



Photo at left shows Montana Breaker with chisel bit attached, and rounded bit and nitrogen kit. T-Rex post driver at right is shown equipped with a side extension.

## Post Driver Also Breaks Up Concrete

Montana Post Driver, with its jackhammer style heads that use rapid taps rather than pounding, has gone full circle with their new Montana Breaker. The company (Vol. 39, No. 4) built their post driver business around a hydraulic head originally designed for powering jackhammers. Now they are using the concept on two new products, a breaker and a pipe/T-post driver.

"Our post driver customers wanted a breaker, so we developed one," says Floyd Yoder, a former professional fencer and founder of the company. "We use the same hammer as on our post drivers, but mounted it on top of the breaker instead of alongside. This lets the operator in the skid steer seat see just what he is doing."

The dedicated Montana Breaker is available in 2 models for use on skid steers. The MB750, with its 2.7-in. dia. bit, has an impact rate of 500 to 900 blows per minute with 750 ft. lbs. of force. It has a work pressure of 1,595 to 2,050 psi. It's priced at \$5,000.

The MB1000, with its 3-in. dia. bit, has a slightly lower impact rate of 400 to 800 blows per minute, but with 1,000 lbs. of force. Work pressure is also slightly higher, by about 150 lbs. It is priced at \$6,000.

Both models come with a rounded point bit, as well as a chisel bit and a nitrogen kit.

"We plan to develop a full line for use on excavators as well," says Yoder. "It breaks up concrete, rock or about any hard material."

The T-Rex is the company's latest post driver, this one designed for T-posts. It also handles up to 3-in. dia. pipes. The drive head is downsized from the hydraulic hammers needed for larger wooden posts. The domed head with a 3 1/2-in. (inside dia.) driving cup eliminates the need for tilt. The 200-lb. driver operates at a working pressure of up to 1,500 psi and has a force of 350 ft. lbs.

"Using our big post drivers for T-posts is



Post driver handles T-posts, and pipes up to 3 in. in diameter.

like driving a nail with a sledge hammer," says Yoder. "The T-Rex, with its 1,200 to 2,000 blows a minute, can drive a T-post or pipe right through blacktop or packed rock driveways. And starting at \$2,500, it's very affordable."

Like its big brothers, the T-Rex comes with the "Yoder chain", a multi-purpose log chain that hangs alongside the driver.

"It serves as a plumb bob for lining up the post," explains Yoder. "It also is handy for pulling posts out of the ground. Adjust the length and it is a quick guide to setting posts at the same height."

The T-Rex is available in 4 mounts: Fork Attachment, Center Plate, Side Extension and Post Driver Attachment. It also comes with a nitrogen charge kit.

"The Fork Attachment is great for carrying a supply of posts," points out Yoder. "The Side Extension goes straight out to the side, up to 3 feet. You can go right down the fence line driving in posts as you go."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Montana Post Driver, 2826 Gold Creek Rd., Gold Creek, Mont. 59733 (ph 406 306-0017 or 800 330-1937; www.montanapostdriver.com).

## Planter Gauge Wheel Arms Built To Last

"Our new Norseman replacement gauge wheel arms for planters come with sealed double-roller bearings. They'll outlast any gauge wheel arm equipped with OEM threaded bushings," says Tim Hoehn, S.I. Distributing, Spencerville, Ohio.

According to Hoehn, the cast replacement arms feature a double-roller bearing that stays tight and withstands abuse, unlike OEM threaded bushings.

"Norseman is a family-owned and operated company in Australia, with a reputation for manufacturing high-quality, longer-lasting planter replacement parts. S.I. Distributing is the distributor for these Norseman kits in the U.S.," says Hoehn.

The Norseman roller bearing gauge wheel arm kits are designed for Harvest International, John Deere XP, XP Pro, MaxEmerge 5, and ExactEmerge planters.



Norseman replacement gauge wheel arms come with sealed double-roller bearings that stay tight and withstand abuse.

Each kit, which includes 2 arms and hardware for a single row, sells for \$159.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, S.I. Distributing, Spencerville, Ohio (ph 800 368-7773; info@sidist.com; www.sidist.com).



Brendan Rockey grows better potatoes when he plants them with companion crops, so he customized this Grimme potato planter to make changing seeding rates easier.

## Potatoes Grow Better With Companion Crops

Brendan Rockey gets better potatoes when he plants them with "companion crops" that fix nitrogen, mobilize phosphorus, and attract beneficial insects to the potatoes when they need them. Earlier plantings of up to 20 different species in 9-row-wide corridors give the good bugs a head start, attracting predators who spread out throughout the field when the companions and potatoes emerge.

"Currently, we plant a mix of 2 species of field peas, desi chickpeas, vetch, buckwheat and fava beans with our potatoes," says Brendan.

Healthy plants are important to any farmer, but especially to Brendan and his brother Sheldon. They grow 30 different varieties of certified seed potatoes and fingerlings for the wholesale market. Aphids, known for carrying a viral disease, are a major concern. Plenty of predators keep the aphids in check without the use of insecticides. That keeps the virus in check without the need for fungicides. Growing a mix of plants and potatoes in the same field means the Rockeys can't use herbicides, but that's okay. They do 3 mechanical cultivations instead.

"We figure we are saving around \$200 an acre in reduced chemical applications," says Rockey. "Seeds produced by the peas and buckwheat fall to the ground, germinate, and emerge after potato harvest, providing us with a free cover crop. It freezes off and leaves a nice residue in the spring."

It all started with field peas planted in rotation ahead of potatoes.

"A few volunteer peas would come up in the potatoes," recalls Rockey. "We wouldn't pull them like we did weeds because they were adding nitrogen. We realized they added a different root system and flowers to attract beneficials."

They tried hand-planting plots of peas into potato hills. The potatoes with peas out-yielded potatoes without. Wanting to avoid a separate trip to plant the peas, the Rockeys used Gandy boxes and seed tubes to drop pea seed alongside the potatoes. The next year they added vetch. They discovered the first cultivation clipped the early emerging pea shoots, but new shoots quickly emerged. Potatoes emerged later.

The Rockeys were already planting a



Companion crops include field peas, desi chickpeas, vetch, buckwheat, and fava beans.

diverse cover crop post-harvest, which was custom grazed. They used as many as 15 different varieties from Green Cover Seed (Vol. 44, No. 4). Working with company co-owner Keith Berns, they came up with a mix of beneficial companions and seeding rates for the dedicated strips and for the in-row companions.

"Our main goal was diversity, but we wanted stuff to bloom early and late as a food source for pollinators and predators," says Rockey. "We also wanted differing plant architectures so there were lots of habitats for beneficials."

Getting the right seeding rate was a big challenge. The brothers experimented with a range of rates from 5 to 40 lbs. per acre.

"Five wasn't enough and 40 didn't gain us anything," says Rockey. "We settled on about 15 lbs. per acre with an even mix of all species except for buckwheat. We go a little lighter on that. At 15 lbs., the cost of the mix runs about \$6 an acre."

When they needed a new potato planter, they had it customized for the companion planting. "We sat down with Grimme company engineers and told them what we wanted," says Rockey.

The new planter makes changing rates even easier. The Gandy boxes now run off the same drive as the seed cups for the potatoes. When potatoes are planted, so are the companions.

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