

**Ag  
World**



Combine barely cleared the \$30,000 Classic Roadstar car

**LATEST NEW SPECTATOR ATTRACTION  
FOR FAIRS, SHOWS, TRACTOR PULLS**

**“Jumping Combine”  
Is World’s First**

“We bent both axles on the combine but we cleared the \$30,000 car,” reports Tim Brookins, Fargo, N. Dak., designer of the “jumping combine” that his father, Ernie, drove last month for the world’s first combine jump, staged at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in Fargo.

On the night of the historic jump, 6,000 spectators cheered as the combine embarked on its maiden flight. It roared down the 1,000 ft. runway at speeds close to 50 mph, off the 42-ft. long ramp, over a \$30,000 Classic Roadstar car and landed on the ground on all four wheels. If the “jumping combine” had failed its maiden flight, it would have squashed the \$30,000 car flat.

“Ideally, you’d land on a ramp,” says Tim, “but this was the first time we tried it so we had no idea where, or how, the combine would land.”

The “jumping combine” he designed as a new spectator attraction for fairs and shows is a far cry from a conventional combine. The 7,000-lb., 21-ft. long rig features a \$15,000, 1,200 hp. dragster engine. “It’s loosely designed after an Allis Chalmers Gleaner combine,” notes Tim. “It’s equipped with regular combine wheels, a 14-ft. header and a steering system salvaged from a Deere combine.

“We built the combine from scratch because commercial combines wouldn’t be able to withstand numerous jumps and are balanced wrong,” Tim notes. “We designed ours with a heavy frame and built it so we’re traveling backwards — small wheels in front. Otherwise, the machine would be nose-heavy and the header would drive into the ground.”

The huge engine is positioned where the straw walkers would normally be on a stock combine, and the driver looks out toward the rear of the combine through a plexiglass plate where the straw chopper would normally be located.

Brookins will be traveling throughout the country this summer performing combine jumps. Coors Brewery, Golden, Col., has been lined up as a major sponsor, says Brookins.

FARM SHOW readers may remember Ernie Brookins from the article in Vol. 7, No. 5, describing the popular combine demolition derbys which he organizes for fairs and shows.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ernie and Tim Brookins, Rt. 2, Fargo, N. Dak. 58102 (ph 701 282-7913).

**Editor’s Note:** Most of what goes into Ag World stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of FARM SHOW touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching — everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit.

If you’ve read or heard a good Ag World type story you’d like to share with others, send it to: FARM SHOW, Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

**“SHIITAKE” VARIETY GROWS ON LOGS**

**Will Mushrooms Be  
Your Next New Crop?**

Shiitake mushrooms are creating a lot of interest in the Midwest for their good taste and their profit potential as a sideline business for woodlot owners.

Says Kraig Kiger, project coordinator of the Shiitake Mushroom Project, Grand Rapids, Minn.: “The Shiitake mushroom variety is extremely popular in Japan and Asia. The popularity spread to the U.S. where it’s now a favorite on the East and West coast.

“They grow to have a 3 to 6-in. dia. head and have a light brown color.

“They’re unique taste is described as a cross between pork and lobster and can be used just like regular mushrooms — fresh in salads, baked on pizzas or fried for steaks. We hope to sell the mushrooms to restaurants and grocery stores.

To grow the Shiitake (pronounced Shee-e-ta-kay) mushroom requires hardwood logs, preferably oak but others also work well. In Kiger’s research he’s tested a number of trees, including small diameter aspen which is commonly left as waste after logging.

He feels that mushrooms will make the otherwise wasted 3 to 4-in. dia. aspen logs productive. For growing mushrooms, he suggests cutting the trees into 4-5 ft. lengths so they’re easy to handle. The trees should be cut in the winter so the tree has the most moisture left inside. You then stack the logs to let them air until May

when they’re inoculated with plugs. Another reason for using fresh cut trees is that they’re normally disease free. The Shiitake fungi is extremely weak and won’t grow if there’s other fungi present.

The plugs contain mycelium (the mushroom’s root system) and are placed in 5/16 by 3/4-in. holes drilled into the logs. On a 4-ft. log Kiger says you’d put in 4 rows of plugs each containing 25-30 plugs.

Once the log is inoculated it takes 18-24 months to get a “crop”. The care needed during that time includes keeping the logs at the proper humidity by spraying a light mist over them and turning the logs once a year for aeration. Kiger suggest stacking the logs and keeping them off the ground. Cold weather doesn’t kill the mycelium it merely puts it into dormancy.

Kiger figures a cord of wood (about 200 logs) will produce 500 lbs. of mushrooms in five years. He hopes to sell the crop for \$6 to \$12 a lb. noting that imported Shiitakes now sell for up to \$18 a lb.

Plugs sell for \$35 a thousand. One cord requires about 5,000 plugs.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kraig Kiger Shiitake Mushroom Project, ICC, 1851 Hwy. 169E, Grand Rapids, Minn. 55744 (ph 218 327-1760, ext. 227).