

# Design and Optimization of a Seedling-Providing Feeding Device of for the Automatic Transplanter of on a Maize Straw Seedling-growing Sprouting Bowl Tray Made of Maize straw

## Abstract

This research aimed to solve the current problems in the process of maize transplanting currently in China such as large labor intensity, low working efficiency and poor quality. Based on the basis of the structure of a maize seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw and the agronomic requirements of maize production, this paper study developed a new seedling-providing feeding device of for such a seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw, determined the dimensions of the key components in the a virtual environment through via Solid Edge software and got obtained optimization of the working parameters in combined combination with Matlab, including the contribution degree and the rotational regression experimental analysis factor. Some tests on field validation and maize production were conducted as well. The test results showed that the importance of the working parameters on an upright degree in descending order (and as well as the best working parameters) was to be the vertical angle of seedling dropping planting ( $13.14^\circ$ ), the forward speed of locomotive locomotion (0.57 m/s), and the horizontal angle of the seedling box ( $22.5^\circ$ ). The standard deviation of the field validation was 6.04%, which was within the allowable range to meet the requirements of maize transplanting. Compared with maize transplanting machines (and compared with manual transplanting operations) currently on the market, the labor inputs, as well as the rates of spacing qualified rate and upright degree qualified rate qualification, omitted planting omission rate and the yield of the seedling-providing new feeding device of for the automatic transplanter of on a maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw increased 0 (6.9%), 0 (3.1%), 0 (4.5%) and 0 (-1.0%), respectively; but whereas, the manufacturing cost was reduced by 35.5%. The results can provide a technical basis and reference for the subsequent development of automatic transplanters of on-maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl trays made of maize straw.

**Keywords:** Maize, Seedling-growing bowl sprouting tray, Automatic transplanter, Seedling-providing feeding device, Optimization

## 1 Introduction

Maize was the first major crop cultivated in Heilongjiang Province, China. In 2014, its total planting area and the total yield were  $6.37 \times 10^7$  ha and 28.139 million tons, respectively, accounting for 46.1%

of the total planting area and 51.7% of the total crop yield of Heilongjiang Province. The maize production of Heilongjiang this province, the largest commodity grain production base, has played a very important food-security role of food security in China <sup>[1]</sup>.

Currently in Heilongjiang Province of China, maize production is most commonly directly sowed in the spring <sup>[2]</sup>, which was is more convenient and labor-saving efficient. But the low ground temperature in spring this season was is a major bottleneck restricting the growth of maize yield crops <sup>[3]</sup>.

A large number of field tests have proved that the transplanting technology of seedling-growing sprouting bowl trays made of maize straw was is one of the most effective means to break through the aforementioned maize-production bottleneck of maize production in Heilongjiang Province of China <sup>[4]</sup>.  
*[English Editor's Note: It is unnecessary (and redundant) to repeatedly name the province--unless another one is introduced.]*

At the beginning of the 21st century, some certain areas of Heilongjiang Province, such as Nahe City, Hailun City, Qinggang County, Anda City and Mingshui County, tried manual transplanting of maize <sup>[5]</sup>. It's The yield obviously increased obviously, but the problems still existed, including large labor-intense input and intensity, low working efficiency, and a low degree of working standardization. At the same time Concurrently, with the annual increases of in rural labor transferring transfers, amount of rural labor year by year and the continuous continually increase of increasing labor costs <sup>[6]</sup>, transplanting such the large areas of maize transplanting crops cannot be achieved by manual means alone. Therefore, the mechanization of maize seedling transplanting was is imperative.

At the beginning of 20th century, the international researchers and institutions started trying the mechanization of to mechanize maize seedling transplanting transplantation. In the 1920s, some researchers in certain developed countries such as France, Holland and Italian Italy developed devised the UT-2, MT and AUTOMA clamp types of maize transplanters, respectively <sup>[7]</sup>. In the former Soviet Union, developed the CKH-6A and CKB-4A disk-cramping types of maize transplanter were developed <sup>[8]</sup>. In some developing countries such as China, a developing country, Wu Wei and his group developed the 2YZ, 2ZT, and 2Z-2 clamp types of maize transplanter and the 2ZY-2, 2ZB-2, and 2ZQ chain-cramping types of maize transplanter <sup>[9]</sup>; Yu Xiugang and his group developed the 2YZ-4, 2ZB-6, and 2ZYB-2 hanging-cup types of maize transplanter; <sup>[10]</sup> whereas, Feng Jun and his group developed designed the 2ZB-4, 2ZDF, 2ZY-200 and 2ZG-2 seedling conduction tube types of maize transplanter <sup>[11]</sup>. The transplanting and yield-improving effects of the above aforementioned maize transplanters were obviously obvious, but most of them were semi-automated way of transplanting maize methods that also required manual operations <sup>[12]</sup>. The existing problems, existed such as the low speed of manual transplanting, large labor intensity and low working efficiency, cannot meet the actual needs of in a large transplanting area of transplanting.

Based on In view of the above aforementioned problems, researchers at Heilongjiang BaYi Agricultural University used maize straw as the main materials material to develop devise the a seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray for the first time by using certain physical methods which could can break through the restrictive bottleneck restricting the growth of in maize yield cultivation.

Taking the a seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw as the seedling carrier, this

study we developed a seedling-providing feeding device for an automatic transplanter mounted on seedling-growing bowl tray made of maize straw this type of sprouting tray It was the as an effective solution to a series of problems in China the traditional mechanical operations of maize transplanting transplantation in China.

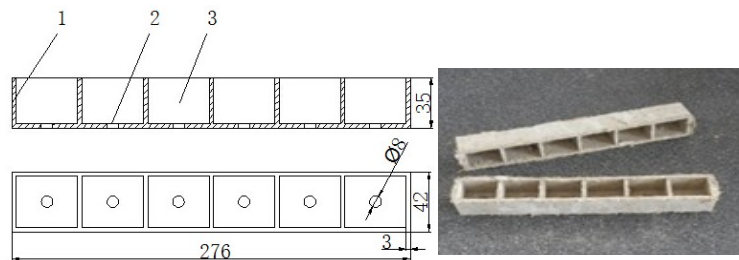
The Tests have verified that this device, which has strong regional adaptability, a good working effect, and a high degree of automation, can provide serve as a good mechanical carrier for maize mechanical maize transplanting transplantation.

