Todd Jensen mounted a 9-ft. wide snowblower on a Deere rear wheel assist combine. "I don't have to turn around like I would with a rear mount blower," he says.

The pto-driven snowblower mounts on a 3-pt. hitch that bolts onto combine's front axle. Blower spout operates hydraulically from inside the cab.

Deere Combine Snowblower

"I built my own self-propelled snowblower out of an old Deere combine. I like it because I have a good view in front of me and don't have to turn around like I would with a rear mount blower," says Todd Jensen of Ramona, S. Dak., who mounted a 9-ft. wide snowblower on a 1978 Deere 7700 rear wheel assist combine.

The pto-driven snowblower mounts on a 3-pt. hitch that bolts onto the combine's front axle.

He bought the combine for $1,000 from a local dealer. He removed the feederhouse, grain-cleaning components, return elevators, grain tank, unloading auger, and big rear drive wheels, keeping the cab, engine, rear drive axle, wiring harness, and hydraulic pumps.

He installed the right angle gearbox out of a Gehl 800 silage cutter in place of the threshing cylinder. It drives a self-contained pto unit out of an IH 4366 tractor which has its own clutch. A shaft from the pto drives the snowblower. The 3-pt. hitch came off a Case 2470 tractor.

The engine was worn out so he overhauled it. He moved the engine down behind the cab and positioned it lengthwise so the radiator faces backward. The fuel tank was moved beside the engine. The fuel tank is off a Massey 410 combine. He narrowed up the big drive axle by 15 in. so it would match the width of the 9-ft. snowblower. He used the hood that originally covered the straw walkers to cover the relocated engine.

He removed the 30.5 by 32 wheels and tires from the front. The wheels were replaced with 18.4 by 38's. The wheels were made from tractor dual clamp-on wheels, and the centers were made from 1/2-in. thick flat steel.

The spout on the blower operates hydraulically from inside the cab. "I simply used the hydraulics that used to fold the unloading auger in and out," says Jensen.

"I built it three years ago but it hasn't snowed enough since then to even use it. The wheels are well inside the machine which makes it easy to maneuver around objects. And I'm up in the air where I can see real well," says Jensen.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Todd Jensen, 44395 221st St., Ramona, S. Dak. 57054 (ph 605 482-8383).

Swather Does Double Duty With Front-Mounted Rakes

Both old and new self-propelled swathers can get extended use with the new Bootsma Swather Front-Mounted Hay Rake. The mounted twin rakes are designed to replace a swather header in less than 30 minutes.

"There are a lot of old swathers out there with worn out headers and not a lot of value for trade-in," says Tom Bootsma. "Our mounted rake can put them back to work. And smaller operators can now justify having a new swather, using it to cut and rake."

Bootsma's brother John, a long time hay producer, came up with the idea. He and Tom formed the company to make it a reality.

The rake frame folds up to an 8-ft. 6-in. transport width and opens up to as much as 25 ft. in the field. To connect the unit, the operator disconnects the swather header and drives up to the rake, which rests on flotation swivel wheels and a stand. Connect hydraulic and electronic connections, and the unit is ready to go.

A double-wheeled model is also available for use on corrugated fields or crossing pivot tracks. For transport, the swivel wheels lock in place, allowing it to be towed.

A control unit mounts in the cab next to the steering wheel when the system is first installed. It controls basket angles, widths and heights. A flow control valve keeps rake speed constant regardless of engine rpm.

Other advantages of the system include visibility, lighting and maintaining crop quality. The twin rakes are out in front of the operator, and swather light bars offer more than sufficient light for night-time raking. Thanks to the placement of drive wheels and the height of the swather, the crop is never driven on and the windrow passes easily beneath the drive unit.

Harvested hay quality is also enhanced with the 6 tine-bar basket design. It operates at a lower rpm than five tine-bar rakes, lifting the hay slower and more gently for less leaf loss.

The swather-mounted rake is also fuel efficient. "The engine generally runs at about half throttle, which is plenty for the drive," says Bootsma. "It uses about half the fuel used for swathing."

About five years were spent developing and refining the rake. The first units have been in the field for about a year and a half. So far the units have been adapted for Hesston, Case-International and McDon swathers, but Bootsma will develop adapters for other makes on request.

"On the Hesstons we use the arms that lift the header with a few modifications," explains Bootsma. "On the McDons, we build a new arm, but don't' change the machine itself."

The company is interested in expanding sales from the Pacific Northwest. Retail price is $22,900, but dealer discounts are available for buyers in a new area willing to demonstrate the rake.

"I think once a person gets behind the wheel and rakes hay in front of them, they will be impressed with how easy it is," says Bootsma.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bootsma LLC, 2604 11th St., Baker City, Oregon` 97814 (ph 541 523-5400; fax 541 523-3333; info@bootsma.com).

You can use the Bootsma front-mounted hay rake on an older swather, or on a new one. The mounted twin rakes simply mount in place of the header.

Rake frame folds up to an 8-ft. 6-in. transport width and opens up to as much as 25 ft. in the field.

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