

Deere Unveils “Plugged In” Electric Tractor

Deere & Co. recently unveiled a prototype electric tractor that runs off 300 kW power supplied by a cable that remains connected to the tractor while it works in the field. That means there are no heavy banks of batteries weighing down the tractor.

Based on a Deere 6210R tractor, the GridCON tractor has no cab and is designed for fully autonomous use in the field. A 100 kW electric motor powers the “automatic” transmission and there’s an outlet on the tractor to power up to 200 kW electric implements.

A drum fixed to the front of the tractor carries up to 3,000 ft. of cable, which is fed out and reeled in by a robot arm. An intelligent guidance system keeps the tractor from running over the cable. The tractor works at field speeds of up to 12 mph and can be manually controlled by a remote control.

The biggest benefit of the electric configuration is that the tractor weighs about the same as a conventional tractor but has twice as much power. It’s also noiseless, and operating costs are about 50 percent lower.



Deere’s prototype self-driving electric tractor runs off 300 kW power, which is supplied by a cable that remains connected to tractor as it works its way across fields.

Treadmill Used To Make Low-Cost Planter Test Stand

Richard Jagels, Buhl, Idaho, uses an old treadmill as a low-cost test stand to check the seeding rate on his Allis Chalmers corn planter.

“It really helps me avoid problems before I head to the field,” says Jagels. “The seed plates on this planter are ground-driven by the packer wheels on back.”

He removed the front bar from the treadmill, then placed the front end of the treadmill underneath where seed drops out between the planter’s seed discs. The

treadmill’s original controls are used to adjust the speed at which the seed plates turn.

“It’s an inexpensive way to check if every cell in the seed plate gets filled with seed, and to see if the plate is too large which can cause doubles,” says Jagels. “If I want I can mark the wheel to see how many kernels are being planted within a given distance, in order to get a more accurate population count.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richard Jagels, Buhl, Idaho (ph 208 731-0702).



Treadmill powers drive wheel to test planter in Jagels’ shop.

Farmer-Built “Dirt Digger” Stands Up To Tough Use By Kids

Ivan Reiff created his first all-steel Dirt Digger for his sons 7 years ago, wanting a toy that would hold up to boyish play.

Several years later, he revised the pattern and made a few kits. He had the parts laser cut, then welded them together and added a powder coat finish. Plastic sleeves on the handles make them comfortable for little hands. A round shaft connects the digger to the base and allows the operator to rotate the machine 360 degrees.

The Dirt Digger sold faster than he expected. “Parents wanted a toy that could endure all sorts of weather and lots of use, a toy they could pass on from one child to the next,” says Reiff. “Grandparents regard the Dirt Digger as a useful gift, and children like Dirt Diggers because they’re so much fun.”

Hundreds of diggers later, it has turned into a father and son business. “My older boys help with welding and shipping, and the younger ones bolt the moving parts together,” says Reiff.

He says children from 3 to 10 years old, and older, enjoy playing with Dirt Diggers in their sandbox or on a gravel lane, but the best place to use them is in the garden. “Dirt Diggers have even been used to dig holes for trees or, to dig trenches for waterlines,” says Reiff.

Dirt Diggers are available in red, green, yellow, or orange. They retail for \$190 including shipping. Wholesale inquiries are welcome.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ivan Reiff, 350 Peace Rd., Leola, Penn. 17540 (ph 717 556-4161; glenbrook114@gmail.com).



Reiff’s “Dirt Digger” pivots 360 degrees on its base. It’s rugged enough that kids can help dig holes for trees or shallow ditches for waterlines or electric lines.

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