## 2 Seedling-growing bowl tray made of maize straw and working requirements Structural and functional parameters of maize straw seedling-sprouting tray

### 2.1 Structure

In accordance with the ideas general concept of a maize seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray and combined in combination with the specific agronomic requirements of maize production, the seedling-growing bowl tray made of maize straw sprouting tray used in this research (shown in Figure 1) was composed consisted of the pot holes, the vertical edges, a vent and the vertical seedling feeding holes etc.

The pot holes were the growing spaces for the maize seeds. The vertical edges were the coupling



1. vertical edges 2. vent and the vertical seedling feeding holes 3. pot hole  
Figure 1 Maize straw seedling-growing feeding bowl tray made of maize straw

portion of an adjacent maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw (the vertical edges was being shared by adjacent pot holes) and were mainly used to maintain the integrity of seedling-growing bowl the tray made of maize straw. The vent and vertical seedling feeding holes were used to ensure the air circulation of from the bottom of seedling-growing bowl the tray made of maize straw and realize orderly vertical transplanting.

Combined with the agronomic requirements of maize production [13, 14 and 15], the main structural parameters of the seedling-growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw were are shown listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Main structural parameters

Items	Values
Total number of pot holes	6
Seeding quantity of single pot hole	1

Horizontal dimension / mm	276
Vertical dimension / mm	42
Depth of pot hole / mm	32
Thickness / mm	35

## 2.2 Working Functional requirements

In order to meet the requirements of the follow-up operations ~~and in combination with the combination of~~ the actual maize production ~~of in~~ Heilongjiang Province, the transplanting and seedling ~~providing feeding~~ work ~~of~~ maize needed to meet the following requirements <sup>[16 and 17]</sup>:

- 1) Emergence rate of maize before transplanting ~~was more~~ greater than 98%;
- 2) Row spacing ~~was @~~ 60-70 cm ~~with adjustable~~ plant spacing ~~can be adjusted~~;
- 3) Upright degree of ~~the~~ maize seedlings after transplanting ~~was~~ not less than 85%;
- 4) Seedlings injury rate ~~was~~ less than 1.2%;
- 5) ~~Omitted~~ planting ~~omission~~ rate ~~was~~ less than 2.7%.

## 3 Design and function of seedling ~~providing feeding~~ device ~~and working process~~

### 3.1 Overall design

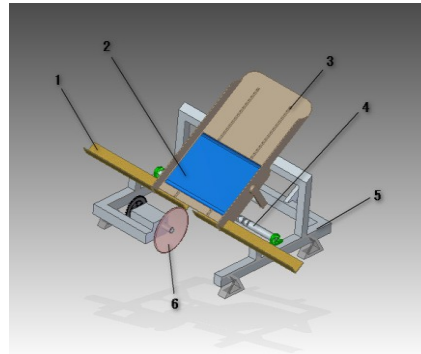
~~Combined with~~ In consideration of the transplanting requirements and structure of a ~~seedling growing bowl~~ maize straw sprouting tray ~~made of maize straw~~, the a seedling ~~providing feeding~~ device ~~of seedling growing bowl tray made of maize straw~~ was developed. Its structure ~~was shown~~ is illustrated in Figure 2, and the main technical parameters ~~were shown~~ listed in Table 2.

The ~~seedling providing feeding~~ device ~~of for the seedling growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw~~ was mainly composed of the rack, seeding boxes, feeding mechanisms and power transmission system ~~ete~~. A seeding box was used for storing ~~seedling growing bowl~~ the sprouting tray ~~made of maize straw~~. The feeding ~~mechanism device was made up~~ consisted of horizontal ~~feeding mechanism~~ and vertical ~~feeding mechanisms which finishing finished~~ the horizontal and vertical feeding operations of ~~seedling growing bowl~~ the sprouting tray ~~made of maize straw and in cooperating tandem~~ with the cutting operations of seedling needles <sup>[18 and 19]</sup>. The power transmission system was composed of a power shaft, a spiral shaft and a shifting fork, mainly used for ~~passing transmitting the~~ input power of the tractor to the various working parts <sup>[20 and 21]</sup>.

Table 2 Main technical parameters

Items	Values
Dimensions (work) /mm	2312×1562×412
Number of operations	2
<del>Rowing</del> Row spacing of transplanting /mm	65
<del>Plant</del> Spacing of transplanting /mm	15-30
Seedling planting speed /min	≥90

Operational efficiency /( $\text{km}^2 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ )	0.15-0.6
Supporting power /kW	42-70



1. rack 2. vertical feeding mechanism 3. seedling box 4. spiral shaft 5. rack 6. planting mechanism

(Note: AB- axial length of spiral groove, CD- inner distance of seedling box)

Figure 2 Schematic diagram of seedling-providing feeding device

### 3.2 Working Operational process

In the operation process of maize transplanting, after a growth period of about 38 days, firstly we first put placed the maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw (growing period about 38 d (shown pictured in Figure 3)) into the seedling box, the furrow opener and the irrigation system, respectively, by digging holes and for irrigation (0.5 L/hole) in the soil along the in a forward direction [22, 23 and 24]. Under the action moving parts of the seedling-providing feeding device and seedling needles, the seedling growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw was cut into blocks and orderly transferred to the soil holes apertures.

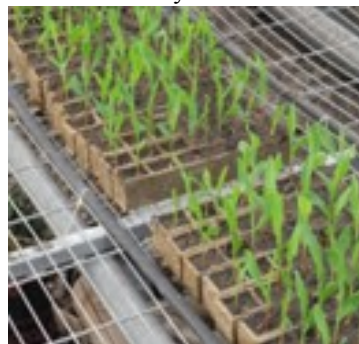
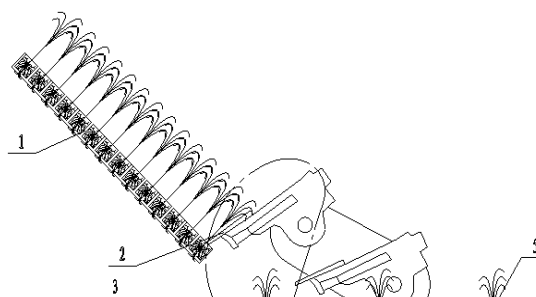


Figure 3 Seedlings before transplanting

The soil blocks of blocks soil was were covered with the a coverer lid to complete a the transplantation process of transplanting. And The seedling growing bowl straw sprouting tray, made of maize straw also having completed a life cycle, then being was also degraded in the role of soil. The working entire process was shown is illustrated in Figure 4.



