

Control Weeds By Controlling Chaff

A new "Chaff Deck" from Australia helps reduce weeds by controlling weed seed-containing chaff, not spreading it.

"The Chaff Deck is a weed control tool, just like pre-emerge and post-emerge herbicides," says Peter Broley, Primary Sales. "The chaff contains 95 percent of the weed seeds that go into the front of the combine. What farmers do now is to spread the chaff and the seeds across the field. The Chaff Deck's enclosed conveyor belts drop the weed seeds and chaff onto the wheel tracks of the combine."

Broley reports that harvest time weed seed control can reduce field weed seed banks by 60 percent in 3 to 5 years. In the past, efforts have included chaff carts, burning and attachments like the Harrington Seed Destructor (Vol. 36, No. 2). However, burning is often restricted and damages soil health. Chaff carts and the Destructor impact the combine and increase fuel consumption.

"Once the chaff was collected, you had to burn it or bring in sheep to eat it," says Broley. "Chaff Decks are a simple solution that don't take much power and leave the seeds where they can be controlled."

Leaving them in the wheel tracks means the majority of the field has fewer weed seeds. It also means that herbicide used the following year can be concentrated over the wheel tracks with less herbicide needed elsewhere.

"One Chaff Deck user uses larger nozzles over the wheel tracks to put more material on there with nothing over the rest of the field," says Broley.

Even without herbicides, the Chaff Decks are beneficial. In a wet year, the concentrated chaff and weed seeds are likely to compost.

Until they do, the residue helps support wheel traffic. In a dry year, the decomposing chaff holds down the dust.

Installation of the Chaff Deck kit is simple and can be done by the farmer or his dealer. Remove the chaff spreaders, bolt the Chaff Decks in their place and link them to existing hydraulics and electronics. Sensors are installed to monitor chaff movement and conveyor operation from the cab. Time to install can vary from a few hours with some brands to requiring two people and a day's time on more complicated systems like Deere.

Cost also varies depending on the brand and the level of complication. "Chaff Decks for New Holland combines cost around \$14,000 (U.S.) with Deere around \$19,500," says Broley. "Once the Chaff Decks are on, you can leave them on. Working on the combine sieves just requires removing 2 bolts and a pin to slide the Chaff Deck out of the way. It only takes a couple of minutes."

Broley notes that while the Chaff Decks haven't been used for harvesting corn, they work fine with soybeans and small grains, as well as canola and barley.

Currently the company is seeking distributors and dealers in the U.S. and Canada. Chaff Decks are already being marketed in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Check them out at FARMSHOW.com.

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"Chaff Deck" uses enclosed conveyor belts on back of combine to drop chaff onto the wheel tracks, instead of spreading it out over a wider area.



Leaving weed seeds in the tracks leaves most of the field with fewer weed seeds. Herbicide used the next year can be concentrated over tracks with less needed elsewhere.

All-New Allis G-Style Tractors

Venture Products - manufacturer of the Ventrac all-wheel-drive compact tractor - will be introducing a new mid-mount Allis G-style tractor in 2019. Implements for the tractor - and existing Allis G's - are coming out first.

"There has been a void of new equipment for small farmers," says Dustin Steiner, Venture Products, Inc. "As we started developing the Tilmor tractor, we understood the need for tools to fit it."

The first implements being introduced this winter include a basket weeder, finger weeders, and flex-tine mounts for rectangular and round shaft tools. Soon to be introduced items include a modular rotary hoe, parallel cultivators and, later this summer, a mechanical plastic mulch lifter.

The company's new Tilmor tractor is designed with a 2-in. steel tube frame. Mounting implements is just a matter of fitting U-bolts over the frame.

To use the Tilmor implements, owners of old G's and similar style tractors will have 2 options. One is to buy the Tilmor 2-in. square toolbar and mount it to their tractor. The other option is to buy mounts and use 2-in. square tubing already available on the farm.

One advantage that won't be available to the owners of other mid-mount tractors is the hitch design and helper hoist on the Tilmor.

The new tractor will have an offset 3-pt. hitch. Steiner says it addresses a common problem with mid-mount tractors.

"Changing tools can be a challenge," he says. "We found a lot of owners of Allis G's had multiple tractors, each configured

with a different implement to avoid having to change attachments."

Tilmor owners will use a hoist on a swinging boom attached to the frame. Simply swing the boom out, pick up the attachment and swing it into place.

"Put the pins in the hitch, and it's ready to go," says Steiner.

Although the Tilmor tractor is about the same length as the Allis G and most other mid-mount tractors, the space for mounting implements is about 20 in. larger.

"One of the challenges with mid-mount implements is lack of space under the belly," says Steiner. "The implements aren't larger, but the Tilmor will have more room for them. Not only is the belly 20 in. longer, but it has more clearance as well, about 37 to 38 in. to the bottom of the mid-mount frame."

Unlike other recently introduced mid-mount style tractors with hydrostatic transmissions, the Tilmor will have a mechanical transmission. Steiner says the mechanical transmission is important for the global market, but also for the domestic one.

"Mechanical transmissions are more robust," he says. "Maintaining a consistent ground speed, such as needed for transplanting, can be harder with hydrostatics. With a mechanical, just put it in first or second, adjust the rpm's and speed will be consistent."

The new tractor is going through final field tests with production planned to start this fall for early 2019 delivery.

"People who are interested can get their name on the list now," says Steiner. "We are still finalizing some components, but expect the price will be in the \$20,000 range."

To see the Tilmor tractor in action as well



Venture Products will introduce a new mid-mount Allis G-style tractor next year. Implements for the tractor - and existing Allis G's - are coming out first.



Soon to be introduced items include a modular rotary hoe (above) and a parallel cultivator.

as implements that are available and those still under development, go to FARMSHOW.com.

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