Deere To Introduce Combine-Pulled Baler

Deere & Company will soon be joining AGCO and others in the crop residue collection business. According to Hillco Technologies, Deere will be introducing a Hillco-designed, Single Pass Round Bale (SPRB) system at farm shows later this year.

Hillco says the SPRB system offers superior quality feed stock, reduced field passes, minimal harvest impact, reduced equipment and manpower, low nutrient removal and additional revenue.

Reportedly, the SPRB will attach to the back of Deere S670, S680 or S690 combines with ProDrive transmissions. A hydrostatic pump installed on the combine engine's output shaft powers a high torque bent axis motor on the trailing Deere 569 baler.

A spout unit on the combine collects corn fodder from the straw chopper via a vaned tailboard. The fodder is blown to an accumulator riding on its own axle and mated directly to the bale chamber. Three sensors track the amount of material in the accumulator bin as it fills. When the bin is full, the baler is engaged and a conveyer and adjustable feed rolls move fodder smoothly into the bale chamber. A gear pump driven off the straw chopper powers the conveyer and feed rolls.

Once the bin is empty, the baler disengages until the bin has again filled and the process repeats until the bale reaches the desired size. At this point, the bale is wrapped and ejected while the bin refills. While the baler can be paused by the operator, all other activities are automatic, leaving the operator to concentrate on the combine.

The baler with its accumulator bin is connected to the combine via a long tongue. When the baler is disconnected from the combine and the vaned tailboard is in the down position, fodder is spread on the field.

According to Hillco, the system is designed to collect about 20 to 25 percent of total residue in a field. This returns the majority of crop biomass to the field to protect the soil and return nutrients and organic matter.

The company suggests that because the stalks are left standing and only some cobs and leaves are collected, bales are less likely to roll on hillsides. Bales are larger and denser (1,700 lbs.) than with conventional post harvest raking and baling. This means they will grind easier. Bales will be much cleaner than with raking, containing significantly less dirt and roots.

Hillco says installation will take about 50 hrs. total. Mounting the blower and electrical and hydraulic connections to the combine will take about 30 hrs., with another 20 devoted to the baler. Company sources suggest the baler connection will likely be permanent.

Deere's Single Pass Round Bale system attaches to the back of Deere S670, S680 and S690 combines equipped with ProDrive transmissions.

Check out the SPRB system at www.farmshow.com

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hillco Technologies, Inc., 1010 1st Ave., Nezperce, Idaho 83543 (ph 208 937-2461; toll free 800 937-2461; info@hillcotechnologies.com; www.hillcotechnologies.com).

Demand Grows For Non-GMO Seed

Seed companies large, medium and small report that demand for non-GMO seed is growing, and it's not all driven by anti-GMO sentiment. Masters Choice, headquartered in Illinois and marketed in 48 states, is one example, says Scott Harris, sales manager.

"The reason farmers are going non-GMO is financial rather than emotional or philosophical," says Harris. "They are asking why they should pay a premium for traits that now have resistant weeds and insects. The premiums being paid for non-GMO grain also play a role. In some cases, farmers are saving $85 per bag of seed and getting a 90¢/bu. premium on corn and a $2/bu. premium on soybeans."

Daniel Jones, manager at DuPont Pioneer Food & Industry Markets, says non-GMO seed demand is up for corn and soybeans. He cites stable to slightly expanded export demand, as well as some increased domestic demand.

"Increased domestic demand appears to be in reaction to potential biotech food labeling in the U.S.," says Jones. "Some farmers seem to be testing going back to a portion or all of their production using traditional non-biotech seeds. And some increased demand is due to the increase in organic acres."

One reason even conventional growers are comfortable switching back to non-GMO seed is equal or better yield. Scott Odle, Spectrum Seeds, reports that his non-GMO hybrids produced yields as good or better than GMO hybrids.

Bruce Ceranske, co-owner, Legacy Seeds, reports slightly stronger demand for non-GMO seed, if not as much as expected.

"Given lower commodity prices, we thought farmers would back off on added trait hybrids," says Ceranske. "We thought we would see more demand. We sell a fair amount of conventional hybrids and varieties, but we still have plenty available."