### 3.3 Motion simulation of seedling-providing feeding device

In order To facilitate the design and shorten the design cycle, the a motion simulation of a virtual sample device was made constructed in the a virtual environment with Solid Edge software. The analysis results of the analysis were shown as follows:

1) The axial distance  $L_{AB}$  (shown depicted in Figure 5) played a decisive role in the size of the seedling door, which meet the as expressed in equation (1):

$$L_1 = L_{CD} - L_{AB} \quad (1)$$

where

$L_1$  is the width of the seedling door, mm;

$L_{AB}$ , the axial length of the spiral groove, mm

$L_{CD}$ , the inner distance of within the seedling box, mm. *[English Editor's Notes: (1) I suspected that Figure 5 was obstructing my view of the text; therefore, I temporarily cut-and-pasted onto the last page of this manuscript. Now, when I try to bring the figure back to this page, it refuses to paste in the proper position. Sorry! (2) There was also a problem with Figure 4: I struckthrough your last four words at the end of the caption (to show that they should be deleted); but three of those words disappeared, and I cannot retrieve them!]*

2) Making sure The dimensional precision when the spiral shaft was processing needed to be verified to avoid the phenomenon of “getting stuck” in the transplanting operation <sup>[25]</sup>.

### 4. Design of the key components

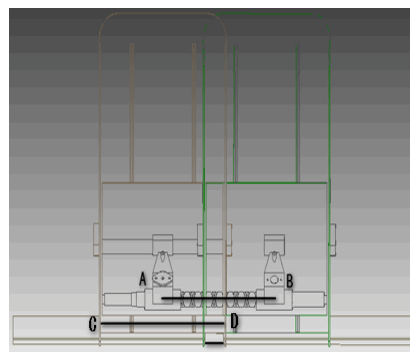


Figure 5 Motion simulation of working process

## 4.1 Horizontal seedling-providing feeding device

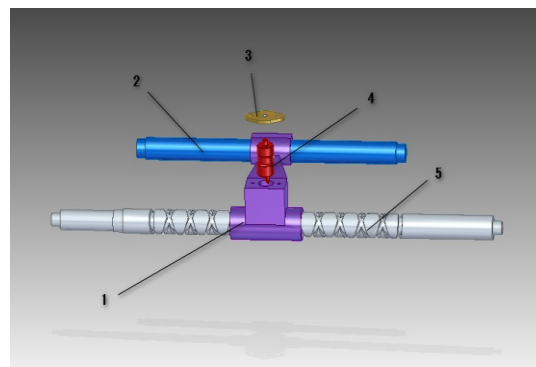
### 4.1.1 Feeder requirements of horizontal seedling providing

1) According to In accordance with the size of the maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw, the horizontal spacing needed should be 45.5 mm when transplanting. The allowed maximum allowable transplanting displacement amount was is 4 mm when cutting the seedlings.

2) The next transplanting operation needed to should be conducted run after finishing 6-times six horizontal operations.

### 4.1.2 Structure

The horizontal seedling-providing feeding device was is one of the key components of the seedling providing device of automatic transplanter, of seedling growing bowl tray made of maize straw Its the bearing part of which was is the a spiral shaft, Therefore of which the diameter of spiral shaft, it's the pitch and the helix angle were are the key parameters. The modeling of the Spiral shaft mechanism modeling was is shown illustrated in Figure 6.



1. sliding sleeve 2. seedling box connecting rod 3. slide plate 4. slider 5. spiral shaft

Figure 6 Modeling of spiral shaft mechanism modeling

#### 1) Shaft diameter of spiral shaft

The spiral shaft of the horizontal seedling providing feeding device was is mainly exposed to shear stress during the working process, as shown expressed in equation (2):

$$\tau_T = \frac{T}{W_T} = \frac{9.55 \times 10^6 P}{0.2 d^3 n} \leq [\tau_T] \quad (2)$$

Derivation:

$$d \geq \sqrt[3]{\frac{9.55 \times 10^6 P}{0.2 n [\tau_T]}} = \sqrt[3]{\frac{9.55 \times 10^6}{0.2 [\tau_T]}} \cdot \sqrt[3]{\frac{P}{n}} = C \sqrt[3]{\frac{P}{n}}$$

where  $\tau_T$  is the shearing force;  $MP_a \cdot [\tau_T]$ , the allowable shearing force;  $MP_a \cdot T$ , the torque;  $N \cdot mm$ .  $W_T$ , the anti-torsional section modulus,  $mm^3$ ;  $P$ , the power, kW;  $n$ , the shaft speed of spiral shaft;  $r / \min$ .  $d$ , the cross-section radius of the spiral shaft, mm; and  $C$ , the safety factor.

Based On the basis of the operating conditions, the spiral shaft selection was 40Cr, the spiral shaft diameter after check inspection was being  $d \geq 10.53$  mm.

In practical application, we set the groove to make the radius increase by 3%; so therefore,  $d \geq 10.875$  mm and the shaft diameter, of spiral shaft  $R_1 = 22$  mm.

2) Pitch and helix angle of spiral shaft

(1) Pitch

The horizontal planting plant spacing was required is 45.5 mm during the cutting operation; so hence, the pitch of spiral shaft of device of horizontal seedling providing was determined set at  $D = 23$  mm.

(2) Helix angle of spiral shaft

This value can be is calculated by equation (3):

$$\gamma = \arctan\left(\frac{D}{\pi R}\right) \quad (3)$$

where  $\gamma$  is the helix angle of spiral shaft;  $^\circ$ .  $D$ , the pitch, mm;  $R$ , the diameter of spiral shaft, mm.

