Molded poly straps bolt together to form a hoop that surrounds the rake wheel, providing support that stops the teeth from bending or breaking.

Hoop disperses pressure from ground contact over 8 or 9 different tines instead of just one. As a result, there's less vibration and less chance the tines will break.

Poly Hoops Keep Hay Rake Teeth From Breaking

By Bill Gergen, Senior Editor

If you're tired of replacing broken or bent teeth on V or side delivery hay rakes, you'll be interested in these new molded poly straps that bolt together to form a hoop to surround the rake wheel.

The VRTS System stands for V-Rake Teeth Support and was invented by Reg Roth, who ranches and farms near Wolbach, Neb.

"The hoops provide support that allows them to work as designed with minimal bending or breaking. It helps on everything from alfalfa to corn stalks," says Roth. "The rake actually performs better and leaves windrows that are more uniform. You can apply more down pressure while raking heavy windrows or raking on uneven ground.

"We developed the system because we rake and bale grass hay, alfalfa, rye, forage sorghum, corn stalks, wheat straw and anything else that will make feed for our cattle feeding operation. We had to replace a lot of rake teeth, which cost us time and money."

The straps are made of high density polyethylene and measure 16 1/4 in. long by 3/4 in. wide. They have a series of holes in them and bolt together with a smooth-shank shoulder bolt through slots at the ends of each strap. Once all the straps are bolted together you thread them onto the rake wheel, one tooth for each hole. When fully threaded on the wheel, install the last bolt to complete the circle. Repeat until the system is installed on all wheels.

It takes 10 or 12 bolted-together straps per wheel to form the hoop, depending on the rake's make and model and the number of tines on the wheel.

"They work by dispersing pressure from ground contact over 8 or 9 different tines instead of just one. As a result there's less tine vibration and less chance the tines will break," says Roth. "The slots allow the hoop to 'float' as it moves with the wheel."

Rakes with 40 tines per wheel require 10 straps. Rakes with 48 tines per wheel require 12 straps.

"If your rake has missing or bent teeth, we recommend that you replace or straighten the teeth before installing the VRTS System. Failure to do this will compromise the effectiveness of the system and may cause unnecessary wear on the straps," says Roth.

The straps are available in yellow or black. They sell for $97.50 to $117 per wheel plus S&H, depending on rake model.

Go to FARMSHOW.COM to see a video of the VRTS system in action.

The high density poly straps are 16 1/4 in. long.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Reg Roth, VRTS System, Inc., 2032 Brady Rd., Wolbach, Neb. 68882 or visit their shipping facility at 1404 Hwy. 281, St. Paul, Neb. (ph 855 754-4011; cell 308 390-1411; vrtssystem@yahoo.com; www.vrtssystem.com).

Plastic-Wrap Machine For Small Square Bales

"Farmers who bale small squares can now wrap them in plastic the way other farmers wrap big round or square bales," says inventor and manufacturer John Miller of J Miller Ag Equipment. "We started producing this machine because many farmers told us they wanted to make haylage with the small square baler they already owned."

J Miller's machine compresses 8 small bales together from the top and sides, then pushes them through a 4 by 4-ft. chamber with a 6-ft. by 32-in. dia. cylinder that's attached to a pusher panel. As the compressed bales go through the chamber, 3 layers of 30-in. wide plastic film wraps them tightly, creating an airtight seal. It'll preserve silage quality hay for up to 12 mos. of outdoor storage.

"This machine works just like the one we have for wrapping round bales," Miller says. "The bales are stacked 4 high and 4 wide in the compression chamber, which is about 6 ft. wide and 4 1/2 ft. high."

The Bale Wrapper rides on two wheels, weighs 3 tons, stands almost 8 ft. tall, is just over 8 ft. wide and 14 ft., 7 in. long. An aluminum 6-ft. conveyor that's 20 in. wide with a rubber belt is optional. The conveyor is adjustable for different wagon heights and swings to the side to allow a wagon to drive alongside the wrapper for unloading.

The wrapper is powered by a 1,000 rpm pto shaft that runs a 40 gpm hydraulic pump at 2,000 psi. The pump operates 5 cylinders, the film stretcher ring and the conveyor.

The machine is ideal for smaller dairies that only use 4 to 12 bales a day or more. A person can cut 3 or 4 bales out and take them into the barn with a wagon, or the plastic can be cut so a group of bales can be transported with any type of loader. The rest of the stack stays wrapped tight and protected from the weather."

Miller recommends not opening the bag until the hay is fully fermented, which is usually 4 to 6 weeks after baling. J Miller Ag has been building bale wrappers for 20 years and says it's a real good niche for his business. They also manufacture in-line round and big square wrappers as well as individual round and big square wrappers. "We started just serving farmers around our area in Pennsylvania, and then it grew to customers in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Maine. Now we're hearing from people in the Midwest," he says.

"Customers like the fact that our equipment is built by a small business," says Miller. "They like the fact that we build quality into everything, we offer service after the sale, and we stand behind what we manufacture." The company also repairs and services other brands of bale wrappers and offers replacement film stretchers on different machines.

The model MW601 Small Square Bale Wrapper with all options is priced at $27,545. Call for pricing without the optional equiment. The machine is available by custom order direct from J Miller Ag. Shipping costs are extra.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, J Miller Ag Equipment, 54 Christiana Pike, Christiana, Penn. 17509 (ph 610 593-6112).

Bale Wrapper lets you wrap small square bales in plastic to make haylage. Bales can be loaded into machine using a 6-ft. rubber-belted conveyor (optional).

Machine compresses 8 small bales together from the top and sides, then pushes them through a 4-ft. sq. chamber which leads to the wrapper.