

He Runs Two Riding Mowers At Once

Cutting grass isn't the big chore it once was for Bob Kessi of Scappoose, Oregon, thanks to the double mower he rigged up.

He uses his 42-in. cut MTD hydrostatic riding mower to pull a Craftsman 42-in. mower behind and off to one side.

"It lets me make an 84-in. cut," he says. "It used to take about 4 1/2 hours to cut my whole yard and now we can do it in only about 1 1/2 hours because we're also saving time on turns," Kessi says.

He was able to purchase the two-year-old Craftsman for only \$200 because the transaxle was bad. Kessi didn't need that to work anyway and says the unit's deck drive is the best that he's seen.

"I removed all the extra weight by taking off the transaxle and the seat. This also prevents the grandkids from wanting to ride on it, which wouldn't be safe," he explains.

"Instead of tearing everything apart and rebuilding to make a big mower, I figured out a simple offset towing system by making a compact hitch. Now, I have a total of 34 hp and an 84-in wide swath without having to do hardly any modifications, plus I've got electric start, nearly new parts, and I spent minimum time and cost on it. This system is different than anything I've ever seen."

According to Kessi, the "pull point" comes directly off the Craftsman's right front king

pin. The hitch is made from a 3/4-in. rod, with a right hand bend in front of the Craftsman's steering tire. Just outside the MTD's left rear tire, the pin hitch connects to the towing tractor.

The simple hitch lets the Craftsman trail very closely in line, without any binding.

"Instead of drilling a lot of holes for the pin, I used 3/4-in. square nuts for the clevis hitch," he says. "I also added another simple 3/4-in. rod hitch so that the trailing mower can be pulled directly behind for transport."

Kessi adds that he has the original set of blades on the Craftsman, but on the MTD, he adapted an idea he saw in an earlier issue of FARM SHOW, using Deere disc mower blades.

"I got tired of buying \$50 worth of blades each season, so I shortened the worn out blades and first tried to drill mounting holes for the disc mower tips, but the steel was destroying my drill bits, so I welded on nuts that were just a hair bigger than the hole in the Deere mounting bolts. With the disc mower blades on, I can't see any difference in the cut, and they'll last far longer."

Kessi says he had been thinking about building a big mower for 30 years, but this system works so much better than he ever dreamed it would.

"I made my 84-in. mowing system in one



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day, including testing and debugging," he says.

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"Pull point" comes directly off the Craftsman's right front king pin.

"Flipped Axle" Army Truck Converted To Front-End Loader

Flip the axles and the differential on a surplus U.S. Army deuce and a half, and you're half way to building a front-end loader. At least you are if you do it Mike Olson's way. Flipping the axles upside down wasn't all he had to do, but it made the rest pretty simple. Doing so let him reverse truck direction while retaining the original two-speed Allison transmission with its high and low manual drop box.

"I stripped the 1952 GMC truck down to the frame, axles, engine, transmission and drop box," he says. "Then I stripped the rear axle of all its springs and shackles and mounted it solid to the frame, giving me a rigid support under the loader."

A cab from a 985 New Holland combine was narrowed up 7 in. in width and mounted on the truck frame facing the former rear end. The narrower cab allowed Olson to mount loader post supports tight against the frame.

He fabricated the post supports out of 4 by 8-in. steel tubing in a U shape. They were welded to both sides and the bottom of the frame. Capped and fitted with outlets, the tubing serves double duty as the hydraulic oil reservoir for the loader. A high capacity filter system is mounted to the frame behind the uprights.

Olson fabricated his own loader arms from 3 by 6-in. steel tubing. He bought new cylinders, but recycled a bucket from a John Deere 158 loader. The pump for the loader hydraulics is belt-driven direct off the engine.

The hydraulic steering system, complete with a tilt and telescopic steering wheel, came out of a 2290 Case tractor and was mounted in the cab. Hoses connect the hydraulic orbit motor to a cylinder on the rear steering axle.

"It gives me finger tip control of the steering, nice and easy," says Olson.

Flipping the axles upside down and reversing driving direction of the truck also reversed the castor/camber of the wheels. To correct the effect, he took the knuckles off the ends of the steering axle and flipped them half a turn. This put them in just the proper position. Before reconnecting the steering axle, he moved it forward on the frame and away from the engine.

"Moving the steering axle forward provides more of a counterweight against the loader," says Olson, noting that he can still pick the rear end off the ground with a heavily loaded bucket.

He dressed up the loader tractor with new tin over the engine and painted everything a bright yellow. To protect the engine, he also



Mike Olson converted a surplus U.S. Army truck into this heavy duty front-end loader, flipping the axles so he could reverse the truck's direction.

fashioned a rear grill from five lengths of 1 1/2-in. diameter, oil-well chrome polish rod and 3 by 5-in. bar steel.

Originally all he wanted was a loader tractor to refill trenches made with his backhoe. His modified truck has proven to be a lot more

versatile. Olson says it is great for plowing snow and moving anything he needs moved.

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Simple Round Bale Hauler, Unroller

Transport, tip and unroll. That's how easy it is to use the Bale Buster, says Wendy Noualy, Vulcan, Alberta, whose husband invented the hauler. "It's also light enough so the whole family can use it."

The hauler is made from heavy gauge square tubing and rides on 3,500-lb. high speed axles. It comes with a 4-ft. long center spike that goes 3/4 of the way through any size round bale, and two 16-in. stabilizer spikes. A 1,500-lb. self-braking safety winch tips the bale back for loading and unloading. It also has an extendable tongue with a 2-in. receiver hitch that can be used on cars, vans, tractors, SUV's and ATV's.

The unit includes two cables and a separate unrolling bar. If you want to tip a bale into the "feeder" position, you simply detach one of the 16-in. stabilizer spikes, insert it

into the bale in the appropriate place, run a cable to the spike and drive the vehicle forward so the bale tips on its end.

To unroll a bale, you unload it and push another bar through the center of the bale.

"The center spike has already created a hole inside the center of the bale during transport so it's easy to push a bale through," she says.

Then, you attach two cables to the ends of the unrolling bar and cut the bale twines. Then drive forward.

Comes apart for shipping. Sells for \$1,399 (Can.) or \$1,699.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Calhoun Sales & Service, LTD., P. O. Box 280, Foremost, Alberta, Canada T0K 0X0 (ph 403 867-3622; wendyjames27@msn.com; www.BaleBuster.com).



"It's light enough so the whole family can use it," says Wendy Noualy, whose husband invented this simple round bale hauler and unroller.