After calculated calculation  $\gamma = 18.4^\circ$ .

#### 4.1.3 Slider

The seedling box of on the seedling growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw needed needs a horizontally reciprocating movement during transplanting transplantation; So therefore, we designed the a slider to drive the seedling box doing during this reciprocating movement reciprocation along the spiral shaft.

Because of this reciprocating movement, the slider needed reciprocating movement when transplanting the seedling growing bowl tray made of maize straw, which needed to have requires strong wear resistance. So Therefore, we used a double-circular slider, and it's the structure of which was shown is diagrammed in Figure 7.

The double-circular structure guarantee ensures that the slider was is able to move in the right proper direction when it moved is transiting through the

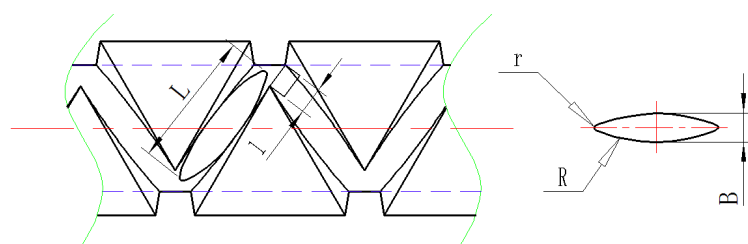


Figure 7 Schematic diagram of double circular arc slider mechanism



transition part of both ends of the shaft and the cross-section of the spiral groove. The relationship was shown expressed in equation (4):

$$\begin{cases} L > 2l \\ l = \frac{B}{\sin 2\gamma} \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

where  $B$  is the width of the gullets, mm;  $\gamma$ , the spiral-lead angle;  $L$ , the tangent contact surface length of the slider and spiral groove, mm; and  $l$ , the width of the spiral groove, mm.

Taking  $B=5$  mm and putting  $\gamma=18.4^\circ$  into the equation, we had obtained  $l=8.347$  mm; so thus,  $L$  was = 17 mm.

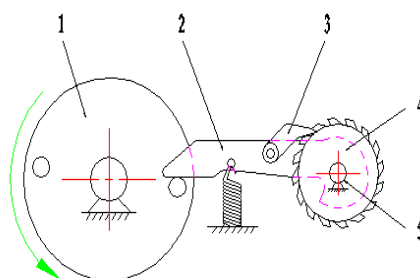
## 4.2 Vertical seedling-providing feeding device

### 4.2.1 Feeder requirements of vertical seedling providing

- 1) Intermittent providing feeding, providing spacing was spaced at 35 mm intervals.
- 2) The next vertical seedling providing feeding needed to should be conducted run after finishing 6 times six horizontal operations.

### 4.2.2 Design of structure Structural design

According to the vertical seedling-feeding requirements of vertical seedling providing, the vertical seedling providing device feeder of on a maize straw seedling growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw was shown in Figure 8 and was is mainly composed of a shifting fork, a rocker, and a ratchet, as illustrated in Figure 8.



1. shifting fork, 2. rocker, 3. ratchet, 4. ratchet, wheel, 5. transmitting transmission shaft

Figure 8 Structure-principle Structural design of longitudinal replanter

During the transplanting, the power of the shifting fork was is transmitted by the spiral shaft through the gear structure, making causing the fork to continuously rotating rotate counterclockwise when the transplanter was at work is operating. When the seedling box is moved to both ends each end,

a plate of ~~6 six seedling-growing bowl~~ sprouting trays ~~just needed then needs~~ vertical replenishment. The ~~second rocker 2-moved moves~~ into the effective working area of ~~the~~ two arms of ~~the~~ shifting fork, the spiral shaft ~~drive drives~~ the shifting fork ~~rotating rotation~~ one lap, the shifting arms ~~shifted move~~ the rocker twice, and the ratchet pawl ~~pushed pushes~~ the ratchet clockwise, ~~thereby~~ rotating two ratchets. ~~Every time~~ ~~At each iteration~~, the spring ~~drive drives~~ the rocker, causing it to ~~returning return~~ to the initial position; and the coaxial belt ~~completed completes the~~ vertical replenishment with a 42-mm vertical displacement. At this time the slider ~~just moved merely moves~~ into the return ~~sliderway track~~ through the buffer area at both ends of the spiral groove, ~~thereby~~ driving the seedling box to horizontal-~~seedling-providing feeding mode~~.

1) ~~The~~ Number of ratchets

The diameter of a ratchet ~~can be~~ is calculated by equation (5):

$$\frac{1}{c} \times 2\pi R_1 = \frac{42}{2} \quad (5)$$

where  $c$  is the number of ratchets;  $R_1$ , the diameter of a ratchet, mm.

The vertical distance ~~that in which~~ the seedling box can hold back ~~was~~ is 55 mm; ~~so hence~~,  $R_1 \leq 55$  mm. The number of ratchets should be 15; ~~so thus~~,  $R_1 = 50.4$  mm, as amended.

2) Ratchet rotation angle

Therefore, ratchet rotation angle  $\theta = \frac{360^\circ}{15} = 24^\circ$ .

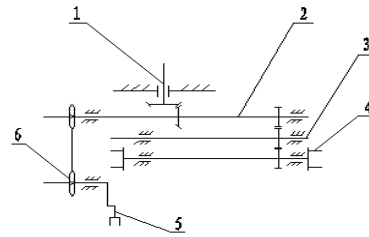
~~Above~~ The ~~above-mentioned~~ conditions can meet the needs when the seedling box is moved to ~~both ends each end and~~ the shifting fork ~~shifted moves the~~ ratchet twice to ~~realize achieve~~ vertical seedling feeding at 42-mm displacement. Thus, ~~achieving replenishing a the seedling-grow bowl~~ sprouting tray is replenished.

