John Stevens

Small storys

The Flexiseeder End User Consortium we are putting together, of which you are part, is well endowed for the kind of work explained in the below links.

In fact during this era, within an identical “hoped for” FAO project in Iran, we built a very simple farmer machine (for a 45 to 70 HP tractor) suited to in-country manufacture, using our S tyne coulters mounted on rotating tool bars, plus a seed box from the market. That machine is still sitting in our workshop, “as new” because for what ever reason, FAO did not get the money they hoped for and never paid for it. The technology is very well proven (over the past 24 years) and the drill is still suited to any new project, comparable to the one in Tunisia for mitigating the impact of climate change by adapting and adopting conservation tillage. In BiH or Turkey for example, as a case study with wider application, also incorporating our fodder oats and fodder peas, etc.

Should anyone care to follow-up (I am too old), for a very modest price we will put forward the drill plus casting patterns and all remaining stock we have so that some local examples / copies of suitable sowing widths (including for sowing between rows of vines / trees / orchards, etc) could be affordably made locally, using locally available seed boxes. Alternatively, if the foam metering system (now long out of patent) used on the box we fitted was preferred, we could supply the patterns for the housings to be cast locally, in aluminium. This package would also come with patterns for casting essential coulter parts and the gear box. The S tynes are standard and can be purchased in the local market. The gear box looks very basic and old fashioned, but it is effective and only requires simple technologies to make and service. Other gear boxes could be used, depending on the gear range need for the seed box used and range of crops to be sown.

<https://repo.mel.cgiar.org/items/e2c08952-5cec-475d-948c-1644f7634209>

<https://www.icarda.org/media/news/smarter-conservation-agriculture-crop-and-livestock-integration?utm_source=European+GDPR+law&utm_campaign=1ceebd04ef-Smarter+CA+with+crop+%26++livestock+integration&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-6d9b3c8596-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D>

If there is interest, I can look out and share some brochures on Flexiseeder history in supporting conservation tillage on-farm, in orchards and vine yards and for plot seeding, which we prepared together with Torbjorn, back in 2019 – still relevant. I first started using this kind of NZ-based technology in reduced tillage during the mid 1970s. Even before going to University, starting in 1968, my father was already using an old spring tine cultivator to cultivate land straight out of grass and then broadcast and work in oats grown for fodder, without ploughing. This cultivator was originally pulled by horses, then converted to be pulled behind early tractors. Our tractor was a  Farmall like in the below photo, but on rubber tyres.

The worst part of it was that the spring tynes would pick up and launch stones up to the size of golf balls, at you like a catapult, fully exposed to their onslaught, seated out over the back of the tractor. A perfect incentive not to try (as a young kid) to make the tractor go faster than a slow walk, which was pretty much the best it could manage anyway, with its small engine, by today’s standards. I started driving it when I was strong enough to push in the heavy clutch, when I was about 10 or 11, I guess. Starting its motor was always risky and I was not allowed to do that for several years more. Because you had to hold the crank handle properly so that it could fly back through your hand and not break your thumb, if it back fired. Particularly if you forgot to first fully retard the spark. A little bit of history, possibly interesting, but not essential reading 😊.

I know that Torbjorn has his own stories of early farm life growing up, not too different. And, Jens of his family life with fishing and then net repairs. Much more interesting for me to hear while I was with them, than about “work”. Treasured memories of the pleasant type.



The Farmall H, produced from 1939 to 1954 (the last two model years it was sold as the Super H, but was the same basic tractor with a slightly larger engine and disc type brakes), became the number two selling tractor model of all time in North America with 420,011 sold (the last 28,784 being Super Hs). Source: Wikipedia.

Kind regards, John.