MOST GROWERS WHO HAVE IRRIGATION PIVOTS ON CLAY SOILS HAVE EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS WITH RUTS.

A particular ungraded field of ours west of Sikeston, Missouri, in the Bootheel, is heavy clay soil with a natural slough that runs through it, draining into another slough that borders it. It's surrounded by precision-leveled rice fields. We entered another farm into WRP in 2003 and needed to move 2 pivots off of those acres and onto other farms; one sandy loam field and this being the other. We had been dealing with ruts and stuck pivots on the St. John farm (WRP) for years and our solution then was rock and railroad cross ties. The St. John farm was a low, rolling black sand farm with a very high water table. We knew the clay soils on the farm where we decided to move the 4 tower Valley 5000 towable would present its own challenges, especially because we were going to a windshield wipe situation. From year one, in soybeans, were we ever right.

Over time, we determined that we could water four times if we had filled our ruts in properly and after that we were pushing our luck...big time. Another prohibiting factor to the four, or slightly more, waterings is that we were limited to soybeans and no rotation at all. We moved along for several years and mostly kept to our system and, for the most part, it worked. We're like every other farmer everywhere else...we push and push and in this case, time and time again, we found the pivot stuck. Rock and cross ties got us through, pulling out the pivot after so many half circles, getting frustrated tearing up crop when we needed to be other places doing other things. When corn prices began to rise, we rotated some clay soil rice acres on that farm into beans and then into corn. We felt optimistic that even though we could water only 4, maybe 5, times, we could still come out on top economically with the price of corn versus the price of soybeans, especially after so many years in soybeans and the dire need of a rotation. We pushed ahead with our plan of corn on the field, planting corners and all. It was what we expected...and worse. Heat and droughty conditions pushed us to water more than we had scheduled for and we were stuck several times with pollination fast approaching. I wracked my brain, day and night, knowing there was a way to make this work. After pricing pivot tracks and other alternatives, everything seemed to be cost prohibitive.

By this time, we had removed the 11.2 tires and rims and had replaced them with 14.9 tires and rims, knowing for sure that we had solved our problems. We sent the pivot back out and less than 100 feet off the end tower...stuck. Although we had a great price booked for our potential corn crop, on that field it was looking like we might not have a corn crop at all. It finally came to me and I began to put my idea into motion. After a few days and nights, on a Saturday morning, we mounted our primitive spacers and an additional 14.9 tire and rim to each tire on the pivot. After all, every tower had been stuck at some point or another. We sent the pivot back in and we've never looked back. I watched as the inner tire barely, or at times didn't, make soil contact or have traction. The outer dual held the weight and got us through that season, making a crop. That year, under the pivot made 212 bushel corn and outside the pivot made 57 bushel corn. Since then, we've had no trouble - none - with pivot gear drives, center drive motors, driveline components or tires. No flats, no nothing. Although we don't tow that pivot or any others now, my spacer completely accommodates any modern pivot system.

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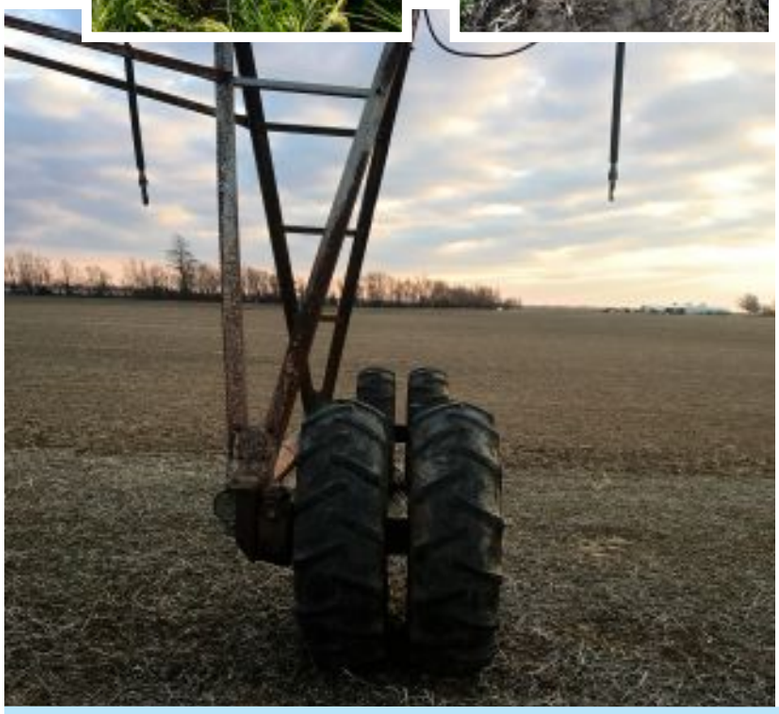

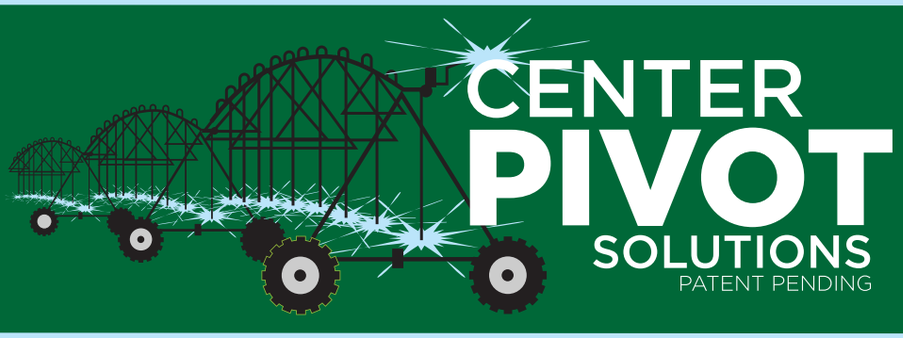

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