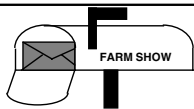


Reader Letters



(Continued from previous page)

It's a safe, flameless source of heat that's maintenance free with no moving parts to wear out. Average operating cost is less than 15 cents per hour. Built-in safety devices prevent overheating and any possibility of electrical damage. The only limitation is that at 44 degrees below zero liquid propane ceases to vaporize. If the propane tank approaches that temperature, the heater will lose its fuel source and won't work.

Sells for \$495. (Donald Schafer, president, Hilton Cordless Heaters, Box 304, Esko, Minn. 55733 ph 218 624-3364)

The only gripe I have with the Deere 7800 tractor we bought last year is that the grille is really chintzy. It just doesn't stand up like the older, heavier-built ones I'm used to.

Last fall when we were unloading our combine on-the-go into a grain cart we pull with the tractor, every corn cob thrown out the back that hit the grille seemed to put a big dent in it.

Naturally, I want to keep the tractor look-



ing nice so I came up with the "Grille Guard," a protective cage over the grille to ensure it does. It consists of a three-sided frame constructed out of 1-in. sq. tubing. It's covered with heavy-duty 1-in. sq., 1/4-in thick wire to act as a barrier between the grille and cobs or whatever else gets thrown at it. The cage fits over the front of the grille and wraps around the sides. Two 15-in. long angle iron arms at the bottom of the cage bolt to the tractor's suitcase weight frame.

It could probably be designed to fit any make or model tractor besides the Deere 7000 series. Our denting problems stopped cold, helping to protect our investment. (Randall Moore, 330 Chesapeake Rd., Colchester, Ill. 62326; ph 309 776-4110).

I make the only kit for smoothing out tire tracks behind center pivots that'll last the life of the irrigation system. No seizing up, no rusting out. Period.

My "Track Wiper" kit consist of a pair of heavy gauge steel, 20-in. dia. disk blades that are plated with zinc chromate which lasts as long as galvanizing. The V-shaped angle of the blades is preset to cover the tracks of any size tire. It's easy to reverse position of the blades when you reverse direction of



your center pivot. A cable with adjustment chain attached to the tower allows you to position the blades so they just skim the soil surface behind the tire to smooth out tracks. The kit features self-lubricating bearings so they never require maintenance.

I've been building the "Track Wiper" kit for a year and it's become quite popular in western Kansas. It sells for \$240, including blades, connectors, cable, and chain. (Mark Rehme, Rehme Manufacturing, Rt. 1, Box 113A, Ellinwood, Kan. 67526; ph 800 324-8032 or 316 564-3289).

We thought FARM SHOW readers might be interested in our little Deere "half track". We depend on it to pull trailers around our nursery, often in very wet conditions.

We first fitted our Deere 870 with steel tracks last year. We had them custom-built by a company previously featured in FARM SHOW (Loegering Mfg. Inc., P.O. Box 870, Casselton, N. Dak. 58012; ph 701 347-5441) which specializes in steel track systems for everything from skid steer loaders to combines. We supplied them with tire widths,



fender clearance tolerance, etc., and they produced the set of tracks, pair of axles, idlers wheels, etc., to spec for around \$6,000. I don't know how we could operate our nursery without the 870 "half track". The biggest benefit is it that it doesn't cut deep ruts in the ground when it's wet.

What's more, we even used our Deere "half track" to seed 200 to 300 acres of wheat when it was too wet to get into the fields with our 4-WD tractors and drills. We simply mounted a spin spreader on back and away we went. Not as fast as the drill, perhaps, but we're still able to seed when some farmers are not. (Angelo Spada, A&R Spada Nursery, 7251 St. Paul Hwy. NE, St. Paul. Ore. 97137; ph 503 633-2941).

Thanks for featuring my home-built electric tractor in FARM SHOW (Vol 20, No1). I've received plenty of calls about it. In fact, an Indiana farmer seems very intent on building one of his own. Meantime, I'm waiting to see if anybody's interested in buying rights to my machine.

I want to clarify one point. The article states that for mowing, the tractor's castor wheels, which reverse with drive wheels for some applications such as roto-tilling, are in front. Actually, for mowing, just as with snow blowing, drive wheels are in front. Pushing the mower deck makes it easier to get around trees, corners, etc., which would be difficult if not impossible to do pulling the mower as suggested in the article. (Peter Heide, P.O. Box 1334, Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada ROA 2A0; ph 204 326-2288).

I've eliminated moisture variations in stored corn by mounting an inexpensive bicycle mileage computer on the discharge auger shaft of my Kan-Sun Model 10-21-210 grain dryer. The problem was that the original gauge measuring grain discharge wasn't very accurate and neither was its "Moisture-Matic" control which would always overcompensate when grain flow changed, resulting in corn that was too wet or too dry.

The "Cyclecomponents" bike computer is designed to tell how many miles a bicyclist has traveled. It's battery-operated so no wiring is required. It's a simple matter of installing a magnet on the shaft. I use the readout on the bike computer to calculate how fast

the shaft is turning in relation to the amount of corn coming out of the dryer. Then I manually adjust metering to keep my corn within an acceptable moisture range of 1/2 pt.

Since I put the bike computer on my dryer I've dried 70,000 bu. of corn and have been able to maintain moisture at a consistent 14 1/2 to 14 3/4%. Before, moisture would vary anywhere from 13 1/2 to 15 1/2%, resulting in hot spots in bins, dockage at the elevator, etc.

