



“Plug-Proof” MudSmith Gauge Wheels

The open design of MudSmith replacement gauge wheels keeps planters and air drills going in conditions where the original wheels would likely plug up with wet soil. South Dakota farmers Duane Smith, his brother Roger, and nephew Jacob came up with the original design and tested it out for several years before selling some to neighbors. Now they’re marketing them for practically every brand in the field.

“We were under our corn planters and drills hundreds of times taking gauge wheels off and cleaning them out when we needed to be planting,” recalls Duane Smith. “When conditions are bad, you have to do it again and again.”

Smith points out that earlier planting dates and reduced tillage have added to the



Open spoke design of new replacement gauge wheels keeps them free of mud.

problem. Their new design with its open spokes dramatically reduces the problem. It also opens up both access and visibility to

disc opener hubs and scrapers.

“We’ve been running them on our own equipment for a few years,” he says. “We were surprised how well they worked. We’ve had no more issues with plugging. They’re a huge improvement over the original equipment. We designed them so you can use standard bearings and tires from your dealer.”

The MudSmith units feature a cast iron hub and simplified bearing replacement. Smith notes that original equipment gauge wheels require removing the tires, splitting the rim, and removing bolts to get at the bearing.

“With the MudSmith, you just remove the snap ring and replace the bearing,” says Smith. “We didn’t intend to sell them when we first made them for ourselves, but the response has been terrific.”

MudSmith gauge wheels are available in 3-spoke/4-in. tire, 3-spoke/2 1/2-in. tire, and 4-spoke/4-in. tire. Prices start at \$125 for the hub and rim assembly. The completely assembled wheel ready to bolt on the planter is priced at \$165.

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Reader Inquiry No. 98

Rotary Tree And Brush Saw

About nine years ago, Leroy Hicks, owner of Hicks Fabrication, Berryton, Kansas, designed a hydraulically powered rotary tree saw that fits skid steer loaders or on three-point hitches.

He says most other brush and tree cutters work by pushing a triangular serrated cutting blade through the trunk. The blade on Hicks’ rotary saw is made from 1/2 in. steel plate, cut into a 28 in. diameter circle. Rather than having teeth cut into the blade, Hicks cut 12 equally spaced notches around the outer edge of the steel plate where he mounted replaceable carbide steel cutting teeth. Because of the way the saw is made, individual teeth can be replaced as needed.

He says the teeth have a long lifetime. “Custom operators who use their saws heavily are replacing them every three or four months, but most people replace them less than once a year,” he says.

A hydraulic motor, requiring a minimum flow rate of 15 gal. per minute, turns the blade. The higher the capacity of the hydraulic system, the faster the saw works, up to a



Hydraulically-powered rotary tree saw fits skid loaders or can be 3-pt. mounted.

maximum of 40 gal. per minute at 2,500 psi.

Hicks built the cutter to fit the mounting brackets on most skid steer loaders. Or, with a hydroslide adapter, it can mount on a tractor’s 3-pt. hitch.

“It cuts faster than most of the push-type cutters I’ve seen,” he says. “It will cut through a 12 in. tree in one pass. I’ve cut trees with trunk diameters up to 3 ft. And

it will cut through soil and even rocks in order to cut trees off below the soil surface. With this cutter blade, once you’ve cut off the tree, you can angle the blade and grind the stump out with it.”

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Reader Inquiry No. 99