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08-27-2010 15:03:56 74.210.22.186

Negligence

I'm new to farming (no family background in it, I'm just learning as I go) so I don't really know how one plows a field with a regular plow (not a reversible/rollover type). I bought a large tractor and a 4 furrow plow, now I just need to get out there.

Report to Moderator

Obviously it doesn't make sense to plow a field in one direction only because of the time spent looping back around to make the next pass. So how do you do it?

I thought of splitting the field in half -- and plowing the opposite direction on each side, so there would be a crown in the middle of the field. But I'm sure there's a better, tried-and-true method that will be simple for a new farmer to try.

Looking for the oldtimers on this one!

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MeanGene1

Report to

Moderator

08-28-2010 07:00:58 209.148.104.28

[Reply] [No Email]

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

My gramps had it down pretty good, he had me paint a white stripe on he inside of the left rear tire, measured the circumference of the tire, and related it to the width of a plow pass. If it was a field he hadn't plowed before, he'd count the

<u>Glossary</u>

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wheel revolutions at one end, put up a couple makers, do the same at the other headland, lay out all the lands before he started. He'd take notes in a pocket pad when he was done, measuring it with wheel revs again, come back the next year and start "wheeling", he'd stop, and sure enough, you'd look across and there'd be the dead furrow or back furrow, mark 'n plow. Pretty amazing guy, he had the IH dealership, trucking and lime spreading/fertilizer/nitrogen spraying company, several farms and did custom combining for others, and sold heating coal in the winter to keep his guys busy. Used deuce-and-a-halfs for lime spreaders and could be in the fields while there were still snowdrifts around the edges. He and my great-uncle worked through a couple depression-era years cutting firewood for the railroad, hand axes and a cross-cut saw, four cord a day at \$.50 a cord, delivered and stacked at the train station. Later on, he bought the station and rail siding property and it became our main lime stockpile, fertilizer and liquid nitrogen storage, and rented part of it to Agway for their fuel storage substation. He was always a little ashamed that they wouldn't let him enlist during WWII because of his agricultural businesses supporting the farmers, didn't like to talk about it. He was also the president of the school board for 20 years, kind of amazing in itself as he never finished high school...

[Reply] [No Email]

Negligence

08-28-2010 06:34:40 74.210.22.186

Report to Moderator

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

Thanks for all the input, some interesting ideas/ways to plow. Unfortunately no one in my family has farming background, but I've got some neighbors on their way out that might be able to show me a thing or two.

As for removing weeds, etc., from a field -- do you think I absolutely need a moldboard, or can I get rid of them and prep a decent seed bed for hay with just a chisel or disc, or both?

Nobody around her plows with a moldboard, looks like everyone is using chisel plows. But they are planting beans/corn, not sure if that

factors into the choice of plow.

[Reply] [No Email]

paul Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-28-2010 06:12:50

76.77.197.242 Do as you were thinking.

Next year, you start on the edges of the field in the furrows - slight dips - you left this year, and fill them in, leaving a slight valley on top of the Report to ridge you created the first year. Moderator

> Do the opposite, throwing the dirt in or out, every other year.

--->Paul

[Reply] [No Email]

oldart Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010 15:03:56 08-27-2010

21:12:43 70.131.50.243 do you have any old unckles or cusinsthat have

> retired from farming may be able to get them to help you get started maybe goto town and find a retired farmer and hire him to come and show how make friends with your neibores but don't be a pest trade your labore for some help. may

Moderator your days get better oldart

[Reply] [No Email]

