**Harold and Dale Scherer found that adding a baffle to the end of their power rake helps form perfect windrows, even when raking at high speeds.**

# Baffles Help Get More Raking Done

Father and son hay harvesters Harold and Dale Scherer like their power rakes. The two men bale 20,000 to 30,000 square bales and several hundred large round bales each year. However at high speed, windrow shapes suffer. Adding a baffle to the end of the rake forms up perfect windrows, even when raking at high speed.

"We harvest 500 acres of hay a year, most of it from a lot of small undeveloped fields or partially developed lots in an industrial park," says Harold Scherer. "Companies will buy 10 acres and develop three. Instead of maintaining them, they let us plant and harvest hay, sometimes at no cost. We keep them neat and clean. Sometimes we even do the road ditches and boulevard medians."

The small fields eliminate the potential use of large rakes, so raking needs to be fast to be efficient. The Scherers opted for two, hydraulic-powered, side rakes from New Holland.

"You can adjust the speed to match the tractor and, by adding extra teeth on the bars, I don't leave enough hay for a mouse to nest," says Harold. "However, if you go too fast, the windrow spreads out."

The Scherers had an idea for a baffle to stop the hay and drop it in the windrow. When they found rolls of rubber belting along the side of the interstate, they had what they needed.

"We have a local welder, Steve Paarmann, who can fabricate just about anything you want," says Harold. "We sketched out a frame the belting could hang from that could be folded up out of the way when it wasn't needed."

The baffle frame is made from 1 1/4-in. steel tubing and pins to end of the rake frame. Strips of angle iron are attached to the top and bottom of the 20 by 30-in. sheets of belting. When unfolded for raking, thumb screws make it easy to adjust the baffle angle.

"Before we added the baffles, we could only rake about 4 to 5 acres per hour," says Harold. "With them in place, we are above 10 acres an hour when conditions are right."

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# Old Furnace Blower Makes Great "Shop Fan"

When Galen Reichart replaced a 30-year-old forced air heating system in his house, he removed the squirrel cage fan from the furnace blower and converted it into a shop fan that runs off any 110-volt outlet.

"It works as well as any commercial fan, and I spent almost nothing to make the conversion," says Reichart. "I live in town and use the fan in my basement shop. I also use it every summer when we hold our Lions Club bingo stand at the local fairgrounds. The weather is usually real hot, and I use the fan to blow air through the area where we're working. It moves a lot of air."

The squirrel cage fan came with a small 2-speed electric motor on one side and was open on the other "intake" side. He stripped away any extra metal and added a steel rod axle and a pair of 6-in. plastic wheels on the back side of the fan housing. He bent some conduit pipe to form a handle and screwed it onto the fan housing just above the wheels. For safety, he used a lid off a 16-qt. porcelain canning pot to block the open side of the fan. He also clipped a plastic dish rack on front.

He attached a 3-ft. long power cord to the fan's wiring box that plugs into a longer extension cord. "I wanted to run the fan at low speed only, so an electrician showed me how to do that. He also told me which wires to hook up to the power cord and which connections to tape up," says Reichart.

**Galen Reichart converted an old furnace blower into this shop fan that runs off any 110-volt outlet.**

"The fan was very dirty and the fins were coated with caked-on dust, so I used an air hose and scrub brushes to clean everything off," he notes.

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**The Hay Train attaches to the baler tongue, allowing you to tow the rake in-line behind the baler on the road and off to the side in the field.**

# The "Hay Train": New Way To Rake And Bale In One Pass

You can rake and bale at the same time with this new baler attachment that lets you pull an existing rake next to your baler and turn swathed hay into windrows as you bale.

The Hay Train attaches to the baler tongue, allowing you to tow the rake in-line behind the baler on the road and off to the side in the field. The unit is designed to pull 8, 10 and 12-wheel ground-driven rakes.

"It eliminates the need for a separate raking pass and turns baling hay into a one-man operation. While you're baling one windrow your rake is making another windrow," says Greg Seifert, Premier Augers & Attachments, Ft. Wayne, Ind. "It saves time, labor and fuel because you don't have to pay someone to rake in front of you."

The attachment consists of a 20-ft. long steel boom that rides on a dolly wheel and bolts onto the baler's tongue. The rake hooks up to a drawbar on back of the boom. A pivot pin at the front of the boom allows the rake to pivot away from the baler to the side or back behind the baler.

The unit narrows up for transport by use of hydraulic cylinders that fold the boom to the side of the baler and allow the rake to be towed directly behind. Disconnecting the rake from the baler is as simple as pulling a pin and unhooking a pair of quick-disconnect hoses.

"It's a simple, affordably priced unit," says Seifert. "There's no need to buy a new rake or a complicated attachment with a lot of moving parts that goes between the tractor and baler.

**Unit is designed to pull 8, 10 and 12-wheel ground-driven rakes.**

The rake trails off to the side but also back a bit like a disc mower, so as you're coming to the end of the field and turning, the rake will turn right with you.

"The dolly wheel allows the boom to float up and down independent of the tractor and baler in hilly terrain and on terraces. The boom attaches using existing bolt holes on the baler. We try to eliminate any modifications to the baler, because when you're spending $35,000 on a baler you don't want to have to drill holes in it or weld on it."

According to Seifert, a variety of mounting brackets are available to accommodate a wide range of balers. Optional hydraulic kits are available for multi-function rakes that not only raise up or down hydraulically but also can be hydraulically adjusted for width. "The Hay Train can also be custom-designed for rakes that require a pto," notes Seifert.

The Hay Train sells for about $5,000.

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# "No Slip" T-Post Puller

Ricky Plunkett, Albany, Ky., came up with a "no slip" T-post puller that lets him use a loader bucket or bumper jack to pull steel T-posts out of the ground without slipping.

"It's a simple idea but it works a lot better than wrapping a chain around the post," says Plunkett.

He welded 2 lengths of 2-in. box tubing together. A 4-in. length of tubing is positioned horizontally and serves as a "handle", while a 3-in. length of tubing is positioned vertically and fits over the top of the post. A 12-in. length of 3/8-in. chain with a hook is bolted to the handle.

To pull a post, Plunkett slides the 3-in. length of tubing over the top of the post and hooks the chain to the loader bucket or bumper jack.

"The T-post's notches catch on the lip of the box tubing and cause the post to pull straight up," says Plunkett. "The only problem is that sometimes the puller will twist around as I'm pulling it up, and then the puller can slip off the post. So, after I built my first model I made a design change. I cut a 1/4-in. wide slot from top to bottom down the center of the tubing. Now the post catches inside the slot and keeps the puller from twisting around. It doesn't slip at all any more and works 100 percent better than the original design."

**"No slip" T-post puller lets Ricky Plunkett use a loader bucket or bumper jack to pull posts out of the ground without slipping.**

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