Combine Converted To Front-End Bale Loader

Val Siddoway of Laketown, Utah runs a cow-calf operation and grows lots of hay. To load bales onto trucks, he converted an IH 815 hydrostatic combine into a bale fork-equipped loader that can pick up and stack 10 small square bales at a time.

"I built it because I couldn't justify the cost of a new loader tractor," says Siddoway. "I used mostly salvaged materials to build it. My total cost was less than $2,000.

"I drop the bales on the ground behind the baler and later use a self-propelled New Holland bale wagon to pick them up and unload the bales in stacks. During the winter, I use the combine hay loader to load the bales from the stacks onto a truck – an old World War II 2 1/2-ton, 6-WD army truck – for feeding on pasture."

He got the combine from a neighbor and removed the threshing parts, leaving the engine, cab, transmission, and running gear intact. He used 8-in. channel iron to reinforce the combine's frame. Then he repositioned the cab and engine to make room for the bale fork. The cab, originally offset to the side, was remounted to the center of the machine. The engine, which originally sat on top of the combine along with the hydrostatic drive and hydraulic pump, was remounted on back.

Then he bought an old, heavy-duty front-end loader at a salvage yard and welded in new material to lengthen it by 2 ft., so that it would raise high enough to load bales onto trucks.

To build the bale fork he copied a commercial model but made it much heavier. "I'm in the repair business, and over the years I've had to fix way too many bale forks because they were built too light," says Siddoway. He used 4-in. steel tubing to build the shafts that support the teeth, which he bought from a New Holland dealer. The teeth are arranged in 4 rows and are spaced 1 ft. apart.

The bale fork is attached to a large rectangular steel plate that pins onto the loader arms. By activating a hydraulic cylinder, the entire bale fork can be rotated 90 degrees to the left or right. Siddoway cut the track-rotating mechanism off an old World War II Japanese army tank and welded it to the center of the bale fork, where a hydraulic cylinder rotates the bale fork.

"I wanted a rotating bale fork because I stack bales on the truck lengthwise and crosswise in alternate layers," explains Siddoway. "With a conventional bale fork I would have to change directions with the loader. I can pick up a load of hay, back up to the truck, and then rotate the fork so I don't have to turn around all the time."

The bale fork's teeth are opened and closed by a single hydraulic cylinder. Another cylinder tilts the bale fork up or down, and another raises and lowers the loader.

He says the bale fork has twice as many teeth as most commercial models, "so it's sure to pick up all the bales. On most commercial bale forks, the teeth are spaced farther apart and don't always grab the bales securely."

The loader is raised and lowered by a pair of 4-in. hydraulic cylinders. "It's built much heavier than conventional loaders. After repairing a lot of loaders over the years I knew I wanted something heavy," says Siddoway.

The combine came equipped with diamond tread tires on front. "I like that the tires don't leave deep ruts in the ground. However, they also don't have much traction so I installed chains on the drive tires, which really help when it's wet," says Siddoway, who also added wheel weights on back of the rig and filled the tires with fluid.

Bale handling forks have a pivot point at center that allows Siddoway to stack bales lengthwise and crosswise for a more stable load.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Val Siddoway, Falula Farms, Inc., P.O. Box 57, Laketown, Utah 84038 (ph 435 946-3321).

Tool Helps Handle Electric Fence Posts

"I made it to help with electric fencing for rotational grazing," says inventor Steve Rodgers about a new post handling tool he came up with. "I use smooth, inexpensive fiberglass posts to make grazing paddocks. I move them frequently and found that getting the posts into the ground could be difficult at times and would hurt my hands, especially when the soil is dry and hard.

"My post supplier recommends using a hammer to pound the posts into hard soil, and they include plastic caps to prevent damage to the post. But that process is inconvenient at best, plus the caps are small and can be easily lost. Pulling the posts out later can be difficult and hard on your hands."

The 6-in. long Post Grip 'R tool is made of lightweight aluminum alloy with a hollow knob handle at one end and a deep, tapered notch at the other end.

To remove a post, you slip the notch over the post and pull up on the tool while grabbing the top of the post with your other hand to keep it steady.

To put a post in, you simply place the hollow knob over the top of the post and use your body weight to press down.

Rodgers says the tool is intended for use with 3/8-in. dia. fiberglass posts, but will also work with 5/16 through 1/2-in. dia. posts.

"The hollow knob provides a large, rounded area for your hand to grip. In dry ground, I search for a crack to push the post into and so far I've never needed to pound a post in, although you could use a soft mallet with the tool," he notes.

Sells for $10.99 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Steve Rodgers, Heritage Machine Works, Inc., 3268 – 320th St., Wellman, Iowa 52356 (ph 319 646-2989 or cell 319 430-3917; srodgers@netins.net; www.eatwild.com).

The 6-in. long Post Grip'R tool has a hollow knob handle at one end and a deep, tapered notch at other end.

To put a post in, you place hollow knob over top of post and push it in. Notch on other end of tool, is used to pull posts.

Slick Coat Makes Surfaces Slippery, Keeps Mud Off

"I've been fighting mud all my life," says Aime DuFault, Red River Coatings about his products that successfully repel even the heaviest wet clay soils in the Red River Valley. DuFault, who formulated Slick Film and Slick Coat, has applied them to packer wheels on air seeders, sugar beet harvesters, beet trucks and even truck and tractor duals.

"The mud doesn't stick," he says. "I've seen packer wheels on planters plug up with mud when going through a wet spot or pothole in the spring. They can spin the tractor out. With Slick Coat on the packer wheels, they go through any kind of mud without a problem."

DuFault says customers use the products any place mud would normally collect, as well as other surfaces that get covered with grime. He has seen it used between duals on trucks or on older tractor duals with narrow spacing between them. Where mud would otherwise pack in so tight the wheels would spin out, they stay clean.

"Customers tell me they even put Slick Film on their boats, and it keeps the slime off," says DuFault. "They can go faster or even if they don't, the boat takes less fuel without the slime."

DuFault has combined water-based latex, silicone, Teflon and acrylic in two formulations for the two products. He recommends Slick Film for exterior surfaces where color is a concern. He recommends Slick Coat, which is heavier duty and contains more latex, for packer wheel-type uses and other less visible areas like truck boxes and the sides of dual tires.

"You can see the film with Slick Coat," he says. "With Slick Film, it's barely noticeable."

Slick Coat and Slick Film repel mud and work great on such things as packer wheels on planters and air seeders.

Both products are easy to apply to a clean surface, adds DuFault. "Just spray it on, and then wipe it down with a soft cotton towel or microfiber cloth that has solution on it," he says. "For a good coating on surfaces like packer wheels, I like to use a spray tip that just fogs it on. Get a good coating, and let it dry."

Slick Film and Slick Coat are available ready to use in 1 and 5-gal. containers. They are also available in concentrated formulations to be mixed with 9 parts water. A 1-gal. ready-to-use container of either is priced at $62.50. The one pint concentrate is priced at $30.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Red River Coatings, 703 Pacific Ave., Argyle, Minn. 56713 (ph 218 437-8512; cell 218 686-8453; rrc@redrivercoatings.net; www.