#### 4.3 Power transmission system

The power transmission system ~~was shown is~~ diagrammed in Figure 9. The tractor supplies power ~~of to the seedling-providing feeding device, came from tractor. The device was which is~~ articulated by a three-point suspension structure. ~~It connected that connects~~ the power by a cardan joint and a power-input shaft, then ~~transmitted transmits~~ the power to ~~the~~ horizontal-~~seedling-providing feeding~~ spiral shaft, ~~the~~ vertical-~~seedling-providing feeding~~ shifting fork and ~~the~~ planting device via ~~the~~ power transmission shaft (shown in Figure 4). The rotary spiral shaft ~~rotary drive drives~~ the hyperboloid slider ~~to do in~~ a collision movement in ~~the~~ spiral groove when transplanting and ~~also drive drives the~~ seedling box ~~to do in~~ a straight reciprocating movement by connecting ~~the~~ sleeve in the shaft direction. ~~At the same time~~ Concurrently, the planting mechanism at the seedling door, driven by the chain drive mechanism, ~~was working on works at~~ picking seedlings and ~~dropping planting the~~ seedlings in ~~cooperating tandem~~ with the ~~seedling feeder~~ box feed. The seedling box ~~would just then moves to both ends each end~~ when a row of seedlings ~~were has been~~ picked. Then the shifting fork ~~shifted shifts~~ the

ratchet at the back of the seedling box and ~~drive~~ drives the coaxial seedling feeding belt to ~~work~~ operate on the vertical seedling providing feeder. In this way Thus, the seedling providing feeding cycle circularly ~~cooperated~~ cooperates with the seedling picking cycle to complete seedling the transplanting.

To ensure that the seedling needle can effectively cut the maize seedling growing bowl sprouting tray ~~made of maize~~, the power transmission ratio should meet the requirement conditions of in equation (6):



1. power input shaft 2. power transmission shaft 3. spiral shaft 4. vertical seedling providing feeding fork 5. planting mechanism 6. sprocket

Figure 9 Diagram of transmission system

$$\begin{cases} i_{63} = \frac{i_6}{i_3} = \frac{1}{2} \\ i_{23} = \frac{i_2}{i_3} = \frac{1}{1} \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

## 5. Optimization of working parameters

### 5.1 Testing conditions

This testing was conducted in the soil bin laboratory in the College of Engineering of at Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University. This trial was a to test ~~bed for a~~ seedling providing feeding device of on a maize straw seedling growing bowl sprouting tray, powered by a TCC-3 soil-bin automated vehicle, ~~made of maize straw~~ as established and reformed by the university. It was powered by TCC-3 soil bin automated test car.

### 5.2 Test design

A large number of tests ~~showed~~ indicated that the horizontal angle of the seedling box ( $Z_1$ ), the vertical angle of seedling ~~dropping~~ planting ( $Z_2$ ), and the forward speed of ~~locomotive~~ locomotion ( $Z_3$ ) ~~and~~ were the main influence factors of influencing the seedling providing feeding device. To optimize the working parameters, the tests used the rotational regression method of ~~rotational regression~~ for experimentation. The coding levels of the factors ~~level were shown~~ are listed in Table 3.

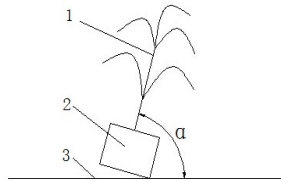
Table 3 Coding levels of factors ~~level~~

Coding	$Z_1 / ^\circ$	$Z_2 / ^\circ$	$Z_3 / (\text{ms}^{-1})$
Above higher Highest level (+1.682)	45	20	0.6
Higher High level (+1)	40	18	0.5
Zero Neutral level (0)	33.5	16.5	0.4
Lower Low level (-1)	27	15	0.3
Under lower Lowest level (-1.682)	22	13	0.2
Change interval	6.75	2	0.1

### 5.3 Evaluation indicator

The evaluation indicator of for the testing was the upright degree. In the evaluation criteria of previous research, the operational quality of a rapeseed transplanting machine specified the percentage of the number of plantings that for which the angle of a seedling stem with the ground was not less than  $30^\circ$ , thereby accounting for the number of actual transplanting transplanted seedlings, excluding the number of omission omitted seedlings, buried seedlings, injured seedlings and lodging seedlings [26, 27, 28 and 29].

According In accordance with the growth features of a maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw, the angle of bowl the tray with the ground was set with the ground to at  $\alpha$ . As shown illustrated in Figure10,  $\alpha \in [80^\circ, 90^\circ]$  was excellent,  $\alpha \in [65^\circ, 80^\circ]$  was good,  $\alpha \in [45^\circ, 65^\circ]$  was qualified, and  $\alpha < 45^\circ$  was unqualified disqualified [30].



1. maize seedling 2. block of straw seedling-growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw 3. ground

Figure 10 Upright degree

The trials tested each sample for the angle of its stem with the ground of each sample, and calculated the upright degree by the ratio of the number of qualified planting seedlings with the total number of samples, which can be as calculated by equation (7):

$$Z_L = \frac{Z_H}{Z_Q} \times 100\% \quad (7)$$

where  $Z_L$  is the upright degree, %;  $Z_H$ , the number of qualified planting seedlings; and  $Z_Q$ , the total number of samples of planting.

### 5.4 Data processing

The tests used the the rotational regression program of rotational regression for experimentation,

analyzed the test results by SPSS stepwise regression using SPSS Statistics software, and established the mathematical model. Then we conducted analysis analyzed the interaction between of a single factor and two various pairs of factors interaction to determine the contribution of their respective degrees of various factors influence on the target, and solved the equation of for the optimal value by using the optimization toolbox in Matlab software optimization toolbox. Finally, we verified the correctness accuracy of the theoretical analysis analytical results through field testing.

