This Farmall H Is Fully Powered

From the power steering on the front end to the live hydraulics that power the 3-pt. hitch, Mike Olson's Farmall H is all power. The live hydraulics come from a "jobbers pump" installed between the engine and the distributor. He fabricated the power steering and 3-pt. hitch himself.

"The front end is a steering axle from an 895 New Holland combine," explains Olson. "I narrowed it up by 16 in. The power steering gearbox came out of a 510 Massey Ferguson combine. It's driven by a Chevy power steering pump that's belt driven off the engine."

To mount the New Holland axle, Olson bolted a 1/2-in. steel plate under the front casting and welded an oscillating pin to it.

The 3-pt. hitch was not quite as simple. He made it from scratch with the exception of lift arms from an old Case tractor. The rockshaft was built from 3/8-in. flat iron and oil well rod. The arms pivot at the rear of a heavy-duty hitch framework that Olson made.

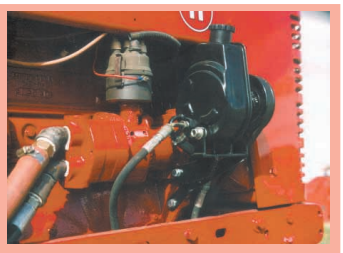
While 3-pts. are mounted to the axle housing, Olson's is mounted there and braced back to the center of the tractor frame for extra support. The drawbar itself is 3 by 1-in. flat iron from an old Deere toolbar. The hydraulic cylinder is anchored to the drawbar frame with the arm extending up to the rockshaft.

Olson threaded the well rod used for one lift rod so he could level the arms. It threads into a nut encased in a pipe attached to the rockshaft mechanism.

With the addition of the 3-pt. hitch and heavy-duty drawbar, getting on the tractor from the rear was no longer as easy. Olson built steps to mount ahead of the rear wheel. They were made from 2 by 1/4-in. steel fitted with extruded metal mesh.

"I added 9 in. to each side of the driver's platform and also added fenders to the H," explains Olson.

To top the old tractor off and make it safer, he added a ROPS with vertical posts of 2 by 3-in. steel tubing and a 32 by 38-in. top frame made from 2-in. square tubing.



Live hydraulics on Mike Olson's Farmall H come from a "jobbers pump" installed between the engine and the distributor.

"The top was made from 1/8-in. flat iron bent on the edges for a finished look and pop riveted to the top frame," explains Olson.

Painted with a fresh coat of Farmall Red, the old H looks mighty good. In fact, it looked good enough that Olson recently accepted an offer of $6,000 for it. It and a second H used for parts only cost him $250. Olson estimates he has spent about $3,600 out of pocket and many hours fixing it up.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Olson, 112 St. Patrick Ave., Medicine Lake, Mont. 59247 (ph 406 789-2358).

Blimp Cameras Monitor Fields

If you're looking for a way to monitor your crops from above, you might be interested in using a blimp fitted with a digital camera.

That's what University of Georgia researchers Glen Ritchie and Craig Bednarz did when they wanted to find an inexpensive and easy way to decide when to irrigate a cotton field.

"The photos clearly showed washed out areas of water stress and told us when to irrigate before drought set in," he says.

"With a blimp, we could go out and take our measurements without having to schedule a pilot to fly over. It was something we could put in the shop, grab when we needed, run out and take the measurements," Ritchie says.

Although they spent about $2,000 to create the system, Ritchie says you could do it for a lot less. "You can pick up a lot of the equipment at Wal-Mart."

They bought the 15-ft. long helium tethered blimp kit for about $500 through Southern Balloon Works Inc. (ph 800 348-4903 or 888 705-1455; www.southernballoonworks.com).

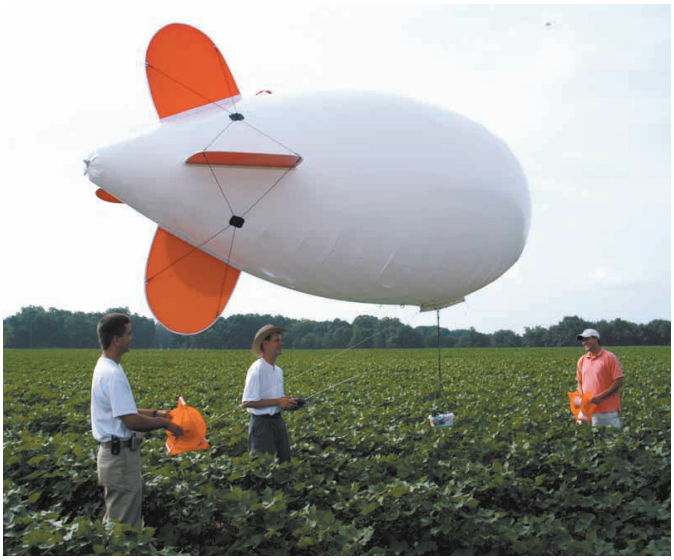
"The nice thing about it was that they gave us an idea of the amount of lift each of their blimps has and we selected one with a lift of between 5 and 10 lbs.," Ritchie says. "You can get smaller blimps for a lot less money but then you'd need to find a smaller camera."

They bought two Nikon 4300 digital cameras and fitted them with electronic shutters so that a handler can operate them from the ground with a remote transmitter. They took one camera apart and modified it for infrared photos. "We rarely use it though," he says.

A gondola under the balloon holds the cameras in place.

Ritchie admits he didn't have much electrical knowledge but was able to put everything together.

"One of the things we were concerned about was the string," he says. "It was 1,000 ft. long and had 110 lbs. of tensile strength but was only twice as thick as a yoyo string. But we haven't had any problems with it breaking or coming undone."



Using a blimp fitted with a digital camera, University of Georgia researchers are able to determine areas of water stress in crops.

In order to avoid problems with the FAA, they can only run it up to about 300 ft. "You can ask for special permission and usually, they'll let you run it up a quarter mile or 2,000 ft. which is good enough to see over center pivots. It's never going to replace an airplane but for something up to 70 acres, it works pretty good," Ritchie says.

It takes a full helium tank to fill the blimp.

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