JMS/.MN Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 20:52:47

Report to

209.237.107.155 The answer to your question depends on the

> size and shape of your field, and the size of your plow. You have a myriad of answers, and some are thoughtful, some make no sense to

other than the sender, per his acreage. Report to

Moderator google...Operation, Care, and Repair of Farm

Machinery, by John Deere. That book gives a

good illustration of plowing, especially with multiple "lands". Also shows how to set up a plow behind the tractor. Chances are many folks here are farming patches of ground from one to a few acres in size, while others might have 40-80 acres in a field. The techniques are differentespecially when one says to drive down one side of the field, cross over, and plow down the other. That's fine on a little 3-sided patch of a few acres, but doesn"t fit a square 40. I use a disc chisel now but for years did moldboard plowing. I have some 80 acre fields, that is a quarter mile wide and a half mile long- they were plowed in lands. Smallest is five acres...irregular shape, was plowed in 2-3 lands. Went from 3 bottom to 6 bottom over the years, but usually made 8-10 rounds per land...but depends on the field. Some suggest no-til...that does not work everywhere- no more than moldboarding or chiseling is the answer for everyone.

[Reply] [No Email]

tjdub

08-27-2010 20:01:51 208.74.246.137 **Re: How to plow a field** in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

Report to Moderator

If you have a non-rectangular field, it pays to do some serious planning before you start. You don't want to be driving over freshly plowed ground any more than you have to unless you like a sore neck. Take a close look to find where the dead furrow (ditch) is from the last time it was plowed. If it's in the center, start plowing in the center and fill it up with the first pass on each side. If it's on the edges, fill it up with the first pass on the outsides. If you have no dead furrow, start on the outside, you will discover where the center of the field is by where your dead furrow ends up. If the field is irregular like all mine are, try to separate the small fingers of field out and do them first if you can. Since I'm quessing this is a semi-mount plow, you can control depth on either side, so when it comes time to make your dead furrow or back furrow, plow very shallow on that side of the plow so that you don't get a deep ditch or high mound. Just scrape the sod over there.

Also, if don't already know this, DO NOT PLOW UP AND DOWN A HILL.

Finally, if these fields still have some alfalfa in them, don't try to plant alfalfa back right away. Plant an annual grass for a year first.

[Reply] [No Email]

kopeck

Re: How to plow a field in reply to tjdub, 08-27-2010 20:01:51

08-28-2010 10:02:48

66.243.209.243

Quoting Removed, click Modern View to see

Maybe a stupid question but why not up and down?

Report to Moderator

One of my fields is long ans narrow, going up hill. If I tried to plow it across the hill is would easily take 5 times as long...

Κ

[Reply] [No Email]

trucker 40

08-27-2010 19:32:22 69.152.39.240

Report to Moderator **Re: How to plow a field** in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

This works if the field is square, which is the only way Ive plowed is a square field. You start out on one end of the field and plow throwing the dirt towards the edge of the field. You dont throw the dirt towards the center, you throw it to the edge, with the furrow going towards the center of the field, when you get to the other end, and if there are any rows you can see count about 50 or 75 and go back. You will be throwing dirt towards the center of the field, then go around and around, running your front tire in the furrow if you have a wide front end and your plow is set that way, and once it gets hard to turn make a new land, by going from the same end of the field another 50 rows past where you were before and finish the last few turns out by coming down the new land side and going up the old land side until you have a dead furrow, and then you go back to going around the new land, repeat until you get all the way across. If you somehow get crooked then you have to plow out the dead furrow to where you have just one furrow.

I can't help you on terraces but it gets more complicated there. You plow the terrace and work inside between the terraces and not across the terraces, is about all I know about it. So9me people like to go across the rows, but it can get rough that way especially if the combine cut ruts. Some people like to go at an angle with a chisel plow. Mostly people dont plow nowdays, or if they do its with a chisel plow. If the ground has ever been plowed a lot it can help it to chisel plow it deeper than the plow went. Dirt that was plowed year after year develops something called hard pan and if you chisel plow it deep enough it will break through the hard pan which is sometimes better depending on what kind of dirt you have.

[Reply] [No Email]

thurlow

Re: How to plow a field in reply to trucker 40, 08-27-2010 19:32:22

08-27-2010 20:18:27 74.177.51.45

Have plowed thousands and THOUSANDS of acres with 3, 4 and 5 bottom 3-point hitch plows, 2 and 3 bottom drag type plows and 5 and 6 bottom semi-mount plows; glad you weren't around to advise me when I started about 1952; I'd still be trying to figure it

Report to Moderator

out.....

