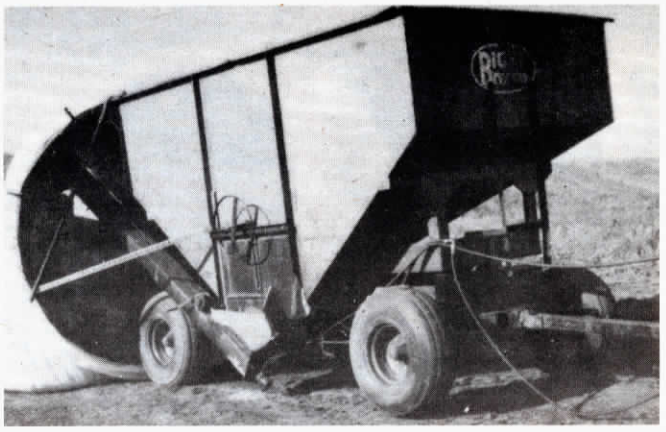
"ONE TENTH THE COST OF A COMMERCIAL SYSTEM"

This Home-Built Grain "Bagger" Works Great



Using a gravity wagon, an old circular stock watering tank and junked augers, Benes and Sons built their own "bag silo" filler.

Last fall when Ermin Benes and Sons, Valparaiso, Neb., finished filling their Harvestore with high moisture corn, they still had corn in the field and were worried about ear losses if it was left too long. Custom operators wanted $400 to fill a 100 ft. long two-ply plastic bag with shelled corn, plus about $200 for the bag.

Benes and his sons decided to build their own "bagger" system. "Took us less than a day to put it together. It works great. We can bag corn in less time than it takes with a commercial machine, and our system costs about one-tenth as much," Benes told FARM SHOW.

He and his sons started by attaching a flat-top U-trough auger from their grinder-mixer to the dump gate of a side-unloading gravity box. An old circular stock watering tank was then supported from the rear of the wagon box. A V-shaped slot was cut in the bottom of the tank for the auger and was made large enough that a man could enter the bag if necessary. The bottom edge of the 8 ft. dia. tank is about 10 in. off the ground and the silage bag, also about 8 ft. in dia., is wrapped around the tank.

Corn is hauled from the combine in an auger wagon and unloaded into the gravity box. A tractor hooked to the wagon-bagger unit provides hydraulic power for the orbit motor which drives the auger. As the bag fills, the tractor and wagon are moved ahead.

"The auger extends far enough into the bag that corn will not pile up against the bottom of the tank. This lets the bag unfold freely as the bagger moves ahead," explains Benes. "The auger angle used permits corn to be piled higher in the bag than is possible with commercial baggers. The filled bag is about 6 ft. high and 10 ft. wide. We're able to store several hundred bushels more in an 8 by 100 ft. bag — about 4,600 bushels, compared with 4,000 which it usually holds."

When each bag was completely filled, the end was wrapped around a 2 x 4 and a lathe nailed to it to seal the bag. And, according to Benes, "it works perfectly with no spoilage at all. A line printed on the outside of the bag shows when to stop filling so there's enough bag to seal properly."

Finding bags was no problem for Benes.

However, Benes doubts that his bagger could be adapted for use with regular silage: There's no means of packing the material, and you couldn't get enough silage in a bag to be practical, or force enough air out to make good silage."

Moisture content of the "bagged" corn was about 30%. "We had almost no field loss. However, corn left in the field another week lost about 10 bushels per acre. Losses went as high as 25 or 30 bushels per acre for corn left out two weeks after we finished. So, we avoided a lot of field loss, and saved a bundle on the bag — filling operation with our own bagging system."

One of Benes' Harvestores holds haylage and the other is used for high moisture corn. If they run out of high moisture corn, dry corn is moistened and the silo refilled. This year, however, they reloaded with the "bagged" corn. The corn was removed by simply slicing a hole in the plastic with a knife and inserting an auger which loaded corn for movement to the Harvestore. A skid-steer loader was used to lift the outside edges of the bag and move grain to the auger. This resulted in almost no loss around the bag and little or no shoveling by hand.

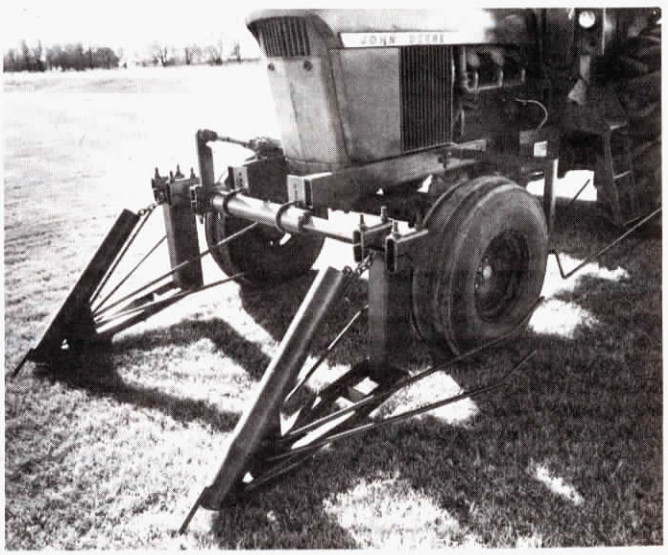
A slatted floor finishing building holds 300 head of cattle which are fed out in about 120 days — or about 900 fed out yearly. "All of our corn is fed to cattle," says Benes, "And we're sold on high moisture storage and feeding. This way, we don't have to cook moisture out of the grain so it will keep, and cattle seem to like it better, too."

Benes' suggestions for others wanting to make a home-built bagger include: 1. Use an auger with hydraulic motor — it's more convenient than a belt or chain drive. 2. Keep joints tight where grain enters the auger to prevent grain loss. 3. Use an open end auger and don't let grain pile against the end of the auger. 4. Extend the auger far enough into the bag so grain won't roll down and interfere with unfolding of the bag. 5. Fill bags on the level if possible. If you must store bags on a slope, fill from the bottom of the hill and work up. Working downslope keeps grain rolling down and the bag won't fill completely.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ermin Benes and Sons, Valparaiso, Neb. 68065 (ph 402 784-2854).

LETS YOU CULTIVATE AFTER CROP ROWS HAVE CLOSED

New Row Divider Lifts Downed, Tangled Crops



Bourquin row divider snouts lift and separate "vining" crops, preventing damage from late season row work.

If you avoid late season field work because of damage by tractor wheels to tall crops in closed rows, you'll be interested in a new row divider that's designed to lift and separate crops, letting tractors pass with virtually no damage.

"We designed it primarily for work in soybeans, sugar beets, potatoes, pinto beans and other vining crops. It works great for any narrow row application," says manufacturer Dan Bourquin, of Bourquin Manufacturing, Colby, Ks.

The front snout of the divider rides along the crop, lifting crops up a smooth metal tube and forcing them out to either side with flared rods at the side. The snout has a low pivot point and is mounted on a rugged box beam, thus reducing the chance of it ever nose diving into the ground, according to Bourquin. The box beam is located directly in front of the front wheel to help protect the tires.

The twin-snout is mounted on a diamond tool bar on the front of the tractor. This allows each divider to be adjusted to the crop's row width. Sprayers, wick weeders and other equipment can be attached to the bar.

The front and rear dividers attach to a frame that's mounted on the tractor frame. A single hydraulic cylinder lifts the dividers off the ground.

The front and rear dividers, complete with mounting frame, sell for $859. They can be painted to match tractor color.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bourquin Design and Mfg., Inc., Rt. 3, Colby, Ks. 67701 (ph 913 462-2998).