The best part is that the bike computer cost only about \$20. You can find one at any bike shop or sporting goods store. (Larry Maiers, Maiers Farms, 1113 Yankee Ave., P.O. Box 181, Stewart, Minn. 55385; ph 612 562-2593).

Nearly 18 years ago you featured our prototype self-propelled baler for making large flat bales that measure 8 ft. sq. by 15 1/2 in. high (Vol. 2, No. 3). Bales this size dry faster and are easier to handle with our bale racks. We thought FARM SHOW readers might be interested in some of the major improve-



ments we've made in the two balers we've built since your report.

We now power the balers with a Deere 250 hp diesel with 4-W hydrostatic drive instead of 2-wheel rear drive. The machines have 12-ft. wide pickups and a new feed system, both of which increase capacity, the latter by 50%. We're the only baler manufacturer in the U.S. to use a precise German knotting system that ties the flat bales with 10 twines spaced every 9 in. Every function on the baler is now computer controlled from the cab. We've also equipped the balers with both left and right side counter systems for a more controlled, uniform bale length.

These balers are used primarily to make ryegrass straw bales that weigh 850 lbs. In ryegrass, the balers do 20 tons per hour. We compact these bales and export them to Japan where there's a hot market for them. They're used to supplement rice straw in the country to satisfy the rapidly growing livestock industry's need for feed.

We also use the machines to make 1,200-lb. hay bales.

We'll custom build them for anyone who's interested. Price is \$175,000. (Steffen Systems Inc., 8045 State St., Salem, Ore. 97301; ph 503 399-9941, fax 371-4779).

Thanks, FARM SHOW, for featuring my fence wire dispenser (Vol. 20, No. 1).

Response from all over North America has been overwhelming. So much so that I'm in the process of obtaining the necessary legal and manufacturing information to produce the wire dispenser commercially.

I'm keeping a file of all interested parties who supply a name and address with their inquiries. (Warren O. Drye, 15000 Shopton Road West, Charlotte, N.C. 28278-7609; ph 704 588-1251, fax 6850).

I've had a lot of trouble getting information on "snail ranching" from U. S. Snail, Omaha, Neb., a company featured in FARM SHOW (Vol. 19, No. 4). I've tried repeatedly to get in touch with them at the phone number you printed but I always get an answering machine or service and my messages went unanswered. Recently, I spotted a small ad for U.S. Snail in "Popular Mechanics" which had a different phone number. I tried that and still got only a recording and no reply. Any suggestions? (Del Unruh, Box 1535, Stetler, Alberta, Canada T0C 2L0)

Editor's note: U.S. Snail has established a new communications center with 24-hour fax service (402 894-2640) and 24-hour voice mail (402 894-2592). You can also write to U.S. Snail at 9755 Q Street, Suite 226, Omaha, Neb. 68127. Founder Shane Farnsworth says he and his staff are working hard to catch up on a huge backlog of orders.

You might also try the Snail Club of America. Its founder, Ralph Tucker, has been raising snails for 16 years and says he'd be happy to answer any questions FARM SHOW readers have. You can reach Tucker and the Snail Club of America at 5085 N. Del Mar Ave., #G, Fresno, Calif. 93704 (ph 209 225-5540).

A couple friends of mine have been killed over the years when their tractors tipped over backward on them as they pulled equipment with their 3-pt hitches in the up position. I've had a close call myself.

That's why I spent well over 500 hours and some \$8,000 developing and patenting a device that could prevent these needless accidents right where they start. I call it my Power Hitch Relief System and I entered diagrams of it in the "Inventor's Corner" at the recent Northwest Agricultural Show at Portland, Ore., where it drew a lot of praise. Now, I hope somehow to get tractor manufacturers to install the system as standard equipment on all tractors and A-frame crawlers.

Although it may sound complicated, the device is really quite simple. It's a weighted pendulum that releases hydraulic pressure to the 3-pt. hitch before the tractor reaches an angle critical enough to cause it to tip over backwards. It works this way: if the front of the tractor comes up too much for safety, a gravity weight swings over to activate the 3 pt. hydraulic valve, releasing fluid pressure and returning the 3 pt. from its up to down position, letting the front end of the tractor down. A ratchet device keeps the hydraulic valve open until it's manually reset by the operator. The device requires few parts and could be mounted in any housing portion of the tractor such as the rear differential or transmission. I'm convinced this device could do for tractor safety what air bags have done for automotive safety. (Ulrich Schiess, 1303 Hwy. 20 East, Colville, Wa. 99114; ph 509 684-6558).

When I first built a roto-tiller out of an old Sears lawn tractor, I discovered I didn't have enough traction for cultivating my vegetable crops. So I poured its steel wheels full of concrete to solve the problem. I made 36-in. dia. steel wheels for the rear and 20-in. dia. steel wheels for the front. It may look unusual, but with each wheel weighing what I estimate to be 150 lbs., it solved the trac-



tion problem immediately.

To convert the lawn tractor into a roto-tiller, I removed the original front-mounted engine and mounted an 8 hp Briggs and Stratton engine on the rear. I coupled that with the mower's original transmission. I then moved the seat from the rear to the center and moved the mower's steering column forward. I can see to straddle the row when cultivating with my single-row (30-in.) home-built unit. (Harold Nolt, R.R. 1, Box 24, Millmont, Pa. 17845 ph 717-523-1211)