[Reply] [No Email]

JMS/.MN

Re: How to plow a field in reply to thurlow, 08-27-2010 20:18:27

08-27-2010 21:05:39 209.237.107.155

I was 8 years old in "52, and remember my older brother telling Dad, when he got back from the other farm, about whether he was throwing

Report to Moderator

furrows together, or plowing them out. When I got to plow a few years later, sure glad I didn"t have to follow the trucker"s current instructions. Learned early on about reversing the pattern the next year. When on my own, always liked the semi-mount for closing deadfurrows...drop the nose, raise the tailwheel, and close them upsaved a lot of time the next Spring, with the

field being level.

[Reply] [No Email]

flying belgian

Re: How to plow a field in reply to JMS/.MN,

08-28-2010

08-27-2010 21:05:39

16:54:23 98.132.233.132

And what works even better is a vari-width plow. Open that sucker up when closing dead furrow and bring in dirt from 20 ft. on each side.

Report to Moderator

[Reply] [No Email]

James22

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 19:22:15

207.179.239.195

No, not a better way. If you don't have a twoway/reversible plow or plow one direction only and return dead-headed you are going to have dead furrows (ditch) and back furrows (mound). Some do plow around a field on all sides working toward the center, but after several years you

Report to Moderator

have made a bowl.

[Reply] [No Email]

Leroy

Re: How to plow a field in reply to James 22, 08-27-2010 19:22:15

08-28-2010 05:18:08

69.88.223.179

To counter that bowl the next year you start in the center of the field and plow in going around

Report to Moderator just the oposite direction and alternate every time you plow. Around here some plow, some chisel and some no-till and some use all three methods and I believe that is the best way to do it. When I was farming had the moldboard plows, bought a chisel and tried it (worked OK only on bean ground) quit using it and sold it and kept the moldboard plow. Usually split fields in lands but at times plowed around, either

throwing in or out. For what you are wanting to

do I would throw in going around. Omly one slight raise in middle of field and get rid of those raised fence rows that aculimated from too many years of just plowing apart that is the easiest way to start.

[Reply] [No Email]

RodInNS

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 18:25:38

Report to Moderator

216.118.158.123

I usually split a field off in lands about 100-200' wide. Make something like 10 trips down and back, then start a new land. You can do more but then you spend more time driving on the headland. I also generally leave the width of the headland on each side of the field and then plow them out with the headlands... just so I don't have to do a bunch of needless driving on the headlands.... but it depends on the field. Just figure out what works for you and make it red.

Rod

[Reply] [No Email]

mjbrown

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 17:20:18 75.194.87.154

Report to Moderator If you split the field in half like you are thinking, you strike out for the far end. You might want to pace it off on the far end and put a stick in the ground with a strip of cloth on it to aim for. When you get to the end raise the plow, turn around and go back laying the first bottom furrow next to the one from the first trip. Where the first furrows lay together is called a back furrow. For this first round you adjust the plow so that the first bottom is plowing kind of shallow so you don't have a huge back furrow. Plow around and around this land until it is as far across the land as it is to the edge of the field then plow the land between the first land and the edge of the field when you finish that it will have a dead furrow in the center of that land. Then go do the other land on the other side of the field again ending with a dead furrow in the middle of that land. Splitting the field in the middle first like that will give you three

lands, one with a back furrow in the middle and two with dead furrows in the middle.

At the end of it all you plow off the headlands. If you make your turns by going a bit past the furrow and swinging back to line up you can avoid a sweeping curve in the ends of the furrow.

Good luck.

[Reply] [No Email]

Negligence

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 16:23:27 74.210.22.186

The no-till comment got me thinking - I'm trying to reclaim some fields from serious weeds and replant them in hay. I was under the impression the moldboard plow was my best bet, as simply discing or chisel plowing will leave lots of remnants on the surface. Is this true?

