

It's All In The Package

How many times do you walk through a market and stop to look at some product because the package caught your eye? It could have been the colors or the picture or the design of the package itself that made you stop to look. Packaging is a huge multi billion dollar industry and is perhaps one of the most important items when considering different ways to sell your product.

Farmers and repackers in particular are faced with extraordinary marketing challenges and as such, diverse packaging considerations are what most affects Wasserman Bag Co, an 86 year old company in Long Island, New York. Karen Wasserman, President, says that price used to be the driving force but today merchandisers, driven by consumer needs, are looking for new and interesting packaging ideas. New materials being manufactured domestically and abroad offer different levels of strength, breathability and durability. A bag used to be just a bag and a box used to be just a box. Today, however, the specifications have become more and more complex and technical. In particular the desire to "go green" and to prolong shelf life of produce for instance, are major issues for packaging buyers.

It's an exciting time in the business. Three generations ago, Wasserman's grandparents (on both sides) picked up used cotton, burlap

and onion bags with a horse and wagon. Today, Wasserman Bag Co. sells nationally via the internet.

Still providing used burlap and onion bags (like the old days), they have also moved on to paper, poly and mesh bags, corrugated vegetable cartons, wood crates, plastic clamshells, biodegradable and compostable trays, farmstand supplies, closing supplies, packaging machinery and more. Servicing farmers, nurseries, plumbing suppliers, hardware suppliers, ice dealers, the fishing industry, and other bag dealers, Wasserman Bag has gained momentum through watching and anticipating the changes in market trends.

Previously selling stock products, custom printed and designed items are now shipped on a regular basis. "In a fast-paced industry, such as produce, where packers may not be able to anticipate supermarket sales, we need to be able to respond to our customers immediately. We are poised to answer questions knowledgeably and to fulfill needs quickly making

our firm different from most others," Wasserman continues.

Wasserman recently redesigned its website: www.wassermanbag.com. You can also contact the company via email (wassermanbag@aol.com) or phone (516-681-5900). The mailing address is Wasserman Bag, 70 Commerce Place, Hicksville, NY 11801.

Reader Inquiry No. 121



"Swather" Zero Turn Riding Mower

Dewayne Madoll, Salol, Minn. built a powerful 5-ft. zero turn riding mower out of a Versatile swather and other salvaged parts, including a 60-in. Arts Way mower deck.

The mower is powered by the swather's original 4-cyl., 28 hp Wisconsin engine. The front caster wheels are from a Minnesota pull-type mower while the rear wheels are off a Polaris ATV.

"The rig is hydrostatic, with a zero turning radius, so even though it's big, it's very maneuverable," says Madoll. "All I bought were three belts and three pulleys. I spent only about \$300 to build it. Even a used zero turn mower would have cost \$2,500 or more."

He started with a 1950's Versatile 400 zero turn swather, which he narrowed down so the wheels would match the width of the 60-in. mower.

Madoll says mounting the mower on the swather was simple. He built a bracket on back of the mower, so he could mount it where the header had fit onto the machine. The swather's upper header mount arms are used to lift the deck.

He used part of the frame off an Owa-

tonna swather to support the mower deck.

The final step was getting power to the mower, which was originally belt-driven. Madoll added a right angle gearbox on top of the deck. The engine pto-drives the gearbox, which uses a pulley to belt-drive the deck's blades.

"I use it to mow my 2 -acre lawn. It works better than I had even hoped," says Madoll. "I can turn on a dime, and I have an excellent view of the deck in front of me. The seat is off a boat so it has a comfortable ride.

"I re-mounted the engine's muffler to deflect heat away from the driver. I use the steering levers off a Sears Craftsman riding mower to turn, and a foot-operated peg to hydraulically raise or lower the deck.

"I happened to have a gallon of leftover Allis Chalmers paint so I painted the ma-



chine Allis orange."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dewayne Madoll, 52226 350th St., Salol, Minn. 56756 (ph 218 463-2647).