

Round Baler Fitted With Walking Beam Tandem Axle

Chad Travis, Drasco, Ark., says the home-built, tandem walking beam axle he added to his Deere 446 round baler has saved a lot of headaches.

"I have a lot of big holes in my hay fields that were dug out by armadillos," says Travis. "When a single wheel drops into such holes, the baler's pickup reel can dig into the ground and tear up the baler's teeth and reel mechanism. But with a tandem walking beam axle, the machine rides much more evenly and prevents the pickup reel from digging into the dirt."

The add-on axle is fitted with a pair of old 15-in. car wheels that mount behind the baler's original tires and are supported by the spindles off a wing-type chisel plow. The spindles bolt onto one end of a 1-in. thick, tapered steel plate, with the other end of the plate bolted to the spindles on the baler's original wheels.

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Chad Travis added a walking beam tandem axle to his Deere round baler. "It results in a more even ride that keeps the pickup reel from digging into the dirt," he says.

"Sprinkler Pads" Make Pasture Irrigation Easy

Having a simple and easy way to irrigate pasture is important to John Yardley. At 76 years of age, he wants to do as little labor as possible to maintain his 55 acres of pasture that supports 40 head of cattle and 80 head of sheep. The sprinklers let him pasture year round, producing grass-fed beef and lamb that he sells for a premium.

"I call my type of place a Poor Widow's Ranch," he says. "Even a poor widow could handle the work."

Moving a line of irrigation sprinklers in a pasture is easy if you do it Yardley's way. He has his pasture broken up into different size circles centered on a buried line of irrigation pipe. Black poly pipe with sprinklers at regular intervals water the pasture in each circle year round. Moving the sprinklers is as easy as riding his ATV.

"Each area in the pasture is set up like a clock face with the riser in the center," says Yardley. "If a line of sprinklers runs from the center to the 1 on the clock face, when it's time to move it, I unhook it from the riser and hook it up to my ATV. I then pull it to the 7 on the clock face and drive back to the riser to hook the other end of the line up to start watering."

When the line is pulled to the outside of the circle, Yardley attaches a female coupler with a sprinkler head to the new outside end and removes one from what is now the center connection. When it's time to move the sprinklers again, he reverses the process

and pulls it the other way, out to the next number on the clock face. Over the course of a week, he irrigates the entire circle, running the system only as long as is needed each day.

The key to the ease of the system is the pads made from pvc pipe beneath each sprinkler and male cam lock couplers at either end of each line of pipe. They hook to the female cam lock couplers at the center risers.

"I use pvc pipe elbows and fittings to make the skid pads," says Yardley. "Anybody who can work a jigsaw can design his own. Just make them water tight and use a drop of glue to hold them together."

Each pad consists of a pair of 1 1/2-in. pvc cross fittings with a sprinkler mounted between them and 1-in. runners to either side. The runners are capped at both ends and fit tight into the sides of the cross fittings, creating a watertight connection.

"Keeping the skid runners water tight keeps the weight in the center of the skid when the line moves," explains Yardley. "A drop of pvc 705 glue keeps all the joints tight."

Yardley prefers black poly pipe to the aluminum pipe he used in the past. He finds it's almost indestructible, whether it's driven over or cows step on it. The pvc pipe is the only thing that requires upkeep; however, it's better than commercial sprinkler skids he has tried in the past.

Yardley has used the system for nearly 6 years. He has 11 lines for his irregular shaped pasture. The longest line is 350 ft.



John Yardley uses his ATV to move a line of irrigation sprinklers in his pasture.



Homemade sprinkler pad consists of a pair of 1 1/2-in. pvc cross fittings, with a sprinkler mounted between them, and 1-in. runners to either side.

with 7 sprinklers set at 50-ft. intervals. The three longest lines use 1 1/4-in. poly pipe, while shorter ones get by with 1-in. pipe. He is confident he could go to as many as 9 sprinkler heads on a line, but that would likely be the maximum.

The sprinkler system has helped make it possible for Yardley to continue his livestock

operation.

"People ask when I'll retire, and I say when I can't get on my four-wheeler and go anymore," he says.

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There's a garden hose hook-up at one end of wand and a "pinched down" fan head at the other end. The wand is small enough to fit into tight spots behind radiator.



He Uses Car Wash Wand To Clean Out Radiator

Glen Schweppe, Syracuse, Neb., needed a wand to clean out the space between the radiator and air conditioner condenser on his tractor. He made one for free out of an old car-washing wand that had a broken brush.

The wand Schweppe uses has a garden hose hook-up at one end and originally had a brush at the other end. The tube was 3/4 in. dia.

He cut off the brush and then put the wand in a vise and flattened the cut-off end of the tube. He then folded the last 1/2 in. of the tube over on itself and flattened it to create a "pinched down" fan head that's small enough to fit into small places. Then he carefully

flattened the entire length of the tube down to a thickness of 3/8 in., providing just enough room inside the tube to allow water to go through. The last step was to drill 4 small holes just below the flattened-out end.

"The wand measures 28 in. long. It's small enough so I can get into confined areas, yet big enough to create a lot of water force," says Schweppe. "I use the wand's original shutoff valve to control water pressure."

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How To Get Email Access Without A Computer

You can send and receive emails without a computer, with the Computerless Email System sold by Conestoga Projects, Inc.

John Sensenig, president, developed the system in the past year using a keyboard, small screen and a variety of electronic services.

The keypad is preprogrammed and simply plugs into an existing phone line. AC electricity or a 12-volt battery can power it. The keypad periodically uses the line to check for emails, but won't interrupt if the phone is in use. Messages go to the LCD screen and can be fed to minimize use of a fax machine that prints out photos/documents and text messages.

Cost is \$199 for the keyboard and an additional \$199/year for the email service charge.

Sensenig notes that the system is popular with some Amish and Mennonite communities who object to the internet.

"Ninety-nine percent of them use this related to business," he says. The keypad is portable so people can take it wherever they retrieve phone messages and retrieve emails as well.

Other customers live in areas where the internet isn't available, or they don't want to



Preprogrammed keypad periodically uses phone line to check for email messages. It's powered by electricity or a 12-volt battery.

mess with computers and more complicated systems.

There are some limits. It doesn't connect to a printer, just a fax machine. Received attachments are limited to 2 MB.

Up to 500 printed messages/photos are allowed per month.

"Almost everyone who buys this already has a fax machine," Sensenig notes. Customers like it because it's a simple system that works.

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