"Fat Tire" Kit Like Putting Duals On Planters

Kevin Schmidt put wider, low-pressure tires on his Deere planter 4 years ago, and now the Iowa farmer is making and selling Fat Cat Tire kits to other farmers. Like him, they need help fighting pinch-row compaction caused by large, heavy planters. The wider tires also help in wet soil conditions.

"They give me nearly twice the footprint of OEM tires," says Schmidt. "They're like putting duals on the planter."

Schmidt didn't intend to start a business. He upgraded to a 24-row planter, and the pinch-row compaction was noticeable. He considered tracks, but found them costly, and durability was a concern. After measuring available space on his planter, he thought larger footprint tires could be the answer.

"It took 2 sets of prototypes to get the clearance and footprint we wanted," says Schmidt. "The subframe cradles where the tires mount needed to be wider, but the question was how wide. We settled on 2 in."

The kits include everything needed to mount the new tires. They maintain the original OEM height with no need to relevel the planter bar or make other changes.

The big challenge was finding the right tires. Initially Schmidt looked at truck tires, but they didn't provide the needed footprint. To get it, he would have to lower tire pressure from 110 to 40 psi. This would cause the sidewalls to go out.

"I found some multi-purpose tires from Alliance that were originally designed for telehandlers," he says. "You can run them at 40 psi or lower, depending on conditions."

Neighbors noticed and asked about the modifications. Last year he sold a few kits locally and some in South Dakota and Minnesota. This year he has more kits and tires on hand and plans to go into full production in 2021.

Bolt-on Fat Cat Tire system nearly doubles tire contact with the soil, helping to fight pinch-row compaction caused by large, heavy planters.

"I have kits in stock and plenty of tires," says Schmidt. "Installation is pretty basic and just takes a little wrenching. We use the factory-installed cylinder stops to raise the planter off the ground, so no blocks or jacks are needed."

Kits are available for Deere 1770NT/1775NT 24-30 planters and Deere 1790/1795NTs. The latter include 16-31, 16-32 and 24-20 row configurations. Kits with the Alliance tires are priced at $9,500. Kits with a similar Michelin tire with a slightly larger void area are priced at $10,160.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Fat Cat Tire, 5048 210th St., Battle Creek, Iowa 51006 (ph 712 369-1566; kevin@fatcattire.com; www.fatcattire.com).

He Built His Own 3-Pt. Bale Mover

Cow-calf operator Kylidge McNally of Bethune, Sask., already had a loader-mounted grapple fork that could carry 2 round bales at a time out to his pasture. However, he wanted to carry an extra bale on back when feeding cows to cut down on the number of trips. So he built his own 3-pt. bale forks using part of the frame and forks off an old Brandt self-loading bale processor.

"It does a good job and cost very little to build," says McNally. "We've used the forks to haul more than 100 bales and find they really speed up our feeding time. We usually haul 14 bales at a time to our cows, which in the past required seven trips. Now we need to make only five trips. Also, hauling a bale behind the tractor helps balance the load."

He flipped the bale processor's frame 180 degrees and cut part of it off. He had 3 used Brandt bale processor forks on hand, 2 of which were bent. He cut the bent portions off both and welded the two together end-to-end to make another fork. Then he welded both forks to the frame, and also added gussets as well as pinning brackets for the tractor's 3-pt. hitch.

You can check out videos of the home-built bale forks on McNally's YouTube channel "KyFarmerman".

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Carr's Repair, 7641 Hwy. 11, Barwick, Ontario, Canada (ph 807 487-2548; www.carrsrepairvintageparts.com).

McNally built these 3-pt. bale forks using part of the frame and forks off an old Brandt self-loading bale processor.

Log is secured by a choker chain that runs through hole in bottom of plastic cone.

Log Skidding Cone Made From Plastic Barrel

This homemade log skidding cone, made from a plastic barrel, was featured in a recent issue of Northern Woodlands magazine. Brett R. McLeod, an associate professor of forestry and natural resources at Paul Smith's College, says it only took him about 10 min. to make.

The barrel should be proportionally sized to the logs you want to skid. For firewood, a 25-gal. barrel is ideal; for small 10-in. dia. logs, such as those shown in the photos, McLeod chose a 35-gal. barrel that had been used for commercial cooking oil.

Use a marker to outline a U-shaped opening on the side of the barrel and a 2-in. dia. hole in the bottom. If the barrel has a top, remove that as well. Then use an angle grinder with a cutting wheel to cut out the U-shaped opening, and a hole saw to cut the 2-in. hole.

To use the cone, place a choker chain diagonally across the bottom of the cone and roll the log partially into the cone, then set the choker. Thread the end of the chain that goes to your 4-wheeler or tractor through the top of the barrel.

Compression rack comes with 10 rods attached to a long bar made of 8-in. dia. solid steel tubing.

Compression Rack For Deere Balers

This new "extreme duty" cornstalk compression rack for Deere round balers presses crop material down into the baler teeth for more aggressive feeding of light, fluffy crop material. The result is heavier, more compact bales.

The compression rack replaces the OEM compression rack. According to Tony Kellen, owner of The Fine Twine Co., its design offers several benefits.

"Our compression rack comes with a long bar made of solid steel tubing instead of a hollow plastic pipe, and is 8 in. dia. instead of 4," says Kellen. "Also, it has 10 compressor rods instead of 6. The extra weight and the additional compressor rods press the crop material down into the baler teeth for more aggressive feeding of light material."

Kellen says the compression rack works well with the company's baffle roller extensions, designed for Deere 568 and 569 round balers. "The extensions reposition the baffle roller ahead and down on the baler," says Kellen.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Fine Twine Co., 1062 Junction Road, Alton, Iowa 51003 (ph 866 999-1006; www.thefinetwineco.com).