## 5.5 Analysis of results

### 5.5.1 Function construction

The A stepwise regression analysis of the experimental results was taken implemented through via SPSS, setting the evaluation indicator upright degree ( $\mathcal{Y}$ ) as a variable, setting the vertical angle of seedling droppings as well as the forward speed of locomotive locomotion and the horizontal angle of the seedling box as arguments. Then the significant coefficient was selected and the non-significant coefficient (Table 4) was eliminated to establish the regression equation (8):

Table 4 Factor analysis

Model		Non-standardized coefficients		$t$	Sig
		$B_c$	Standard deviation		
1	(Constant)	76.218	1.621	47.030	.000
	$Z_1$	-10.277	2.103	-4.887	.000
2	(Constant)	76.794	1.312	58.517	.000
	$Z_1$	-10.277	1.690	-6.081	.000
	$Z_3$	-5.588	1.579	-3.539	.000
3	(Constant)	77.005	1.085	71.003	.000
	$Z_1$	-10.816	1.404	-7.704	.000
	$Z_3$	-5.783	1.304	-4.435	.000
	$Z_2$	-4.380	1.359	-3.224	.004

$$y = 77.005 - 10.816Z_1 - 4.38Z_2 - 5.78Z_3 \quad (8)$$

### 5.5.2 Dimension-reduction analysis

To analyze the effect between two pairs of factors and the evaluation index, we took conducted a two-factor interactions interactive analysis of the test results by the dimension-reduction method, fixing  $N - 2$  factors in the quadratic regression model with  $N$  factors to get obtain the regression model between two factors and evaluation index. The Following discussed is a discussion of the influence of two those different factors on the upright degree.

- 1) Horizontal angle of seedling box and vertical angle of seedling dropping planting

When analyzing the influence of ~~two factors~~ the interaction between the horizontal angle of the seedling box  $Z_1$  and the vertical angle of seedling ~~dropping planting~~  $Z_2$  on the upright degree  $y$ , we can set the forward speed of the ~~locomotive locomotion~~  $Z_3$  on at the fixed value 0; ~~so~~ hence, the regression equation was expressed as (9):

$$y = 77.005 - 10.816Z_1 - 4.38Z_2 \quad (9)$$

Revise graphic:

Vertical angle of seedling  
~~dropping planting~~

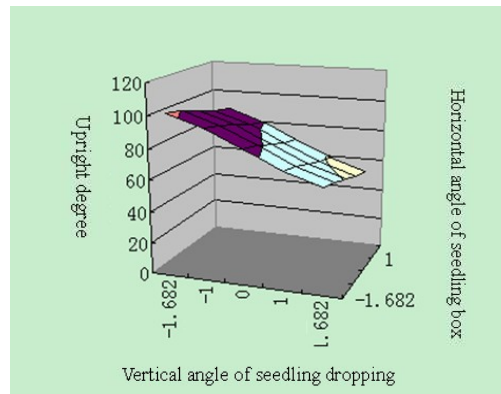


Figure 11 Effects of horizontal angle of seedling box and vertical angle of seedling ~~dropping planting~~ on the upright degree

The influence of the interaction between the horizontal angle of the seedling box and the vertical angle of seedling ~~dropping planting~~ on the upright degree ~~was shown~~ is graphed in Figure 11. The areas of relatively high upright degree appeared when both of these ~~horizontal angle of seedling box~~ and ~~vertical angles of seedling dropping~~ were below level the 0 level. When the vertical angle of ~~seedling dropping~~ was is fixed, the upright degree will gradually increase with the decrease of in the horizontal angle of ~~seedling box~~. When the horizontal angle of ~~seedling box~~ was fixed, the upright degree gradually increased with the decrease of in the vertical angle of ~~seedling dropping~~. This phenomenon was occurred mainly because that when the angle of a seedling-box angle that was too large it could lead to large cause the vertical angle of ~~seedling dropping planting~~ to be too large and Then the seedlings would consequently fall over easily. Both the ~~angle of seedling box horizontal~~ and the vertical angles of ~~seedling dropping~~ needed to match reasonably to increase the upright degree. Therefore, the vertical angle of seedling ~~dropping planting~~ was the major factor influencing the upright degree<sup>[31]</sup>.

## 2) Horizontal angle of seedling box and forward speed of the ~~locomotive locomotion~~

When analyzing the influence of ~~two factors~~ the interaction between the horizontal angle of the seedling box  $Z_1$  and the forward speed of the ~~locomotive locomotion~~  $Z_3$  on the upright degree  $y$ , we can set the vertical angle of seedling ~~dropping planting~~ at  $Z_2 = 0$ ; ~~and then~~ hence, the regression equation was expressed as (10):

$$y = 77.005 - 10.816Z_1 - 5.73Z_3 \quad (10)$$

The influence of the interaction between the horizontal angle of the seedling box and the forward speed of the ~~locomotive locomotion~~ on the upright degree ~~was shown~~ is graphed in Figure 12. When the

forward speed of the locomotive locomotion was at the level of -0.594 level and the horizontal angle of the seedling box was below level 0, the upright degree was the highest. When the forward speed of the locomotive was fixed, the upright degree changed little with the a change of in the horizontal angle of seedling box. When the horizontal angle of seedling box was fixed, the upright degree changed significantly with the a change of in the forward speed of the locomotive. Too large or too small a change in the forward speed of the locomotive would caused a decrease of in the upright degree. These reason was that, changes occurred when the forward speed of locomotive locomotion was the same with as that of the horizontal component velocity of the seedlings knife [Is "knife" the correct word here? This is the 1<sup>st</sup> occurrence.] but in the opposite direction [32 and 33], when both were approaching seedling dropping planting at zero speed and the seedlings' landing was most stable. Therefore, the horizontal angle of the seedling box was the major factor influencing the upright degree.

**Revise graphic:**

Forward speed of the locomotive locomotion

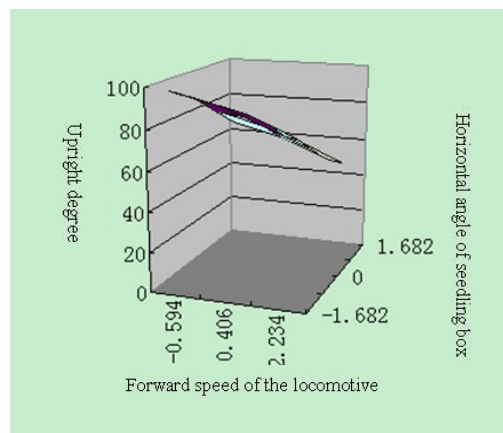


Figure 12 Effects of horizontal angle of seedling box and forward speed of the locomotive locomotion on upright degree

