Self-Propelled, All-Hydraulic Rock Picker

"As far as we know, there is no other commerially available self-propelled rock picker in the world," says Paul Jorgensen, Coulee City, Wash., inventor of this new self-propelled picker that Jorgensen began building "to get away from trailing rockpickers that I had to turn to see, and that were awkward to maneuver."

"The picker uses forks with a row of fingers that go below the dirt to scoop up rocks and lift them into a dump bucket. The driver sits to the side of where the rocks are being scooped up so he can see what he's doing all the time, without having to turn around. This helps combat driver fatigue," Jorgensen points out.

The unit has three wheels, the front one being an offset free-wheeling "crazy" wheel. The two larger back wheels are driven by a hydrostatic drive system. There is one hydraulic motor for each rear wheel. The motors are run by a conventional gasoline engine. One control lever is used for controlling forward and backward motion, and turning left and right. There is no clutch, brake, steering wheel or gearshift. When the controlling "joystick" is moved to the left, oil feeds to the right rear wheel, moving the machine to the left, and vice versa for turning right. Since both wheels operate from one control, it can go from forward to backward instantaneously.

The picker will pick up rocks from a few inches in diameter up to as large as 2 by 3 ft. Jorgensen also uses it for digging out partially buried rocks and for removing small rockpiles. Total load capacity is about 6 cu. yards. A larger model is on the drawing board.

There is a road-grading attachment for the picker — it bolts to the pickup fingers — for doing light grading and landscaping work. It can be attached so that the angle of the blade changes hydraulically. A tow bar that attaches to the front wheel is available for moving the machine long distances.

Jorgensen has applied for patents and is looking for a manufacturer.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Jorgensen, Star Route, Coulee City, Wash. 99115.

Corn "Topper" Makes "Hotter" Silage

Arthur Vanderpol, of Hospers, Iowa, figures there's little feed value in corn tassels and the upper leaves, and he wants to make his corn silage as nutritious as possible. So, he built a corn topper for his forage harvester which clips the tops of stalks just above the ears. He also raises the chopper head higher than normal and leaves 12 to 14 in. of stalk at the bottom, too. He figures he's getting from 1/2 to 2/3's of the stalk and all the grain in his silage.

Vanderpol's topper was built with 30 in. blades similar to those on rotary lawn mowers. If he built another one he says he would use mower blades. The topper is mounted on a bracket attached to the side of the forage harvester and extends to the side to top rows which will be cut by the chopper on the next round. This gives time for tops and leaves to fall to the ground before the corn is chopped. Three set screws hold the topper and must be loosened to raise the unit up or down to compensate for different ear height.

Mounting the topper to one side does present a possible safety hazard (it normally runs about 5½ ft. high) admits Vanderpol, who says he always shuts off the topper while turning at the end of the field.

A hydraulic motor powers the topper and one spinning blade is used for each row. So, depending on arm length and number of blades used, he can top two or three rows to match chopper capacity. He originally had the blades mounted one above the other and slightly overlapping. But they still struck each other occasionally until he shortened the blades to eliminate the overlap.

Vanderpol figures such a topper would cost $300 to $400, depending on the cost of the hydraulic motors used. He says it was easy to build and can be installed or removed in a matter of minutes.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Arthur Vanderpol, Hospers, Iowa 51238 (ph 712 752-8152).

Go Anywhere "Buggy" Built From Scrap Parts

Rolland Shild, Greenfield, Ill., built this go-anywhere 4-wheel drive recreational vehicle using a variety of salvaged parts from trucks, tractors and automobiles.

Named "The Buggy" by its builder, FARM SHOW went for a demonstration ride in which we drove across a farm pond, climbed over a 2 ft. log with one wheel and climbed embankments of at least 45° slope. The Buggy twists in the center to permit driving over logs and very uneven ground surfaces.

A 200 cu. in., 6-cylinder Ford engine powers the vehicle through an automatic transmission. Top speed is 8-10 mph. One revolution of the tires drives the machine 15 ft. Shild used old M & W tractor dual wheels equipped with 12 by 48 in. tires. The 2 axles are from ¾ ton Chevrolet trucks. To fit the wheels to the axles, Shild used wheels from a 1 ton truck and adapted them for the M & W wheels. The seats are out of the same 1970 Ford Maverick that provided the engine and transmission.

Skid Steer Cab and Trailer

This is a picture of a "heater housing" cab, and a trailer I made for hauling my skid-steer loader.

The trailer is the running gear from a mixer-mill. I bolted planks to the frame and used a chain and log binder to secure the loader.

The "heat housing" cab was originally purchased for use on an old tractor housing. I had to install a sheet of heavy clear plastic in front to see down low in front of the machine. It's like getting into an old airplane because you have to step over the top onto the seat. Works good and I sure made good use of it last winter.

Glenn Kinneberg
Spring Grove, Minn.