Genesys Grain Genetics announced non-GMO seed availability this past fall. Co-founder Jeff Littrell says demand is about what was projected, though he too expected more growers to switch due to trait failure and low margins. He does report increased interest from buyers of non-GMO grain.

"We are hearing from major food companies who are looking for non-GMO grain to buy," says Littrell.

Cheerios from General Mills and Grape-Nuts from Post are now GMO-free, with Post considering making more cereals with non-GMO ingredients. The Non-GMO Project reports more than 14,000 food products with sales totaling more than $5 billion have been certified GMO-free.

Meat giant Tyson and Perdue Farms are reportedly investigating marketing non-GMO fed poultry. Multi-state Murray's Chicken is already offering certified non-GMO chicken through east coast supermarkets. Cargill, ADM and a host of smaller grain companies pay premiums for non-GMO grain. Even an ethanol plant in one area has had to match premiums offered at local elevators in order to get corn, reports Harris. He says livestock producers are also demanding non-GMO feed.

"Livestock producers planting our non-GMO seed say they are getting improved herd health and higher production when feeding non-GMO grain," says Harris. "Dairies report increased milk and higher protein and fat, and swine producers report improved rate of gain and feed efficiency."

Harris reports Masters Choice has seen exponential growth over the past 8 years with non-GMO seed accounting for 70 percent of yearly sales.

Odle reports sales of non-GMO Spectrum Seeds nearly doubling annually since the company started. Spectrum now markets its seed in more than 30 states.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Masters Choice, 3010 State Route 146 East, Anna, Ill. 62906 (ph 866 444-1044; info@seedcorn.com; www.seedcorn.com); or Legacy Seeds, Inc., 290 Depot St., P.O. Box 68, Scandinavia, Wis. 54977 (ph 866 791-6390; www.legacyseeds.com); or Spectrum Premium Genetics, 220 S. Main St., P.O. Box 7, Linden, Ind. 47955 (ph 866 400-9468; www.spectrumseed.com); or Genesys Grain Genetics, 2510 Hwy. 63 NE, P.O. Box 157, Stewartville, Minn. 55976 (ph 507 533-7855; www.genesysgrain.com); or DuPont Pioneer, 7100 NW 62nd Ave., P.O. Box 1150, Johnston, Iowa 50131 (www.pioneer.com).

Paver Placer uses an air compressor to create vacuum to lift and place heavy stones.

Vacuum Tool Lifts Heavy Landscape Blocks, Pavers

When David Morin ran into trouble placing a new type of paver in his hardscaping business, he knew whom to ask. His dad Tom is an engineer with a background in pneumatics, vacuum and process engineering. He also has a company making micro pneumatic seed handling tools.

"David had a huge job installing 56-lb. pavers," recalls Tom Morin. "He brought me a bathroom plunger and asked me to work on a way to pick them up using a vacuum. In 30 minutes I had it working. Now we sell one or two Paver Placers a day to contractors."

The concept is simple. The Paver Placer uses a standard air compressor (minimum 5.2 cfm @ 125 psi) to create vacuum in a line attached to a handle or grip. The user sets the head on the paver or stone, creating a tight suction seal, then lifts and sets the stone in place. A Venturi trigger on the handle provides a quick release.

Morin makes multiple heads and handles. The smallest is ideal for placing bricks and small tiles, while the largest is a 2-person tool that can easily lift a 240-lb. paver. The handles for the larger one and the 2-person Paver Placers are waist high, reducing back pressure and fatigue. Vacuum pipe extensions are available to adapt the handle height to the worker.

"Our customers tell us the Paver Placer cuts install time by 30 to 40 percent and reduces injuries," says Morin. "Safety issues are nearly gone with this tool. You're not messing up fingers, knees or your back. It's like going to a health club and lifting weights."

A Venturi trigger on handle provides a quick release of stone.

The 1-person tool ($469) is recommended for a maximum 70-lb. load. The 2-person tool ($1,489) can be equipped with memory foam heads that lock onto rough surfaces.

See Paver Placers in action at www.farmshow.com

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