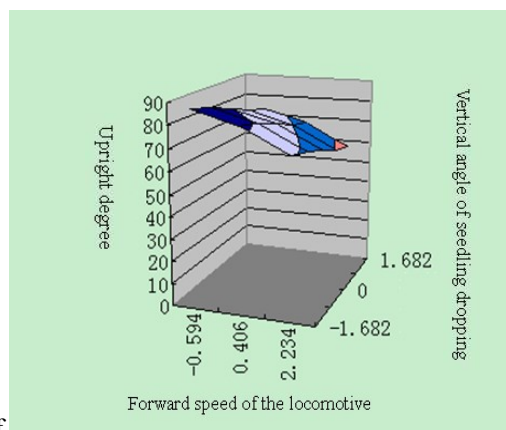
3) Vertical angle of seedling dropping planting and forward speed of the locomotive locomotion

When analyzing the influence of two factors the interaction between the vertical angle of seedling dropping planting  $Z_2$  and the forward speed of the locomotive locomotion  $Z_3$  on the upright degree, we can set the horizontal angle of the seedling box at  $Z_1 = 0$ ; and then thus, the regression equation was expressed as (11):

$$y = 77.005 - 4.38Z_2 - 5.783Z_3 \tag{11}$$

**Revise graphic:**

Forward speed of the locomotive locomotion and Vertical angle of seedling dropping planting



The influence of seedling dropping planting and the

Figure 13 Effect of forward speed of the locomotive locomotion and vertical angle of seedling dropping planting on upright degree

forward speed of the locomotive locomotion on the upright degree was shown is graphed in Figure 13. When the forward speed of the locomotive was at the level of -0.594 level and the vertical angle of seedling dropping was below level 0, the upright degree was relatively higher. When the forward speed of the locomotive was fixed, the upright degree changed little with the change of in the vertical angle of seedling dropping. When the forward speed of locomotive was fluctuate fluctuating on at the critical point of seedling dropping planting at zero speed, the upright degree was relatively stable. The upright degree changed more significantly when the forward speed of the locomotive was above the level of 0.406 than it was below that level 0.406. Therefore, the forward speed of the locomotive locomotion was the major factor influencing the upright degree.

## 5.6 Analysis of the importance of factors

The contribution-rate method was usually used to determine the primary & and secondary [Insert a noun?] and as well as the importance of the influence of various factors on the target. For the quadratic regression equation <sup>[34]</sup> we got obtained the variance ratio of regression coefficients  $F(j)$ ,  $F(ij)$ ,  $F(jj)$  and set formulated the equation was as (12):

$$\delta = \begin{cases} 0(F \leq 1) \\ 1 - \frac{1}{F}(F > 1) \end{cases} \quad (12)$$

We got obtained the contribution rate of each factor of the regression equation to for the evaluation index  $y$ .

The formula of the contribution rate of factor  $j$  to evaluation for that index  $y$  was (13): [Delete this y]

$$\Delta_j = \delta_j + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\substack{i=1 \\ i \neq j}}^m \delta_{ij} + \delta_{jj} \quad (13)$$

where

$\delta_j$  was is the contribution of factor  $j$  as a coefficient;  $\delta_{ij}$ , was the contribution of interaction terms;

$\delta_{jj}$ , was the contribution of the quadratic term. Through comparing the value of the contribution rate <sup>[35]</sup>, we can intuitively determine the primary and secondary [Insert a noun?] and as well as the importance of the influence of each factor on evaluation  $y$ .

Table 5 Regression coefficients and contribution rates

Regression coefficients coefficient	Contribution rate
$F_{(1)} = 23.879$	$\Delta_1 = 0.958$
$F_{(2)} = 27.716$	$\Delta_2 = 0.963$



$$F_{(3)} = 24.755$$

$$\Delta_3 = 0.959$$

Therefore Thus, the variance ratio of regression coefficients and the contribution rates in this test were shown are listed in Table 5.

So Therefore, the descending order of importance of the factors was is as follows: vertical angle of seedling dropping planting, forward speed of locomotive locomotion, and horizontal angle of the seedling box.

## 5.7 Optimization of working parameters

The optimization of working parameters with Matlab by solving the regression equation was that is as follows: when horizontal angle of seedling box, was  $22.5^\circ$  and horizontal angle of seedling box was  $13.14^\circ$ ; and the forward speed of the locomotive locomotion, was 0.57 m/s; the upright degree of seedling growing bowl sprouting tray, made of maize straw reached 89.64%. [Better: List this data in a Table.]

## 5.8 Verification test

To adjust the testing bed plot for the seedling providing feeding device to the optimum parameters and measure the differences of in the upright degrees of several experiments and the fit of the results by theoretical analysis <sup>[36 and 37]</sup>, the upright degree of the maize straw seedling growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw (shown in Figure 14) was determined as to be 83.6%. The relative error was no more than 6.04% when compared with the optimal results, which was within the allowable range; so therefore, the optimal results were reliable.

Table 6 Results of experimental verification

No.	$Z_1 /^\circ$	$Z_2 /^\circ$	$Z_3 /(\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1})$	$Z_L /\%$	Average
1	$13.14^\circ$	$22.5^\circ$	0.57m/s	82.32	
2	$13.14^\circ$	$22.5^\circ$	0.57m/s	85.08	83.6%
3	$13.14^\circ$	$22.5^\circ$	0.57m/s	83.42	



Figure 14 Verification test

## 6 Production test

### 6.1 Test conditions

The production test was conducted in Shengping Township, in Anda City, Heilongjiang Province from May to October in 2014. The testing ground was flat without covering with and free of both weeds and crop residues<sup>[38, 39 and 40]</sup>. The ridge distance was 65 cm in The soil was black soil And the having a firmness was of  $236.7 \times 10^4$  Pa.

## 6.2 Test design

To verify the reliability and yield increase of in yield from a transplanting machine of equipped with a maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw (T), we set two conditions. One The first was to compare the seedling-providing feeding device of on an automatic transplanter of seedling-growing bowl tray made of maize having the aforementioned type of sprouting tray (T<sub>1</sub>), as developed by the Agricultural Machinery Engineering Science Research Institute of Heilongjiang Province, with transplantation in traditional maize production. The other one second was to compare with manual transplanting (T<sub>2</sub>) with traditional maize production. Therefore, we set 4 [Delete Arabic numeral] four 1.2 ha testing areas, with each area of 1.2 ha and under the same management.

