

Editor's Notebook



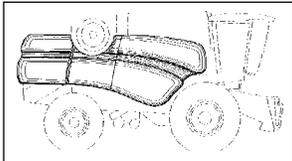
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Prototype combine has a totally new look but not much is known about the "innards" of the machine.

"Space-Age" Combine

A prototype combine with a space-age look has been showing up around the country, being field-tested by New Holland (or CNH, as the company is now known). Photos of the futuristic-looking combine have been showing up on the internet and a sharp-eyed reader suggested we take a look. We found photos at www.harvesting.com. They were taken by a farmer who said New Holland engineers field-tested the combine on his farm. We could find no further "official" information. However, a number of cyber-surfers reported that the new-look combine has been making appearances across North America and Europe.



This drawing comes off a design patent filed by New Holland engineers.

We asked Gene Hemphill, top communications man at New Holland, what he knows about the new-style combine. "It's the best kept secret around that everyone seems to know about," he told FARM SHOW. "It's been in the design stage for years." Hemphill couldn't say when, or if, the new combine would ever make it to market.

We decided to search the patent records to see if we could learn any more and found at least three patents, taken out by New Holland engineers, which appear to cover the new design. You can look them up yourself at IBM's patent site. There's a link to it at FARM SHOW's web site, or you can go direct to: www.delphion.com. The patents involved are #5,906,411 and design patents #D399,851 and #D500,543.

Cheap Talk

A New Jersey woman has invented a disposable cellular phone which you may soon be able to buy at any corner store. It's made out of extra-thin electronic circuitry and is about as thick as a credit card, complete with normal phone keys, earphone and microphone. The phones are designed to sell for \$20 and provide about 60 min. of talk time. When the times runs up, you throw it away. The inventor says the cheap phones will be great for emergencies. You can keep one in your glove compartment with no monthly fees to worry about. Should be on the market within a year.



Voth's home-built baby carriage is based on a 4-wheel cart with a "stretched" red wagon box mounted above.

Home-Built Baby "Carriage"

My family and I were at the Minnesota State Fair this fall when we spotted a couple babies riding around in a contraption that was unlike anything I'd ever seen.

We stopped and asked if we could look it over. Mike Voth of St. Joseph, Mich., proudly showed us his unusual baby carriage and told us why he had built it.

"There's always a lot of stuff to carry when you've got little kids and there's never enough cargo space on a regular baby carriage. We wanted something a little more practical," says Voth, who is a welder by trade.

He combined a standard 4-wheel cargo cart with a box from a child's red wagon. He "stretched" the wagon box by adding a new section in the middle, and then mounted the wagon box on four up-rights above the base of the cargo cart. That leaves plenty of room down below for carrying all the paraphenalia a family needs for a day-long outing. On the day we spotted the Voths, they were carrying a full-size cooler in the cargo area under the baby.



Steering handle controls tie rods that connect to front wheels.

The extra-long wagon gives the Voth babies plenty of room to move around, and to lay down and take a nap when they get tired.

The two front wheels steerable. A handle on back is at a handy height for the adult pushing the cart. Tie rods run from the back of the cart to the wheels up front.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Voth, 4253 Bacon School Rd., St. Joseph, Mich. 49085 (ph 616 428-4872).

"Storm Door" Message Center

Items posted on the bulletin board in downtown Raymond, Ill., used to last only until the next rain or snow storm. But then Lester Walch got the idea of installing a storm door over it.

He used a prehung door so installing it was a simple matter of fastening it to the wall. The bulletin board is open to the public.



Walch put a storm door over his town's bulletin board to protect notices from the weather.

Oops!

If you read this column last issue, you might have spotted a mistake. We printed a brain teaser but then gave the wrong answer. Here's the question again with the correct answer.

What do you get if you multiply 111,111,111 times 111,111,111?

Answer: 12,345,678,987,654,321

Great Gift Idea For Christmas!

If you've got a hard-to-buy for farmer or rancher on your Christmas gift list this year, why not do your shopping right here?

Many readers who gave FARM SHOW for Christmas last year wrote to tell us they've never given a gift which generated so much response from appreciative recipients.

Your first gift subscription is \$17.95 (\$25.95 Canadian). Each additional gift is only \$11.95 (\$17.95 Canadian). If you like, you can give the "First Gift" to yourself as a one-year extension of your own FARM SHOW subscription, entitling you to give reduced rate gift subscriptions to friends, relatives, business associates, students, or others.

Use the handy order form inserted elsewhere in this issue to order your Christmas gift subscriptions, or call us toll-free at 1-800-834-9665.



Strap-on bag catches cow's daily output of manure, which is then weighed and charted.

Measuring A Cow's "Output"

Farming giant J.G. Boswell is building a 47,000-head dairy operation near Fresno, Calif. In Northern Indiana, Dutch investors are putting up several 10,000-head dairies.

Handling manure from gigantic operations like these is becoming a focus of more and more research by animal scientists at Universities across the country.

One approach is to try to reduce the volume of manure by modifying diets. The more digestible the diet, the less manure cows will produce, says Wendy Powers, an assistant professor of animal science at Iowa State University. One tool she uses to evaluate various diets is to strap bags onto the back end of cows to gather their daily "output".

Genetic Test Identifies Tough Animals

Two researchers have developed a genetic test to determine which young steers will produce prime rib and which will produce only ground chuck.

"The DNA test can identify, with 99% accuracy, whether cattle have the genetic potential to produce tender, tasty beef if fed and raised properly," says Francis Fluharty, an Ohio State University feedlot nutritionist who developed the test along with molecular biologist Daral Jackwood.

Fluharty says the test would allow farmers and feedlot operators to avoid wasting time and money fattening up cattle that will never produce high-quality steaks. Tough-meat cattle could be eliminated through selective breeding, meaning consumers would get only quality choice cuts for their money.

"I think the potential is huge," says Jim Riemann, executive director of the Certified Angus Beef Program, which plans to license the test for exclusive use in Angus cattle. "It should take a lot of variability out of the market."

The test would be done early in a steer's life. Inferior animals could be raised for hamburger or other ground meat whose tenderness isn't as important.

"Savings could reach \$40 to \$50 per animal in the feedlot," says Fluharty.

"The technology, if widely used, could eliminate most tough beef from the marketplace within a decade," he says.

The test would require a few drops of blood, cost about \$10 per animal and take about a week, the researchers say. Further refinements to the test and finding labs to perform it could take up to two years.

A little girl climbed into the lap of her grandfather and studied his white and balding head. She ran her fingers along the deep wrinkles on his face and neck. "Did God make you?" she asked. "Yes." "Did God make me, too?" she wondered. "Yes," he replied. "Well," she shrugged, "don't you think he's doing a better job now than he used to?"