



HOW TO LEVEL PLAYING FIELDS

There is a lot of uneven ground out there and there are a number of implements that can be used with a small acreage tractor to level things out. Here are a few options.

GRADER BLADES:

Grader blades are a good general purpose implement. They are quite versatile because the blade can be manually angled and tilted. They are great for reconditioning driveways, cutting drains and for small areas of levelling.

Basically you have a blade that can scrape a small amount of material with each pass. On soft ground or loose gravel they work very well. If the ground is very hard or the gravel is quite compacted the blade tends to skip over the top rather than cut in. Better grader blades come with rippers attached which loosen up the ground or driveway to make grading easier.

The rippers on grader are made of mild steel and more than adequate for your average lifestyle farmer to keep the driveway in order. However with extended use they will eventually wear out. They can be replaced but the entire tine needs to be replaced.

The best models to have an offset blade which means that grader blade can be used out to either side of the tractor. This is great for applications along side walls or fence lines.

BOX BLADES:

Box blades are better at tackling larger bumps and hollows than grader blades. The box shape is more suited to moving larger amounts of soil once it has been broken up. This makes the box blade ideal for a task such as levelling out market garden furrows.

You can also move the soil larger distances unlike a grader blade where it will pass out to the side quite quickly.

Box blades with rippers fitted with hardened wear boots can be replaced as they wear out. This means it is not necessary to replace the complete tines.

If you don't have a 4 in 1 bucket, a box blade is a pretty good tool to have in the shed.

4 - IN - 1 BUCKET:

If you are unfortunate enough to acquire a 4-in-1 bucket then you will have a very versatile implement. It has all sorts of uses in addition to levelling but we will concentrate on that here. The best way to level is to open the bucket – the front jaw has a cutting edge facing to the front of the bucket. This is used for light grading and pushing of loose material. The tractor is driven forward to use this cutting edge. Some cutting edges are hardened – check with the dealer if you are buying one as they will last much longer.

Remember this is not a bulldozer. It is designed for pushing or spreading material that has already been excavated. If you need to break up soil use a ripper or backhoe on the rear of the tractor.

LEVELLING BARS:

The levelling bar is a handy add-on to a 4-in-1 bucket. It is simply grabbed by the bucket and ready to go. The advantage of the levelling bar over just the bucket is it enables you to smudge out larger areas faster and even a novice can achieve a very smooth tidy finish.

PASTURE HARROWS:

Pasture harrows are good for roughly levelling off small bumps in a larger area. A food use is tidying up piece of ground that has been pugged up by cattle once it has dried out. Or to smooth out ground that has been turned by discs.