Report to Moderator

I'm looking to recover the fields as cheaply as possible (i.e. not buying expensive tillage equipment), but I do not want to pay someone else to do it. Need to learn sometime.

[Reply] [No Email]

kyplowboy

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 16:23:27

08-28-2010 11:55:32 98.93.3.69

Not sure what kind of hay you want, but the cheapest way to go from weeds to hay here would be roundup in the spring, no till warm season annual like pearl millet or a sudan cross for hay/pasture, then round up again in the fall, no tilled back into the cool season grass or legume of your pick'n.

Report to Moderator

Good luck.

Dave

[Reply] [No Email]

camju

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010 16:37:30 08-27-2010 16:23:27

16:37:30 142.161.15.231

no-till is ok if you want to spray but if your organic or don't want to spend alot of money in chemicals you have to work the feild. I still beleive that you benafit greatly by doing alittle summer fallow once in a while. Sea gulls love you

<u>Moderator</u>

Report to

for it and you get to know the land and don't become "just another farmer".

[Reply] [No Email]

O8-27-2010
16:22:52
66.119.9.207

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

It always depended on what we were going to sow or plant. Hay or small grains we went around the field always throwing the dirt out, then you would have a short dead furrow in the center, loop the corners. For row crops we laid

Report to Moderator then you would have a short dead furrow in the center, loop the corners. For row crops we laid in off in lands, a field a quarter wide would lay off 4 or 5 lands. Leave the headland until last.

[Reply] [No Email]

Gordy from Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 16:17:59 75.167.217.198

Easy way is to sell the plow. Mother nature hasn't plowed in several thousand years, and didn't have any trouble growing crops. Hire somebody to plant your field no-till. You will increase organic matter, increase water infiltration, stop erosion, and not create a hard pan that you can't drive a nail through.

Report to Moderator

You can do your own spraying with a four wheeler. Actually, a plow looks good on a mound of rocks in the front yard. Paint it up pretty.

[Reply] [No Email]

foot balls.

buickanddeere

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Gordy from Iowa, 08-27-2010 16:17:59

08-27-2010 16:37:51 216.183.130.76

Some money saving farmer was no-tilling my farm for 30+ years without mouldboard ploughing.

Report to Moderator

Every time it rained the fields were lakes of water on top of a solid impervious layer. Water would lay on the surface for days until the sun and wind evaporated it away.

I've deep V-ripped the place twice now with a single shank JD 22B ripper equipped with a 10" wide tip. Tractor is 50HP and weighs 7500lbs. That hard blue clay would stall or spin out the tractor in 3rd gear depending. If I shortened the top link and made the ripper "lift" the soil. The tractor also struggled with a mounted 3X16" plough after the fields were ripped. The soil rolled over in rock hard clods the size of

So unless you farm sand or light loam soil. Forget about no or limited till.

[Reply] [No Email]

Gordy from Iowa

Re: How to plow a field in reply to buickanddeere, 08-27-2010 16:37:51

08-27-2010 21:09:55 75.167.217.198

Buick, you forgot to say that there wasn't any oxygen getting into your soil after 20 years of notilling. LOL

Report to Moderator

[Reply] [No Email]

James22

Re: How to plow a field in reply to buickanddeere, 08-27-2010 16:37:51

08-27-2010 19:39:37

207.179.239.195

Yes no-tillers, mother nature might not have a steel tillage tool, but show me her 100 ft sprayer spewing chemicals that you use instead. In general she doesn't practice mono-culture so

Report to Moderator comparing her to our farming practices isn't really that relevent. She does have earth worms

and deep rooted plants which provide puesedo tillage and some plants such as rye are allelopathic that mimic a weak herbicide, so in a limited fashion she employs both.

