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Double Baler Kicks Out Small Bales Fast

The farmer-built Twin Pak baler punches out small bales with big baler efficiency. New Mexico custom hay harvesters Jason Grady and his father Mike designed the double Twin Pak baler, which reaches about 85 percent of the tonnage per hour a big baler can produce and 2 to 3 times more bales than the fastest small bale balers on the market.

“Our first attempt at the Twin Pak was ugly, but it worked perfectly the first time,” says Jason Grady. “We cut apart 2 old balers and put them back together behind a big baler pickup. We started it up in the shop rebaling hay and then took it to the field.”

To get the productivity they were after, they used a single big-baler style pickup and a plunger that not only presses each flake, but also cuts it in half. Each half bale is triple tied. As the bales exit the baler, they drop in an offset pattern for ease of pickup by stackers.

While the current prototype is anything but

ugly, Grady says the next generation will be even better.

“GK Machine in Donald, Ore., has been re-engineering it for mass production,” says Grady. “They have put in a new gearbox with a forward facing flywheel like big balers have and made other improvements.”

Creating the Twin Pak was an economic necessity for the Gradys. In addition to their bale handling equipment business, Grady Press Trailers, they operate J&M Baling. The company does custom harvesting of 4 crops of 23,000 acres of alfalfa and 2 crops of triticale on 3,000 acres. The contract requires a combination of small and large bales, but the profit margin on small bales was minimal.

Economics change radically with the Twin Pak. At about 600 small bales an hour, it can nearly replace 3 self-propelled Freeman balers or 2 Hesston small balers, but with a single tractor and operator.

“The adjustable width chamber can produce 14, 15 or 16 by 21-in. bales, as hard and heavy and as long a bale as you want,” says Grady.

The on-board computer system tracks flake count, moisture and hydraulic temperature, as well as bale count for the field and lifetime. It shifts tension as the bale is formed and indicates adjustments for the operator to make to keep bales consistent.

With room for 30 rolls of twine, the Twin Pak can produce 11,000 bales without reloading. It also has an auto-lube system that can be adjusted for frequency and length of time lubricating. A proprietary valve can be opened to release tension for hand removal of bales. Once closed, tension is automatically reset to the previous level.

As a custom hay harvester, Grady knows the value of a well-built machine. Some of the Freeman balers they currently use have

up to 27 years in the field.

“The Twin Pak has steel in it like a Freeman,” he says. “It is built to last 20 years or more.”

With 2 on the ground now, Grady plans to have 5 more units in the field for the final testing in the 2019 season. Three of those will be used by J&M, one will be in California and one in Washington State. He expects to be ready to take orders for delivery in 2020.

“We are shooting for a price comparable to the cost of 2 new Freemans,” says Grady. “A Twin Pak should come in at around \$235,000.”

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They Made Their Deere No-Till Drill Easier To Service

John Mills, Howell, Mich., recently sent FARM SHOW photos of how he and his grandson made their 2014 Deere 1560 no-till grain drill easier to park and also easier to service. The 15-ft. drill is equipped with 24 row units on 7 1/2-in. spacings.

“My grandson and I farm 1,100 acres in southeast Michigan. We were concerned about soil erosion so 4 years ago we decided to convert to no-till,” says Mills. “We sold our old end-wheel drill and bought the Deere drill equipped with a 2-pt. hitch. We use our Deere 8200 tractor to pull it. Even though this drill is a fine piece of equipment, it requires more maintenance than any other machine on our farm.”

The 2 men found it difficult to maneuver the drill into a tight parking spot in their shed while it was hooked up to the tractor. Their solution was to bolt a couple of truck pintle hooks onto the quick-tach plate on their skid loader.

“The driver matches the pintle hooks up with horizontal pins on the drill’s 2-pt. hitch,” says Mills.

The drill has a lot of moving parts so twice a year - after planting wheat in the fall and soybeans in the spring - Mills and his grandson look everything over on the drill to make sure it’s ready to go again. “The drill isn’t equipped with a mechanical ‘transport link’ that would keep the row units from settling over time to the floor,” says Mills. “We can use valves to close off the flow of hydraulic oil to the drill’s lift cylinders, but the cylinders aren’t perfectly sealed so

after the drill has been parked for a couple of weeks the row units settle to the ground, making the drill difficult to move.”

To solve the problem, he placed an electro/hydraulic unit from a 1-ton dump truck on an old Red Ryder kids wagon and hooked a 12-volt battery up to it. A pair of hydraulic hoses attach to the pump, and the battery is wired to a switch on the wagon handle. Mills connects the hoses to the drill’s lift cylinders, then pushes the switch to raise the row units.

“Using an electro/hydraulic unit is a lot easier than backing the tractor up to the drill and hooking the hydraulic hoses up to it,” says Mills. “This electro/hydraulic unit also comes in handy for many other tasks where hydraulic pressure is needed only for a short period of time.”

Due to low clearance, Mills and his grandson found it difficult to crawl around under the drill for service work. Their solution was to use 4 heavy-duty truck landing gear jacks to raise the entire drill. They welded a short length of metal tubing alongside each jack, then welded slightly bigger tubes on all 4 corners of the drill for the jacks to fit into.

“It takes just a few minutes to crank the jacks until there’s plenty of room under the drill,” says Mills. “We paid \$120 apiece for the jacks. They’re rated at 8,000 lbs., apiece so we know they’ll hold up.”

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To raise drill row units off the ground, Mills placed an electro/hydraulic unit on a kids wagon and hooked a 12-volt battery up to it. Hoses connect to drill’s lift cylinders.



Truck pintle hooks bolted onto skid loader quick-tach plate make it easier to maneuver drill into a tight parking spot (upper left). Driver matches pintle hooks up with horizontal pins on drill’s 2-pt. hitch (above). Four truck landing gear jacks make it easy to raise entire drill.

