How To Combine Corn Without A Cornhead

Wheat and small grain farmers can try growing corn without buying an expensive cornhead. Flexxifinger Corn Harvest Pans cost a fraction of cornheads and pop off in minutes if a small grain crop is ready to harvest.

"Farmers like being able to try growing corn without investing in all the equipment," says Dave Dietrich, Flexxifinger QD Industries, Inc. "One customer installed our Corn Harvest Pans on his two 45-ft. MacDon headers. At $300 per linear foot, he figured he saved about $250,000 compared to buying two cornheads."

Instead of row units with snouts, Flexxifinger offers mild steel pans that are just over 9 in. wide at the cutterbar and about 3 ft. long. Each pan is centered every foot on the header to guide stalks into the cutter bar and make sure ears and the cut stalk move into the auger or onto the canvas.

"The Corn Harvest Pans take only about 30 min. to remove or replace once our quick-detach mechanism is installed," says Dietrich. "They open up options in row spacing too," he adds. "We don't care if rows are spaced 15, 20 or 30 in., or if the crop is solid-seeded."

Regardless of row spacing, Dietrich advises cutting the corn at an angle between 20° and 45°. This ensures the crop is spread out across the entire cutterbar, not bunching up in a few spots.

"The angle is largely determined by how rough the field is," says Dietrich. "Cutting height is also optional."

If the residue is to be baled, the cutter bar is set low. If residue is to be left to trap snow over winter, it can be cut higher.

Flexxifinger did limited testing of the concept with select customers in 2012. This year Dietrich hopes to have as many as 150 sets of Corn Harvest Pans in the field. Crews are traveling to install systems that initially can take as much as half a day with four people working on a 45-ft. header.

"The $300 price per linear foot includes the quick-detach mechanisms," says Dietrich. "They work with most of our crop lifter systems as well."

Dietrich says the Pans are available direct from the company this year. In the future, they will be offered through the Flexxifinger dealer network.

"We believe they will work on any combine with a 3-in. guard system. If they don't, we plan to make any needed modifications," says Dietrich. "We aren't saying they will replace cornheads. We don't know how they would work in a 200 to 300 bu./acre field, but we do believe they have a fit in areas where the yields aren't that heavy."

To see the Flexxifinger Corn Harvest Pans in action, check out the video at www.farmshow.com.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Flexxifinger QD Industries Inc., 501 1st Ave. E., P.O. Box 1599, Assiniboia, Sask., Canada S0H 0B0 (ph 306 642-4555; toll free in Canada 800 925-1510; toll free in U.S. 800 544-8512; communications@flexxifinger.com; www.flexxifinger.com).

Flexxifinger Corn Harvest Pans let wheat and small grain farmers harvest corn without buying an expensive cornhead. They pop off in minutes to switch back to small grains.

Pans are just over 9 in. wide at the cutterbar and about 3 ft. long. They guide stalks into the cutter bar and make sure ears and the cut stalk move into the auger or onto the canvas.

"Made It Myself" Cornhead Built To Harvest Faster

Ross Bishop hopes his home-built IH cornhead will run faster than the old head on his 2166 International combine. He also expects it to leave corn residue in better shape. The "made it myself" head contains parts of three International 38-in., 4-row cornheads.

"Prior to 1997, I ran an International 1066, 6-row cornhead on 30-in. rows, and it chopped stalks up nicely," explains Bishop. "When I went to 20-in. rows, I built an 8-row cornhead to match out of two 30-in., 4-row Deere cornheads. It couldn't take crop at more than 4 mph, though the combine had more capacity and it had no chopping rolls at all. No-tilling into the fields in the spring was a disaster."

So, Bishop spent an additional $4,000 to $5,000 on Deere rolls and knives. That helped, but it wasn't the answer. After some delay for health issues, he finally decided to start over, this time using all International parts.

"I extended the main frame on my old 1066, 30-in. 6-row from 12 ft. to 13 ft., 8 in. and extended the auger by 13 in. on either end," recalls Bishop. "Getting the auger properly measured and welded together was one of the most difficult challenges of the process."

Bishop bought new Calmer 20-in. header snouts and remounted his existing 30-in. row units. Here he ran into his second major challenge. The row units had 10-tooth sprockets on gathering chains. When condensed to 20-in. spacing, the neighboring chains jammed, and a shaft broke on one. Bishop called Calmer founder Marion Calmer, thinking he would need to order Calmer sprockets and shafts. Doing so would require tearing the gearboxes apart. Calmer suggested simply trying an 8-tooth sprocket.

"Deere had an 8-tooth that fit my existing smooth shafts with some modification," says Bishop. "I had to drill holes through the sprocket to match the roll-pin hole in the International shaft."

He also welded a notch on the round shafts so the hexagon-shaped sprockets would fit tighter. Another problem was matching the sprocket width to the shaft. He found that shaving 1/4 in. off the bottom part that protects the gearbox was sufficient.

The cost of parts for the International 20-in. 8-row cornhead came to around $10,000. Over time, however, working his way up from 6-row to 8-row he spent about $50,000. Among other things, he had to replace tires and add duals for more stability on the road.

To see how Bishop assembled his cornhead, check out the video at www.farmshow.com.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ross Bishop, 1930 Western Ave., Jackson, Wis. 53037 (ph 414 531-8531; rbishop@milwpc.com).

Ross Bishop's home-built IH cornhead contains parts from three International 38-in., 4-row cornheads. He hopes it will run faster than the old head on his International 2166 combine.

He bought new Calmer 20-in. header snouts and then remounted his existing 30-in. row units.

Leaf Springs Turned Into Bucket Forks

Leaf springs from old trucks can be used to make inexpensive, loader-mounted forks, says Granville Yates, Jr., Cumberland Furnace, Tenn.

Each fork consists of 2 springs sandwiched together – a shorter one on the bottom and a longer one on top. The springs are 22 1/2 in. long but extend only 12 in. in front of the bucket. They're pinned to steel brackets that Yates made by welding a metal plate between 2 pieces of angle iron. The brackets are welded to a length of 5-in. wide, 3/8-in. thick angle iron that bolts on across the inside width of the bucket. A short length of 2-in. angle iron on front of each bracket slips under the bucket's lip.

"I've used it for many years to pick up big logs and to haul tree limbs and brush, and it works great," says Yates. "The springs are mounted concave up which allows me to cradle and stabilize a log up to 20 in. or so in diameter and still keep the load as close to the tractor as possible. I can remove the entire assembly by removing just 6 bolts.

"To pick up a log I tilt the forks down and slide them under the log, then I tilt the bucket back up and the fork tips rise, cradling and stabilizing the log for lifting."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Granville Yates, Jr., 1135 48 N., Cumberland Furnace, Tenn. 37051 (ph 615 789-4265).

Granville Yates used leaf springs from old trucks to make inexpensive, loader-mounted forks. Each fork consists of 2 springs sandwiched together.