



This Claas combine, fitted with new "cat tracks", showed up at the Farm Progress Show this fall in Iowa. The tracks virtually eliminate compaction, cutting ground pressure to 7 lbs. per sq. in.

CATERPILLAR TEAMS UP WITH CLAAS AND KINZE FOR TRYOUT OF NEW TRACK SYSTEM

Combine, Grain Cart Fitted With New "Cat Tracks"

One of the biggest showstoppers at the recent Farm Progress Show in Iowa was the first combine to be fitted with Caterpillar's new rubber-tracked drive system.

Mounted on a Claas 116 combine, the new Mobil-Trac rubber tracks are identical to the drive system recently introduced on Caterpillar's new Challenger farm tractor.

The combine-mounted tracks are 30 in. wide and 128 in. long. When fitted with an 8-row cornhead, combine ground pressure is reduced to just 7 lbs. per sq. in. According to Caterpillar engineer, James Gee, that helps make Mobil-Tracs the best harvest traction system around. "They work better than flotation tires, hydraulic assist rear wheel drive, and metal half tracks. Under wet conditions, where wheels would cut 1 1/2-ft. deep ruts, this track-equipped Claas machine just flattens down the stubble. You can see the imprints of the bars - that's all."

Gee notes, however, that the company looks at the Mobil-Trac system as an all-weather drive because of the benefits from reduced compaction. "The track system will pay for itself in increased yields due to lower compaction," he says.

Caterpillar has conducted compaction studies in cooperation with Iowa State University for the past four years. Track-equipped tractors have demonstrated up to a 5% yield advantage over wheel-tractors, according to Gee. Those tests have only compared the effects of spring tillage work. "When we start using tracks on combines and grain wagons at harvest, we may see considerably more than a 5% yield increase," he notes.

Caterpillar claims the rubber-track system will far outlast conventional rubber tires. "Because they drive so much easier they'll easily last the life of the combine," says Gee.

Up to this point, the track-equipped combine is still experimental. Both Caterpillar and Claas spokesmen told FARM SHOW the companies have no plans yet to produce a tracked combine.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, James Gee, Caterpillar Inc., Peoria, Ill. 61629 (ph 309 698-5959).



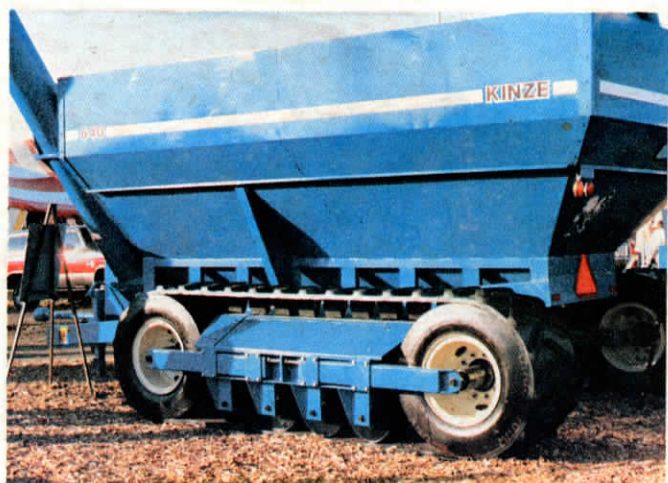
"It'll run circles around conventional grain wagons in mud," states Jon Kinzenbaw, manufacturer.

Kinze Mfg., Williamsburg, Iowa, equipped a large 625 bu. grain cart (model 640) with non-powered Caterpillar tracks—the same Mobil-trac System used on the new Cat Challenger 65 tractor—to decrease compaction, and to provide added flotation for moving big loads through wet spots—without getting stuck and without tearing up fields.

The experimental Kinze rig has been field tested for two seasons "with flying colors," says Jon Kinzenbaw, president.

"It'll run circles around conventional grain wagons in mud. We figure soil compaction with a fully-loaded wagon on tracks is only about one-fifth as severe as with conventional rubber-tired wheels." The 24.5 in. wide belts spread total weight over 106 in. of ground surface—5,194 sq. in. of ground contact—and exert only about 5.7 lbs. of pressure per sq. in.

The one-piece rubber belts are reinforced with flexible steel cable bonded into the rubber. There are 36 sets of rubber lugs on each belt.



Kinze Manufacturing equipped a 625 bu. grain cart with non-powered "cat tracks" to reduce compaction and provide added flotation in wet fields.



Martintrac tracks use 6-in. wide rubber cleats in place of steel grousers. The self-cleaning cleats flex like a tire to grip the ground.

BOLT IN PLACE LIKE A SPARE TIRE

"Go Anywhere" Tracks For Tractors, Combines

A "hollow axle" version of those Martintrac tracks we've told you about in past issues is now available to make mounting of tracks as easy as changing a tire.

The new design makes it possible to easily move the tracks from a combine flange axle to a farm tractor. It takes less than 5 min. to mount the tracks. You just slip them on using a front-end loader or a forklift and tighten them down.

Unlike other tracks on the market, Martintrac tracks use 6-in. wide rubber cleats rather than grousers. The cleats are self-cleaning and tend to grip more like a tire, doing less damage to fields than grousers, which tend to dig in more. The company

says independent tests have shown the rubber tracks have more traction than steel tracks under all conditions except very hard ground, where the ability of the grousers to dig in seems to help.

Another advantage of the tracks is that they flex up and over objects on the ground, leaving the majority of the tracks on the ground for continuous traction.

The tracks, which require a minimum 90 hp., sell for \$15,990.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Martin Research, Inc., 1701-D North Congress St., New Port Richey, Fla. 34653 (ph 813 845-0466).

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