



Some farmers and custom operators use brush chippers to shred newspaper. You can run a tube directly from the discharge chute to a baler to bale up the shredded paper.



Lee Shaffer fills his Kidd bale chopper with 300 to 400 lbs. of newspaper that's blown into stalls. Smaller single-bale choppers can also be used to shred newsprint.

LOWER COST AND MORE ABSORBENT THAN STRAW

By Bill Gergen, Associate Editor

Chopped Newspapers Make Cheap Livestock Bedding

A nationwide glut of newsprint due to a limited recycling market is prompting more farmers to take a look at chopping up newspapers for livestock bedding. Most farmers say that the conventional bale choppers they use to chop straw work great with newspapers, too.

Lee Shaffer, Selinsgrove, Penn., and employee Nathan Hackenburg, have bedded their 170-cow freestall barn with 1 to 4-in. of shredded newspapers for more than 9 years. One Saturday a month, local Boy Scouts borrow Shaffer's truck to gather bundled and boxed paper. They unload the bundles of newspapers inside a shed next to the free-stall barn. Shaffer pays them \$20 a ton. Friends and acquaintances also bring in newspapers. Every morning, after scraping out his freestall barn, Shaffer and Hackenburg heave 300 to 400 lbs. of newspaper bundles into a pto-powered Kidd round bale chopper. The 3-pt. mounted chopper, powered by a 70 hp Deere 3020 tractor, blows shredded newspaper out both sides. It takes about 1 min. to go from one end of the barn to the other.

"Cows really like to lay in the new bedding and they can't drag it out of stalls as fast as they can drag out straw. It's much drier and six times more absorbent than straw, and it's not nearly as dusty," says Shaffer. "It dissolves in the freestall scrapings so it's no problem for my above-ground liquid manure storage tank. However, we make sure we remove all twine which might catch in the chopper knives or get caught in the impeller of the liquid manure pump."

"No one believes how much bedding is produced by a few bundles of newspaper. I use 3 to 4 lbs. of newspaper per day per cow. Blowing chopped up newspaper into stalls does raise some dust, but not as much as straw. Best of all, it costs much less than straw - \$20 a ton compared to about \$100 per ton for straw."

Shaffer added extra knives to his chopper to create a finer cut. He also added a speeded-up gear box so the chopper operates at 1,000 rpm but notes that the chopper would have worked fine for newspaper even without modification. When he first started using newspaper bedding, he hand-fed a small, belt-driven, single-bale chopper. "It worked fine but it took us an hour to bed the 170 stalls and we had some maintenance problems with belts because we put it to hard use. With our round bale chopper the job

takes only 15 minutes."

Shaffer says the Kidd bale chopper's shredding knives are easy to sharpen or replace. Expeller chutes, controlled from the tractor cab, discharge shredded material to either side or both sides at once. Deflector flaps can be adjusted to direct shredded material upward or downward. Two models are available. The 4-5 model chops up to 5 standard size square bales or a single 4-ft. dia. round bale. The 6-10 model can handle up to 10 square bales or a single 6-ft. dia. round bale. The 4-5 model sells for about \$5,000 and the 6-10 model sells for about \$6,450.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lee A. Shaffer, RD 2, Box 184, Selinsgrove, Penn. 17870 (ph 717 743-8269). For more information on the Kidd bale chopper, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Cummings & Bricker, Inc., 111 Cedar St., Batavia, N.Y. (ph 716 343-5411), or FARM SHOW Followup, Edney Distributing Corp., Inc., 906 Airport Road, Bismarck, N.D. 58501 (ph 701 223-1886).

Jim Berry, Lebanon, Penn., uses a Wic single bale chopper to shred newspapers for both his freestall and stanchion barns. He bought the gas engine-powered chopper for about \$1,500. After loading bundles of newspaper into it, he pushes the chopper down an alley and blows the dry fluffy newspaper bedding into the stalls. "Straw looks nicer but it doesn't absorb like newspaper and costs much more, selling for \$110 per ton in our area. I get most of my newspapers free from neighbors and acquaintances. It's hard to believe how much bedding is produced by a small bundle of newspapers. Chopped-up newsprint is really absorbent and keeps cows drier than straw. I like to blow in the newspaper and then blow in straw on top of it. When the cows walk on it they mix it up which helps to keep the fluffy newspaper bedding in place. A mixture of 70% shredded newspaper and 30% straw or other material works best. I don't use magazines because they're difficult for a small bale chopper to handle. Chopped newspaper dissolves in my liquid manure handling system and spreads well in the field."

Berry puts whole newspapers in maternity and dry cow pens because he can't get the chopper into the pens. He pulls the papers apart by hand and spreads them around. "As the newspapers absorb mois-

ture, the cows tear them apart. If I place whole newspapers in the pens in the morning, by afternoon the pens are dry," says Berry.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Berry, 135 Fox Road, Lebanon, Penn. 17042 (ph 717 274-5773). For more information on the Wic bale chopper, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wickham, QC, Canada J0C 1S0 (ph 819 398-6822) or FARM SHOW Followup, Bechard's Farm Equipment, Champlain, N.Y. 12919 (ph 518 298-5381).

A European-made brush chipper is also being promoted for shredding newspapers. The Valby chipper shreds 2 to 3 tons per hour. It's powered by either electric motor or a tractor pto. Paper is chopped by a 560-lb. cutter disc fitted with three 11.8-in. by 5 1/2-in. knives. An impeller on the cutter disc discharges the shredded paper into an internal recutter and then up through a 9 1/2-

in. discharge pipe. Chopped-up paper can then be baled using a conventional hay baler for storage or spread immediately in barns. "You can run a tube directly from the discharge chute to the baler without making a mess," notes Rainer Langstedt, president, Northeast Implement Corp., Spencer, N.Y., the manufacturer. "We offer one Valby model that lets you operate the brush chipper and a baler off the same tractor pto. A pto shaft runs through both sides of the shredder."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Northeast Implement Corp., P.O. Box 15, Spencer, N.Y. 14883 (ph 607 589-6160).

Forage harvesters can also be used to shred newspapers with some modifications and heavy-duty commercial paper shredders are also available. Some recycling centers shred newspapers and offer bales for a small fee.



Farmers who've tried it say chopped newsprint is more absorbent than straw and yet it dissolves in manure to eliminate plugging problems in spreaders or slurry systems.

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