

Chain Marker Improves Planting Accuracy

"I wouldn't plant corn or soybeans without it," says Nebraska farmer Melvin Fischer, of Emerson, who rigged up a simple chain marker which lets him know — right from the tractor seat — if the planter is traveling in perfect position.

The marker — one on each end of the planter — is simply a short angle-iron arm with a chain dangling from one end. You make it as wide as the row width on your particular planter.

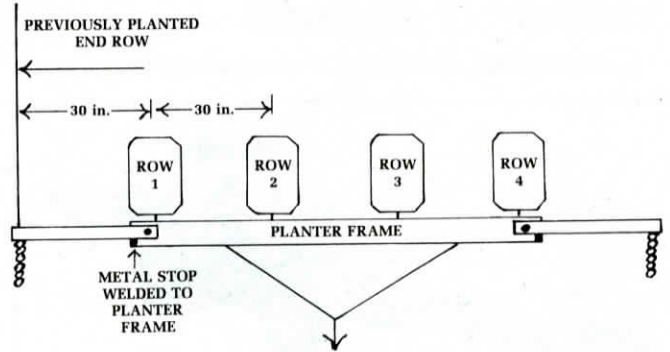
If you're planting 30 in. rows, for example, make the distance between the end planter unit and the dangling chain exactly 30 in. (See drawing, which shows marker adapted to a four row 30-in. planter).

"When you're planting, you only have to glance at the chain to see if it's following exactly in the path of the previously planted end row," explains Fischer. "If the chain isn't on the row, you know you're off

and can quickly adjust your steering accordingly to get back on target. You still guide on the regular planter marker. This chain marker simply verifies your driving accuracy.

"I've discovered that, because of an eye problem, I'm generally right on the mark going in one direction, but off it going the opposite direction. Drive through the country soon after corn and beans are up and you'll see that a lot of farmers have driven off target because of a similar dominant-eye problem which, in most cases, they probably aren't even aware of," notes Melvin.

He manually folds the chain markers back along the planter frame so they're out of the way when going through gates, or down the road. He welded metal "stops" on the frame which prevent the chain markers from dropping down below horizontal when extended into the operating position.



"Double-Barreled" Crop Dryer

"We cut the drying bill on our 6,000 bu. drying bin by at least one-half," says Norman Laufer, pleased with the "doubled barreled" crop dryer that he built on his New Palestine, Ind., farm.

The supplemental dryer consists of a 55-gal. drum barrel mounted inside a 275 gal. oil tank. Smoke and ash are channeled out of the stove by a flue while heat that collects in the space around the barrel stove is pulled off through a connecting 8-in. pipe to the 10-hp. drying fan. The system required no modification to the existing electric dryer. The supplemental drying air is simply mixed in with the drying air,

cutting costs.

"The system was easy to make. Even when there's a roaring fire inside the stove, you can lay your hand on the outside of the oil tank and not get burned," says Laufer.

The first model Laufer built consisted simply of a 30 gal. barrel inside a 55-gal. barrel. He used it for 4 years until he needed more capacity. He currently burns only wood but plans to drip waste oil into the stove this season for extra heat.

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Spear-Trolley System Simplifies Bale Handling

Swedish dairy farmer Ake Sjöberg, of Valdemarsvik, rigged up this low-cost spear-trolley system for handling-feeding big round hay bales inside his dairy barn. Here, courtesy of Husdjur magazine, is how it works:

1. First, Ake made a spear out of scrap metal. It's mounted on a large diameter metal disk to make it self-standing.

2. The bale is picked up "on-end" with the tractor loader, then raised so the spear can be set underneath in dead center. The loader is then lowered, forcing the spear up

through the bale.

3. The spear tip is hooked, via a clevis-type hook with a pin running through a hole near the tip of the spear, to a chain-operated winch and "come along" which rides on an overhead rail. Ake simply attaches the winch hook to the spear, winches the big bale off the floor, then manually moves it via the overhead rail throughout his 140 cow stanchion barn. He pushes the bale with one hand and uses the other to turn the bale and "peel off" a portion for each cow.

