# **Renaldo transplanter more** accurate, saves on labor

#### By DAN BRYANT



RESNO, Calif. - A new vegetable transplanter design using the "punch and place" concept

touched California soil for the first time during a recent demonstration for growers in Fresno.

County farm advisor, the event put to says, "haven't had the pressures to work the Renaldo RTM-1100 semiautomatic transplanter placing rows of tomato and squash transplants into black plastic mulch sheeting.

In the San Joaquin Valley for the California Farm Equipment Show, the machine was explained in the field by Frank W. Faulring, design engineer of Renaldo Sales and Service of North Collins, N.Y.

The design is based on the company's patented system that can inject into the ground 3,000 to 3,600 seedlings per hour with a single row configuration.

The demonstration was with a single row unit that requires a 30-horsepower tractor with a three-point hitch, but up to eight rows can be installed on a tool bar with a suitable tractor. It also can be fully automated.

Faulring says a 50-acre vegetable operation could realize a payback on the \$7,000 machine in a year. "Hand

labor transplanting costs from \$200 to \$300 per acre, and the machine will run you less than \$50. The single row transplanter can do about a half-acre per hour depending on the spacing." It can be used for either mulched or bare ground beds.

Primary markets for the machine, introduced last year, have been in the Organized by Pedro Ilic, Fresno east. "California growers," Faulring move to mulching as rapidly as other areas. You have very fertile ground and a mild climate, just better growing conditions. But with the water shortages and pressures against pesticides, more growers are looking at mulching systems here."

> The demonstration was done with tomato and squash transplants placed into four-foot strips of mulching plastic.

> Faulring said the transplanter uses He calls the principle "the progres-

the "punch and place" method to burn a two-inch hole in the plastic sheeting, set the transplant, and gently tamp the soil around the plant. An operator places plants from a flat into a five-cylinder revolving chamber that drops them into place after a propane burner has penetrated the sheeting. sive mode," meaning the ground

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FRANK FAULRING, LEFT, explains operation of Renaldo transplanter during a recent demonstration in Fresno. Single row machine can set out 3,000 to 3,600 plants an hour.



## SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1993

PLACING TOMATO transplants here, Renaldo transplanter eases over plastic mulch to place seedlings accurately without chafing from the sheeting. Costs of operation are a fraction of hand labor expenses.

## Renaldo

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engaging mechanism can place a seedling while the hole for the next is made.

The machine gives greater accuracy of placement, which is particularly important in getting the plant where it is not chafed by the sheeting.

At the same time, the action has to be gentle so the mulch is not torn. Plant spacing can be set from eight to 24 inches, on the flat or on beds up to 12 inches high.

In addition, if desired, the machine can be fitted with an injector for either water or a starter fertilizer solution along with the other two steps.

James V. Renaldo, president of the company, started the operation as a welding and repair shop in 1964. He



worked out of his shop near the Buffalo, N.Y. area on specialized designs, including the Mecca grape harvester in the early 1970s, and came up with innovations in precision seed planter equipment, which have been used in Georgia and Texas.

His RTM-1100 transplanter, based on his earlier direct-seeding designs, was introduced in June 1992 and the first 17 units were sold in Florida. "We missed the season in our home area that season, so now we are starting up there. Tomatoes and peppers are the main crops it's suited for," he says.

He calls his 20-employee operation a "niche company" and he brought the machine to California at the invitation of Ilic. Frank and Ken Lucero of Fresno are California representatives for the company.

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