## 6.3 Evaluation indicator

1) Qualified Qualification rate of planting plant spacing

We set the distance between each two adjacent 2 seedlings to at  $X_i$  (mm) and the theoretical transplanting spacing to at  $X_r$  (mm) to determine the qualification rate of plant spacing according to the relationship between  $X_i$  and  $X_r$ <sup>[41]</sup>, for which the actual distance between adjacent 2 seedlings was  $X_i \in (0.5X_r, 1.5X_r]$ .

So Thus, the qualified qualification rate of planting spacing can be is calculated with equation (14):

$$Z_G = \frac{Z_{GH}}{Z_{HT}} \times 100\% \quad (14)$$

where  $Z_G$  is the qualified qualification rate of planting spacing; %,  $Z_{GH}$ , the number of spacing-qualified seedlings; and  $Z_{HT}$ , the total number of seedling samples of seedlings.

2) Omitted planting omission rate

The evaluation criteria of for quality operation quality of a rapeseed transplanting machine specified specifies the measurement of distance between two adjacent 2 seedlings. We set it this measurement to at  $X_i$  (mm) and set the theoretical transplanting spacing to at  $X_r$  (mm) to determine the number of omission omitted plantings according to the relationship between  $X_i$  and  $X_r$ . When the actual distance between two adjacent 2 seedlings was  $X_i \in (0.5X_r, 1.5X_r]$ , the number of omission omitted plantings was one; when the actual distance was  $X_i \in (2.5X_r, 3.5X_r]$ <sup>[41]</sup>, the number of omission omitted plantings was two. And so forth.

So Thus, the omitted planting omission rate can be is calculated with equation (15):

$$Z_o = \frac{Z_{OH}}{Z_{OT}} \times 100\% \quad (15)$$

where  $Z_o$  is the omitted planting omission rate, %;  $Z_{OH}$ , the number of omission omitted plantings;  $Z_{OT}$ , the total number of samples of planting.

## 6.4 Test results

The test results were shown are listed in Table 7.

Table 7 Production test results

Indicators	T	T <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>2</sub>
Manual input/(yuan ha <sup>-1</sup> )	1233	1300	1672
Manufacturing cost /yuan	43200	67000	0
Spacing qualified qualification rate/%	94.1	93.9	92.7
Upright-degree qualified qualification rate/%	83.2	83.1	80.1
Omitted planting omission rate/%	2.2	2.3	3.2
Yield increase/%	10.2	10.0	5.7

As shown indicated in Table 7, T was closer to T<sub>1</sub> in aspects terms of manual input, spacing qualified qualification rate, upright-degree qualified qualification rate, and yield increase; but however, the manufacturing costs were reduced by 35.5%. When compared with T<sub>2</sub>, the manual input was reduced 26.26%; the spacing qualified qualification rate increased 1.4%; the upright-degree qualified qualification rate of upright-degree increased 3.1%; the omitted planting omission rate was reduced 1.0%; and the yield increased 4.5%. Above These results proved demonstrate that the design, theoretical analysis and parameter selection were rational of reasonable for the seedling-providing feeding device of on the automatic transplanter of on the maize seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize used in this paper research [42, 43and 44].

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper study, took a stepwise regression analysis of multi-factors factor experimental results was implemented through via SPSS, established the a mathematical model of the main parameters of a seedling-providing feeding device of on the automatic transplanter of on a maize seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize formulated, and a field test conducted. The conclusions were as follows:

- 1) The influence-degree of working parameters on influencing the upright degree were ranked in descending order (and best working parameters) was as follows: vertical angle of seedling dropping planting, forward speed of locomotive locomotion, and horizontal angle of seedling box.
- 2) The optimization of working parameters was that achieved when the horizontal angle of the

seedling box was  $22.5^{\circ}$  ; the ~~horizontal~~ vertical angle of the seedling box, ~~was~~  $13.14^{\circ}$  ; ~~and~~ the forward speed of ~~the locomotive~~ locomotion, ~~was~~ 0.57m/s; and the upright degree of the maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray, ~~made of maize straw~~ reached 89.64%.

3) Compared with maize transplanting machines currently on the market, the labor inputs, ~~as well as the rates of~~ spacing ~~qualified-rate~~ and upright degree ~~qualified-rate~~ qualification, ~~omitted~~ planting ~~omission-rate~~ and the yield of ~~our seedling-providing new feeding device~~ ~~of~~ for the automatic transplanter ~~of~~ on a maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray ~~made of maize straw~~ were ~~basically~~ essentially the same; ~~but~~ however, the manufacturing cost ~~was~~ reduced by 35.5%. Compared with manual transplanting operations, the rates of spacing ~~qualified-rate~~ and upright degree ~~qualified-rate~~ qualification ~~and~~ ~~as well as~~ the yield increased 6.9%, 3.1% and 4.5%, respectively; ~~whereas~~, the planting omission rate ~~was~~ reduced by 1.0%.

## Acknowledgments [“XXXX” indicates redaction for anonymity.]

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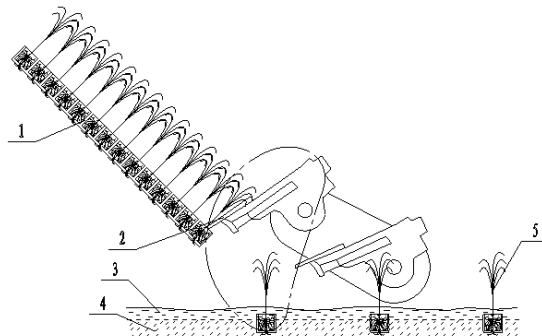
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Biographies: XXXX



1. maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of maize straw 2. planting mechanism 3. water layer 4. soil 5. seedling-growing bowl sprouting tray made of maize straw in block after transplanting transplantation

Figure 4 The transplanting Transplantation process of with maize straw seedling-growing sprouting bowl tray made of