



"I put in all new bearings and bearing holders, either making them or buying them. I also bought five new disc blades at about \$60 each," says Gutschmidt.

50-Year-Old Disc Looks Like New

Roger Gutschmidt bought a 1975 model John Deere disc from a neighbor for \$500. It was in tough shape, but he figured he could scrap it out for the price.

"After I tore it apart, I decided to restore it," says Gutschmidt. "The frame was in really good shape, with no welding needed. There were a lot of loose bolts that couldn't be tightened down and had to be replaced. The nuts had seized and had to be cut off with my heat wrench/cutting torch."

The 8-ft long gang shafts were worn and bent and had to be replaced. Once he heated the nuts on the gang shafts, they came right off.

"About half the bearings were completely shot, with no balls left in them, so they were running metal on metal," says Gutschmidt. "I put in all new bearings and bearing holders, either making them or buying them. I also

bought five new disc blades at about \$60 each."

The disc blades were supposed to be deep-dished but were less concave than Gutschmidt had wanted.

"Sometimes, when restoring a piece of equipment, you want it as accurate as possible, but I decided these looked okay," he says.

While he likely put in at least as much in parts as he paid for the old disc, Gutschmidt is satisfied.

"I sandblasted it and repainted it John Deere green," he says. "It's field-ready and needs nothing more. It may be 50 years old, but it looks brand new."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Gutschmidt, Gutschmidt Manufacturing, 202 Elm St. E., Box 311, Gackle, N.D. 58442 (ph 701-269-0537).



PolyCleaT is lighter than both wood and rubber flooring, won't crack, splinter or rot, has UV protection, and remains resilient even in extreme cold, down to -40 F.

New Lightweight Livestock Trailer Flooring

PolyCleaT is designed to replicate the look and feel of a traditional 2 by 8-in. wooden plank used for livestock trailer flooring. PolyCleaT offers a modern alternative that's both durable and easy to install.

"Simply remove your existing wood floor, put our cleated planks in, and you won't have to replace or worry about your trailer floor again," says PolyCleaT COO Angela Cobos. "Our unique flooring will keep your livestock standing tall and secure."

Constructed from a proprietary blend of high-performance, 100% post-consumer recycled polymers, PolyCleaT is lighter than wood or rubber flooring and offers flexibility without sacrificing strength. It won't crack, splinter or rot, and it has UV protection. The material remains resilient even in extreme cold, down to -40 F.

Each fully 8-in. wide plank features cleats in a taller 3/4-in. height for livestock hauling or a shorter 1/4-in. height for utility trailers and flatbeds. The cleats run the entire length of the plank, providing stability and grip for animals, while groove lines indicate screw

placement for easy installation. Available in 6 ft, 6.5 in., and 8 ft lengths, the planks can be cut to size and fastened with standard tools.

"The lightweight, combined with the strength, sets our product apart from any competitors," Cobos says. "Customers can maximize their payload by eliminating 1,000 lbs of flooring in a 24-ft trailer. Regarding strength, if you push down on wood and rubber, they'll eventually break. Our product just stretches because of its material makeup."

PolyCleaT is headquartered in Bryan, Texas, and its products are distributed across North America through a growing network of more than 30 dealers. Priced at about \$50 per plank plus S&H, the flooring includes a 20-year warranty.

PolyCleaT planks are also suitable for cattle squeeze chutes, processing alleys and loading ramps.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, PolyCleaT, P.O. Box 32, Bryan, Texas 77806 (ph 979-822-7998; info@polycleat.com; www.polycleat.com).



"A lot of people have small, movable pens of chickens or pigs, but you have to be physically capable and present to move them. Our drive unit eliminates those concerns," says Smith.

Solar Powered, Autonomous Chicken Tractor Drive

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

No more getting up early to push or pull your chicken tractor around the pasture. The ClusterCluck Drive will do it for you. The programmable, solar-powered, autonomous drive unit can be mounted on any chicken tractor or pasture coop with a towing weight under 600 lbs. The ClusterCluck Drive is the latest innovation from Zack Smith, an Iowa farmer and entrepreneur (Vol. 45, No. 6).

"After more than 7 years developing larger (ClusterCluck Pico) and smaller (ClusterCluck Nano) autonomous chicken tractors, we're focused on providing an autonomous drive unit that anyone can use," says Smith. "A lot of people have small, movable pens of chickens or pigs, but you have to be physically capable and present to move them. Our drive unit eliminates those concerns."

A year ago, Smith was considering giving up on his goal of personalized protein production. After posting about his situation on X and Facebook, he received a call. A venture capitalist and investor in multiple startups was on his way to Singapore when he saw the post.

"He told me that he wanted to be a part of our effort," recalls Smith. "He described his mother, in her mid-70s, facing difficulties moving her chicken tractor. He thought our drive unit would be the solution she needed."

Smith decided to focus on the drive unit he'd introduced at several field days the previous year. By fall, he'd secured an engineer to do the necessary work and a company to fabricate the drive.

"We put a lot of effort into a simple and functional design," says Smith.

The result was a compact, bolt-on, two-wheel electric drive unit with a battery and a solar panel for power. Units ship 95% assembled and can be easily mounted to pens or coops using basic tools and video support from Stock Cropper. The operator can use a Bluetooth key fob to make on-demand moves and turn the unit around at the end of a run. For hands-free, autonomous operation, the drive can connect to the Stock Cropper web-based application over Wi-Fi.

"Just point it in the direction you want to go, and it moves in a straight path at the time and distance you choose, every day," says Smith. "The only hands-on is when you manually start a new line."

This spring, he had 15 prototypes ready for beta testing. By June, half were running, and the other half were being set up.

"With what we learn, we plan to have production units ready to sell in 2027," says Smith. "We're already receiving \$100 deposits from our future customers."

The deposit ensures the current target price



Stock Cropper also makes autonomous chicken tractor units.

of \$2,500. How the units will be used is up to the buyer, notes Smith. Whether for rolling shelters for poultry, pigs, lambs or young calves, the only limitation is the 600-lb tow capacity.

"Growing your own protein for family and friends is no longer a fringe idea; it's a movement," says Smith. "Our drive unit makes it easier for the owner, ensures fresh grazing for the animals, and improves the soil as it goes."

Eventually, Smith hopes to continue working with the larger systems, which have more complex designs and higher costs. Prototypes of the ClusterCluck Pico have proven themselves in multiple locations.

"In 2024, we were invited to have it vetted at the Precision Technology Institute farm in Pontiac, Ill.," says Smith.

Results were better than merely positive. That year, the Stock Cropper system (alternating strips of corn and forage for grazing) set the site's all-time corn production record — 434.9 bushels per acre. In 2025, it recorded the second-highest yield and the highest farm profitability of any comparable practice on the 500-acre farm.

"The concept works," says Smith. "The data proves it."

He had more than 200 reservations for the ClusterCluck Pico, priced at \$10,000, when he set it aside. Smith plans to reintroduce it in 2028. In the meantime, he's excited about the ClusterCluck Drive.

"We started with a big vision — change the system, feed the world," he says. "The deeper we got, the clearer it became that reforming industrial meat production wasn't something that we could do. With the ClusterCluck Drive, we're giving people the tools to feed themselves first."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Stock Cropper, 45982 180th Ave., Lake Mills, Iowa 50450 (ph 641-512-0379; thestockcropper@gmail.com; www.thestockcropper.com; Facebook: The Stock Cropper).