or netting with the bale off the ground. Release the swing arm, lower the 3-pt. arms, and drive forward to begin unrolling. As the bale edge hits the ground, it swings around into a diagonal position. If lowered fully, the bale swings around until one side is completely on the ground and unrolling flat.

"To stop unrolling, simply raise the bale off the ground and lower it again when you want to resume," explains Robinson. "When the hay has unrolled completely, raise the handler, stop and reverse the tractor slowly as you slowly lower the bale handler again. The swing arm skids back into place, and the spear is again latched in pick-up position."

Robinson has been selling his Bale Handler in Australia for nearly 25 years. Currently they retail for a little over \$1,000 (U.S.). While Robinson has no plans to market his unroller in North America, he's considering selling plans if there are requests.

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Unit can also be used to pick up and transfer bales.



As the bale edge hits the ground, it swings around into a diagonal position.