

“One-Off” Loader Tractors Ideal For Muddy Ground

So far, John Fehr of Warren, Manitoba has built six of his special “Fehr-Trac Loader” tractors, keeping the price down by using salvaged combine components and used Chevy engines.

“I developed this loader because the area I live in gets very soft in the spring and it’s hard to maneuver with a conventional tractor - you’re always getting stuck carrying bales,” Fehr says. “I built a front-wheel drive unit to get better traction and floatation when feeding cattle. The straight-arm, self-leveling loader, which I built from scratch, is a big feature, too. I can load semis, double-decking them from just one side. With most tractors, you’d have to go around to the other side to load.”

Of the six units he’s built so far, Fehr uses two of them on his own farm, and has sold the other four. If there’s interest, he’s willing to build more with a price tag of \$25,000.

The Fehr-Trac Loader’s framework is made from a salvaged semi-truck frame and the cab comes from a 1500 New Holland combine. The hydrostatic front drives are out

of an 815 International and he mounts a New Holland TR70 steering axle at the rear. All four tires come from combines and the wide profile provides great floatation. The unit also “turns on a dime” and weighs only 9,000 lbs., according to Fehr.

He builds the self-leveling loaders from heavy-walled square tubing. The extra heavy-duty main arms are made from 8 by 3 by 1/4-in. square tubing and the loader has a reach of 13 1/2 ft.

“The lift capacity is quite extreme. If I put the 3 pt. hitch on, I can carry four 1,200-lb. bales at a time - one on the 3 pt. hitch, which is on the steering axle, and three on the loader. I build a teepee and pierce the bottom bales closer to the top, which cradles the top bale,” he explains. “If I need to, I use counter weights on the back instead of a bale.”

Fehr says he salvaged “120-hp, Chevy inline 6-cyl. gas engines” for the first five tractors because they’re economical and easy to replace. On the last one he built, he put in a new 80 hp, 3.9-litre, 4-cyl. Cummins motor. This change was because Fehr wanted to try



John Fehr uses salvaged combine components and used Chevy engines to build his special “Fehr-Trac Loader” tractors.

a diesel to benefit from lower fuel costs.

“The only thing that’s brand new on these tractors is the hydraulic system and the loader,” he points out. Fehr also makes 8-ft. buckets for his tractors and to use for clearing snow.

All the units are compatible with a 12-ft. front-mount haybine, and Fehr just raises the loader up out of the way when cutting hay. It

looks like a giant swather with a loader on it, he says. “The hardest part of building them was developing the loader - it took lots of hours and went through a test period where I made a few changes - but now I wouldn’t live without it.”

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Stand-Up Bike Goes 50 Mph

With its many advantages over conventional bicycles, the patent-pending and bizarre-looking HyperBike promises to change the way you look at “going for a bike ride.” Inventor Curtis DeForest Jr., of East Hampton, N.Y., has one prototype and is seeking financing for additional units.

Thirty years of cycling and experience as a cycle shop mechanic, combined with an inventive streak, motivated DeForest to try to create something new.

With no seat, the HyperBike gives the user “a full body workout,” as it requires engagement of all four limbs, using arm and foot pedals. With the rider standing, the unit has excellent stability. This is important since he says the machine can achieve speeds of up to 50 mph and better.

DeForest says the HyperBike driver uses a “skate-ski” motion to propel it. “The HyperBike is the fastest and safest human-powered vehicle on the road,” DeForest points out. “The circumference of an 8-ft. dia. wheel is roughly 25 ft., and gearing that al-

lows an operator to rotate the wheels four times each pedal cycle (at a 1:4 ratio) while at a comfortable cadence rate produces a speed upwards of 50 mph.”

The HyperBike’s stability is maximized because “the upright driver’s center of gravity is below the wheels’ spinning axes, as is the weight of the transmission. This stability is reinforced by both the frames’ broad base, formed by the canted wheels, and by the power of the centrifugal force of the spinning wheels pushing down on the road.”

Similar to a racecar, the framework will include a roll cage that could potentially withstand a 200 mph impact, and incorporates interior air bags.

“I was inspired by the design of a racing wheelchair, which is unbelievably fast and has a low center of gravity,” DeForest explains.

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With no seat, the HyperBike gives the user “a full body workout,” as it requires use of both arm and foot pedals. The driver uses a “skate-ski” motion to propel it.

He’ll “Plasmacize” Your Farmstead In Steel

Now you can capture your favorite farm scene - or antique - or tractor in 16 ga. cold rolled steel. Jim Kuttner uses a plasma cutter to create amazingly detailed rural scenes, creating his own images or working from photos provided by customers.

“I spent a lot of time learning how to take a picture and transfer it to a digital format so it can be reproduced with the plasma cutter,” he says.

Kuttner adds a unique touch to his artwork by doing additional cutting and welding that gives scenes a 3-D effect. “You need a lot of time to play with it and learn,” says the retired college instructor.”

Kuttner taught himself how to create fine lines to give tractors the detail he wanted. He now has digital templates created for more than 40 different tractor brands. He has done common brands like Deere, IH and Ford but also more rare antiques such as Flour City, Graham-Bradley and McTaggart. He also has templates for more than 18 steam engines from Advance to Wood Brothers. Tractors and steam engines are mounted on 8 3/4 in.



Jim Kuttner creates amazingly detailed rural scenes out of metal, working from photos provided by customers.

high by 11 1/4 in. wide wood plaques. Kuttner sells them for \$35 each.

A Blacksmith scene he created measures 42 in. wide by 27 in. high. Details include a blacksmith making a horseshoe on an anvil and even a squirrel in a tree. Scenes are layered on five different levels for a 3-D look. It has a bare metal finish with a clear sealer and is priced at \$550.

He’s now doing 24-in. high custom farm scenes for individuals. One 36-in. wide piece

was completed for \$275, while a 6 1/2-ft. long farm scene was priced at \$950.

“One guy wanted one that was 8 ft. long and had eight different tractors he had once owned in the scene,” says Kuttner. “If somebody has a picture, I can reproduce it in steel.”

All completed work is buffed lightly and then covered in one of two finishes. If meant for outside display, he covers it in a UV-resistant bronze paint. If interior display is planned, the buffed steel is covered in two

coats of a clear finish to retain the steel look. “People want to see that it’s steel, not wood or plastic,” he explains. “Steel is popular now.”

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