Self-Propelled Grain Auger Mounts On Old Swather

After several attempts to sell a 1970's vintage International Harvester 210 self-propelled swather, the De Blonde brothers, Jerry and Laurie, parked the old machine and figured they were stuck with it forever.

"It still worked fine but it was old. Nobody wanted it for any price," Jerry says. So the machine sat parked in the corner of the shed, taking up space. Then one day, in a fit of creativity, the men hit on the idea of mounting their 44-ft. 10-in. Westfield grain auger on it.

"We'd always thought about putting an engine on the auger so we didn't have to have a tractor to run it," De Blonde says. "By mounting it on the old swather, we figured we wouldn't need a tractor to move it around, either."

They removed the cutting table from the swather and the wheels from the auger. Then, using pieces of the auger support frame and scraps of steel bar and angle iron they had around the shop, they fashioned new mounts to hold the auger tube on the swather. A lift cylinder from an IH 914 combine lifts the top end of the auger. A header lift cylinder from the old swather raises and lowers the hopper end.

"We can raise it off the ground enough to maneuver it into grain bins to clean them out," De Blonde says.

To drive the auger, they used the pulley that originally drove the cutter bar. "We mounted a jackshaft on the swather with a pulley that lined up with the existing pulley. We replaced the pto shaft from the auger with a longer telescoping shaft with universal joints and attached that to the other end of the jackshaft. That way, as we raise and lower the ends of the auger, the shaft can flex and extend or shorten, so everything stays in line," he explains.

He says they had to do a little experimenting to find the right sized pulley for the jackshaft, in order to run the auger at the right speed. "We ended up with a 16-in. pulley on it," he adds.

"It took a bit of time to figure out how to attach everything, but when we were done with it, it worked great. We did have to add some weight to the front of the swather to counterbalance the weight of the auger hanging out behind it. The belt drive transmission lets us go as slow as we want to move it into position and disengages completely, unlike a hydrostatic transmission, so it doesn't tend to creep once its set. And the swather's existing lighting lets us use it at night if we need to."

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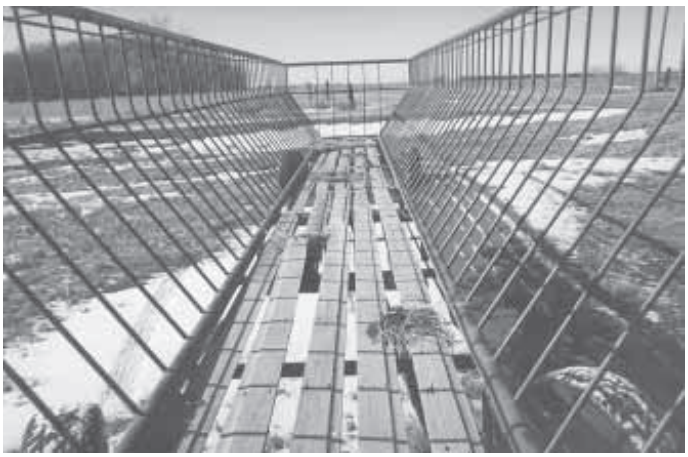
Jerry and Laurie De Blonde removed the wheels from their 44-ft. 10-in. Westfield grain auger and mounted it on an IH self-propelled swather.

Tongue can be easily detached and re-attached at opposite end of rig.



Because feeder is steerable at either end, it's easy to maneuver in and out of pastures.

Towable Hay Feeders Steer At Both Ends

Don Hampton and his son, Darrel, needed to be able to feed loose hay from stacks to cattle in pastures and small lots.

The Hamptons felt it made more sense to load hay into towable feeders at the stacks, rather than trying to move it from the stack to the pasture or lot and then put it into a bunk.

After studying the matter a little, Hampton came up with the idea of a hay feeder on a running gear with steerable axles at both ends. That way, the Huron, South Dakota, cattleman can pull from either end, with a tongue that can be easily detached and re-attached on the opposite end.

"When we unhitch from the feeder, we take off the tongue and hang it on a hook on the end of the rack. That keeps it up out of the mud and manure," says Darrel. "Being able to put the tongue on the other end of the feeder lets us pull it back out of small lots where there's not enough space to turn it around."

They built the feeding rack from used 2 5/16-in. well stem pipe for the frame, with vertical 3/4-in. sucker rod spaced 12 in. on center from front to back. "This spacing allows even the largest bulls to get their heads through to eat, but they're close enough together that they don't throw hay around and waste it."

They bent the sucker rod, eight pieces at a time, in their shop press to flare out the feeder's sides, so it would hold more hay.

The bottoms of the rack are open, with just loose boards laying in them, so dirt and debris can fall through.

The Hamptons have made four of these feeders. "We sold one to a neighbor who liked the idea," Hampton says.

Their first model was 37 ft. long, with wagon (bolster) steering. To make sure both front and rear axles turned the same, they ran cables from the corners of the front bolster to the opposite corners of the rear bolster. A hanger in the center of the wagon stringer keeps the cables from sagging. It worked well, so they made the second one 50 ft. long.

"The longer one holds about 4 tons of hay when it's full but the weight tends to make it a little tippy when you turn short," Hampton says.

Based on that experience, the Hamptons made their third feeder 40 ft. long with automotive type steering, using two front axles from a couple of old 2-ton trucks. Both axles are hooked with tie rods to the tongue mounts. Then, to make them both steerable from either end, the Hamptons made a long tie rod between the axles out of 2-in. pipe. The pipe runs from opposite corners, through a cradle in the center of the wagon frame.

"This type of steering is really the best," Hampton says. "It's more stable under a load in a turn than bolster-type steering. We put stops on each end of the rack to keep it from turning too short and tearing off the tie rods."

He says besides being easy to get in and out of pastures and lots and holding enough hay to feed cattle for several days, the hay feeders can also be positioned to make a wind break. "I've pulled three of the feeders together into a pasture ahead of a blizzard to give the cattle a place to eat and get out of the storm."

While they usually feed loose hay in them, Hampton says they work fine for any size round or square bales, too.

Darrel built a shorter 24-ft. hay feeder wagon this past fall. "It took about two days in the shop to put it together," he says.

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Flagged Entries Easy To Spot

Here's one of those simple ideas that helps make ordinary chores easier and less stressful.

Doug Phillips uses bright orange flags to mark field entries, culverts, and other crossings for himself and his employees. No need to search for the right place to drive when pulling big equipment or when in a hurry.

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Bright orange flags mark field entries.