Tall Wheel Tractor Replaces High Clearance Sprayer

Why spend $150,000 on a high clearance sprayer when you can do the same job with a row crop tractor at a fifth the cost? Steve Kaltenheuser says his Tall Wheels-equipped tractors and pull-type sprayers cover ground faster than he ever could with his self-propelled high clearance sprayer.

"With 3,000 acres of soybeans, I knew if Asian soybean rust showed up, I would need to cover a lot of ground fast," says Kaltenheuser.

All the Iowa farmer needed was clearance. Two years earlier he had used his pull-type units to treat soybeans for aphids. The sprayers had plenty of clearance and Kaltenheuser put 14:9 x 46 tires front and rear on his tractors. While they gave him the clearance he needed on the front axle, he couldn't use front wheel assist, and he still didn't have the clearance he needed under the rear axle.

Kaltenheuser knew he needed to get 8-ft. wheels on the back axle to level the frame for front wheel assist and get rear clearance. After seeing lugs used on logging equipment, he decided to build his own wheels and use the bolt-on tire lugs. He cut the wheels out of steel plate, drilled holes to match the axle hub and welded channel iron around the edge to mount the lugs.

"The lugs are designed to bolt onto a solid rim so each lug touches the other, but I knew that wouldn't work in a corn field," says Kaltenheuser. "If the soil got wet, they would have no traction."

By mounting the lugs in pieces of channel iron, he was able to leave gaps between each lug. In wet conditions, the lug spacing fills with mud and falls through the spaces, self cleaning as the wheel turns. For added traction, Kaltenheuser cut treads into the lugs with a chain saw. The original lugs were too wide at 18 in. He made one set of Tall Wheels with 12-in. lugs but they were too narrow and tended to sink into the ground. Kaltenheuser has settled on 15 1/2-in. wide lugs as an optimum size. He now has a supplier who will provide precut treads.

"The wheels increase clearance by 15 in. which lets us spray 5 1/2-ft. corn and full season soybeans with no problem," he says.

Last year with Tall Wheels on two tractors, he sprayed nearly 20,000 acres with no wear on the lugs. Kaltenheuser reports they are more stable and run smoother than pneumatic tires early in the season. Later in the season they run a little rougher, but still offer an acceptable ride.

"We've driven them down the highway at 27 mph without a problem," he says.

Kaltenheuser has begun marketing his Tall Wheels. Prices vary with the cost of steel, but are in the neighborhood of $10,000 for a pair. While that may seem high, he points out that it lets him get more use out of a tractor. He estimates the cost of a pull type sprayer and a set of wheels with spacers at $31,500 versus a high clearance sprayer at $150,000. Now instead of a single highboy-type sprayer, he runs two pull-types with 90-ft. and 120-ft. booms. He says he sprayed his beans several times last year, and it paid off.

"We averaged 66 bu./acre over 3,000 acres," says Kaltenheuser. "With a set of Tall Wheels and a sprayer, you can take care of your beans."

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Steve Kaltenheuser says putting Tall Wheels on his tractor lets him cover ground faster than he could with his self-propelled high clearance sprayer.

He built his own 8-ft. high rear wheels and uses bolt-on tire lugs on them.

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March-April, 2006

Friends Helped Move A Building By Hand

By Arthur Bolduc

When Dennis Miller, Butler, Ohio, decided to move a 24 by 50-ft. storage building a hundred feet or so away on his farm, he knew a moving contractor would cost a lot of money and heavy equipment would tear up the yard.

Instead, he decided to move it himself with the help of a few neighbors.

It ended up being a pleasant way to spend a spring evening. The actual move took just 5 minutes and then the rest of the evening was spent sitting around enjoying cold drinks and home-baked pastry.

The prep work took longer, of course, and involved cutting the building from its foundation, bracing the inside and installing steel straps connected to 1 1/2-in. steel pipe that ran around the perimeter of the building.

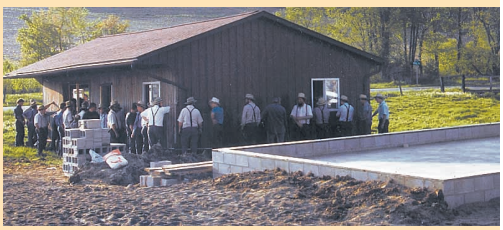
Shortly before 7 p.m., horse-drawn buggies and pickups started arriving on the Amish farm.

While the women set up tables, chairs and benches on the lawns the men appraised the building and move.

It wouldn't be moved in a straight line, but three short moves, including three 90 degree turns.

At 7 p.m., 60 or more strong backs bent and lifted the building off the ground and carried it to the new foundation. It took just 4 minutes and 12 seconds.

It was an excellent fit on the foundation and nobody got a strained muscle.



Dennis Miller moved this 24 by 50-ft. storage building about 100 ft. with the help of a few neighbors. Prep work involved attaching a 1 1/2-in. pipe to the perimeter of the building.