

ABN 57 628 401 235

Rust risk - *high**

*In areas not affected by drought

Aphid/virus risk - *high**

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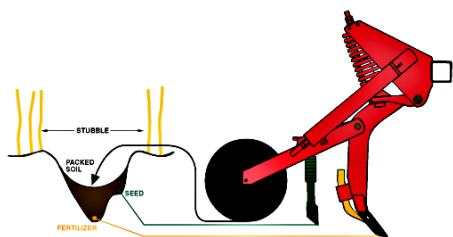
The following article has been extracted from the August 2002 newsletter. All other articles have been deleted. For a complete list of all other topics that were in this and other newsletters, please click on the following link.
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Which no-till seeder?

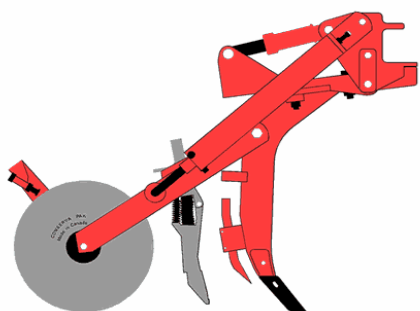
I have not been asked this question much until recently. I am the first to admit I am not very "mechanically" minded, but I do see many seeders in action and know which work well, and which do not. You will have to forgive me if you do not like what I say in the following, but I am just saying what I see in the field.

If you are new to no-till, in most cases I suggest you use a knife-point system because you need to have more things correct when using discs.

However, when you have been into no-till a few years and have most things going OK, you are likely to move into a disc seeder as long as it does not hair-



The Conserva-Pak system, but now has hydraulics on the front tyne (see below).



pin stubbles. This is because discs cause less soil disturbance (leaves the weed seeds on the surface better), you can seed on less moisture, and they do not bring up new rocks.

Best knife point seeder

For knife-points, the Conserva-Pak (www.conservapak.com) is the best seeder for germination and placement of seed and fertiliser. The bar it comes with is getting better, but still has further to go before being "robust" for our rock riddled paddocks. Only get it with the hydraulic tyne option. If its look-a-like Seed Hawk (www.seedhawk.com) was in Australia, this too would possibly be a candidate for the best knife-point seeder, but it is not in Australia and so it remains an unknown.

A few farmers are having better success with the Conserva-Pak units on a stronger bar to get the best of both worlds.

The most robust and best all round seeder would be the DBS, but many farmers are going very well with similar tyne/boot arrangements on all sorts of bars. I do not see much agronomic difference in any of these types because they all have a knife point to place the fertiliser, and the seed is dropped behind a closer plate.

I am not fan of these type of seeders because they have some limitations. They cannot place the seed. They only drop the seed, which results in less than ideal germination.

Similarly, they cannot seed on as little moisture as the Conserva-Pak can. The DBS types dry the slot out when moisture is marginal, often leaving the seed stranded in dry soil until the next rain.

In wet areas, the wettest part of the paddock with these DBS type seeders is in the bottom of the furrow, and where is the seed? In the bottom of the



Simple single-shoot knife point with closer plate.



Simple double-shoot knife point.



DBS with liquid fertiliser. A very well built and reliable double-shoot knife point seeder.

furrow. Seed bursting and poor germination occurs regularly in these cases, whereas I almost never see this happening with the Conserva-Pak because it can place the seed up the side of the furrow.

Best disc seeder

My jury is out at the moment on the best disc seeder. The Cross-Slot (Agri-Systems) seeder was the best I had seen 10-15 years ago, but it is still not

practical nor readily available.

The K-Hart (www.khartindustries.com) keeps on getting better and is currently my preferred unit for clients, but there are some new kids on the block that I am watching. I do not think they are going to be as good value as the K-Hart, but I am watching them.

These are the Barton, DayBreaker, and Conserva-tech disc seeders. The DayBreaker appears to at last be an over-engineered seeder (unlike all other no-till seeders). It does get through stubble very easily, and so does the Conserva-tech. Both do not separate seed and fertiliser though (they are single disc openers). Separation is something that is preferred and will be a big limitation to their success.

The Barton openers are sold by Flexicoil and have two discs for separating seed and fertiliser. They are very adjustable for depth and soil disturbance. So far they are being robust seeders, but like all disc seeders, residue managers are required for best results.

The Conserva-tech seeder disturbs the soil much more than the DayBreaker unit. Depending on your scenario, this may be a good or bad thing. It is not a good thing in my view.

The main reason knife points are better than discs for people new to no-till is that disc seeders have a common problem of hair-pinning. This is not wanted under any circumstances. The seed should never be in direct contact with stubble, and especially not with a deadly cocktail of stubble and fertiliser touching the seed.

Therefore residue managers are required. I have not seen something yet that is perfect, but the Yetter units sold by the K-Hart dealers appear to be the best at this stage. You will see these on display at the machinery field days.



**One type of residue manager
–this one from Yetter
(www.yetterco.com).**

