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Spenco Enterprises Lemken Rubin

*Helping keep farms
in the green*



Canada 

Unique harrow design helps keep O'Leary farmer in the black - and green

To say that Spencer Ellis likes his Lemken Rubin 9 harrow is an understatement.

"Just try and get it away from us now, you won't get it out of the yard," he says with a laugh. "We love this piece of equipment."

In just one season, the German-engineered, Canadian-made compact harrow has become Spencer's equipment of choice to prepare the land and control weeds on his cereals farm. He owns and operates the farm with his father, Robert, as part of O'Leary-based Spenco Enterprises, which includes a trucking operation.

The harrow has also become a major part of their effort to reduce soil erosion.

Spencer says he was looking for a faster, fuel-saving alternative to the discs and plow he was using on their wheat, barley, corn and soybean fields. It required as many as four passes with a tractor to work the organic matter into the soil, especially the tough-to-bury residue left behind from the grain corn harvest.

That's when he came across the Lemken Rubin 9 on-line.

He liked what he saw – off-setting rows of scalloped discs that lift the soil one way and then the other while uniformly mixing in the organic matter.

It could also be pulled quickly, keeping the stubble in the top five inches of soil where soil bacteria are most active breaking down organic matter.

In March 2022, Spencer bought the harrow with assistance from the PEI Agriculture Research and Innovation Program under the federally and provincially funded Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

"It's the one piece of equipment we have used on every acre we've farmed this year," says Spencer. "It's the angle and position of the discs, along with the down pressure of the baskets, that really make the difference."

"Regardless of what crop has been in the field the previous year, we can do it in one pass and then bring in the seed drill."

With the harrow able to prepare up to a dozen acres an hour, he says he was able to cut his fuel costs and his time in the field by more than half.



Spencer Ellis says his Lemken Rubin 9 harrow has cut his fuel costs, increased efficiency and contributed to his soil conservation efforts on his O'Leary cereals farm. Ellis purchased the harrow with assistance from the PEI Agriculture Research and Innovation Program under the federally and provincially funded Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

“With the cost of everything going up, and particularly with the cost of fuel, that’s huge.”

Spencer, a young farmer who transitioned the family farm from beef to cereals five years ago, says he’s always been keen to try new things that can improve production. He credits the Agriculture Research and Innovation Program for making it easier to bring new technology to the farm.

“It definitely helps,” he says. “With everything costing so much and with margins getting tighter, it makes it a little easier to make these big investments.”

Since last year, the farm has been participating in the province’s Agriculture Stewardship Program, covering the fields with a winter cover crop after harvest to reduce soil erosion.

This fall, Spencer used the Lemken Rubin 9 on 250 acres to incorporate a manure application and plant a winter cover crop of barley, field peas and radish.

“It reduces soil erosion, helps with water infiltration and allows carbon sequestration to continue during a time of year when it normally wouldn’t,” he says.

Along with doing some no till trials over the last couple years, Spencer says keeping soil disruption down is key to his crops, and that his new harrow shines when it comes to minimal tillage

Overall, he’s sold on the value of the Lemken Rubin 9.

“It’s efficient, fast and cuts our costs,” he says. “It does everything for us and that’s all you can ask for.”