[Reply] [No Email]

Gordy from Iowa

Re: How to plow a field in reply to James 22,

08-27-2010 19:39:37

08-27-2010

22:10:33 75.167.217.198

Myth number 1. Notilling requires a 100' sprayer and more chemicals. Honestly, some of you guvs need to come into the 21st century.

Report to Moderator

[Reply] [No Email]

Tom Schnitzler

Re: How to plow a field in reply to buickanddeere, 08-27-2010 16:37:51

08-27-2010 19:30:18 166.221.53.99

I don't know where you are but in wisconsin, we have what you call frost and it loosens the ground, my best corn is on no-till. The plowed ground got so wet I almost got stuck in some spots. If you do plow make sure it is in the fall! One great saying, "If you don't plow in the fall

Report to Moderator

don't plow at all".

[Reply] [No Email]

buickanddeere

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Tom

Schnitzler, 08-27-2010 19:30:18

08-27-2010 20:10:00

216.183.130.76

I'll agree with the fall ploughing. It was so wet in

the fall the tractor only spun in the 2" of mud on top of the hardpan. Just could not plough

with a 2WD.

Report to Moderator

Of course the spring ploughing was rough without the frost to breakup the lump. And the

soil fractures to allow moisture absorption.

[Reply] [No Email]

Negligence Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 16:14:11 74.210.22.186

Most of the fields are rectangular, no greater

than 15-30 acres in size. Some are square but

those are smaller (5ac).

Report to Moderator The plow I'm getting is an International 46 4-bottom. Just a cheap oldy. Being pulled by a Fiat

130-90 (4wd)

This post was edited by Negligence at 16:15:19

08/27/10.

[Reply] [No Email]

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 16:03:57 173.88.92.254

We need to know just size your field is, to give

you much of an answer...

Report to Moderator If you have a 4 bottom plow, I would figure at least 75 Paces to the Center of the land..less or even more depending on the size of the field.. If the field is large enough, you strike 2 Headlands and once they are plowed, finish by plowing the center until you have just ONE

Dead-furrow..

You will need to know how to adjust the plow for striking a Head-land, and also for plowing

the Dead-furrow shut...

Just what equipment do you have .. someone

may be able to give more info..

Ron.

[Reply] [No Email]

grj Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010

08-27-2010 15:03:56

15:58:52 72.161.229.158

You didn't give the shape of your field. That will

Report to Moderator make a difference. What you described is a backfurrow.Larger rectangle or square fields should be layed out in lands. Meaning plowing first a backfurrow land then moving over a distance to another backfurrow land. After this you then plow out the deadfurrow land between them. Next year you will plow a backfurrow land where the deadfurrow was this year and this years backfurrow land should end up with a deadfurrow.I'm sure this is clear as mud to you, so I suggest you find an oldtimer in the neighborhood and have him physically show you how to lay these out.

[Reply] [No Email]

	-	
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La		ч

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence, 08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 15:54:35 142.161.15.231

We always made a strike out every hundred or so feet. If the feild isn't to big then cuting it in

half as you mentioned works well. Then next year you would start on the outside of the feild throwing the dirt out and work your way to the

Report to Moderator middle.

The further apart you make your strike outs the

longer you drive with out plowing.

[Reply] [No Email]

Phil in Pa

Re: How to plow a field in reply to Negligence,

08-27-2010 15:03:56

08-27-2010 15:38:43 96.61.6.141

We used to do both ways you describe.

Report to Moderator Splitting the field in half, either plowing in to center or out to edges. The next time the field is plowed in a year or more, you plow the opposite way of the last time to keep the low

furrows filled in.

I also plowed one way like you're describing, driving back one way with the plow up, in

steeper fields. Just doing what I was told there, I didn't really get the logic.

[Reply] [No Email]

Goose Re: How to plow a field in reply to Phil in Pa,

08-27-2010 15:38:43

08-28-2010 09:27:40 67.63.68.13

I'm glad I didn't know all of this all of the years I

spent in front of a plow.

Report to Moderator

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TRACTOR MANUALS

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