Sod Buster Sales sells, repairs, and rebuilds used New Holland bale wagons and has been in business since 1980.

Market Still Hot For Rebuilt Bale Wagons

Reconditioned New Holland bale wagons have been a hot item for years and the market shows no signs of cooling off. Lonnie Haack's Sod Buster Sales is as likely to send a bale wagon to South America or the Middle East as they are down the road in Montana. The company maintains sales agents in both Turkey and Chile.

Haack knows New Holland bale wagons inside out, having worked on them for more than 50 years. He's been buying and selling them and the parts and manuals to make them work for almost that long, having started his business in 1980.

While he has sold thousands of the machines, including every model, he has his favorites and a couple less favorite. "They are all good machines, but I tend to stay away from the 1002 and the 1012," he says. "A good entry model is the 1033 for short bales and the 1032 for 4-ft. bales."

Midsummer he listed 13 pull-type bale wagons. A 1032 was listed at $14,000 and a 1033 at $16,500. Others ran as high as $36,500. A half dozen self-propelled models were priced as high as $98,000, including a 1981 8500 for $75,000.

Haack's inventory runs low by midsummer. Over the fall and winter, he rebuilds, picking up bale wagons and rebuilding them as needed.

"Let us know if you have one not being used," he says. "We are always looking. All too often they end up in the fencerow."

When a machine needs to be rebuilt, he tears it down completely. This is especially the case for pull-types.

"A pull-type rebuild can take 50 to 100 hrs.," says Haack. "We don't go through that many self-propelled machines. When we do, rebuilding the engine and all can take 300 hrs. With them, there are so many more things to look for."

Parts are a big share of Sod Buster's business. Many that are hard to find or no longer available from the factory are fabricated specifically by Sod Buster.

Haack also makes lower cost versions of OEM parts still available. "Having our own metal fabrication department lets us pass savings on to our customers," he says.

Although he maintains a web page listing parts, he prefers customers call him up to order. He says it will take less time and ensure they get the right part.

"A person may think they know the part needed, but sometimes after we talk, they find out it's not," says Haack. "It saves time, and time can be a tighter commodity than money. With the right part, you can get back in the field fast."

Operator and parts manuals are another important share of Sod Busters' business. Haack offers manuals for every model New Holland bale wagon. He says they are a must for any bale wagon owner.

"Bale wagons are complicated machines with lots of moving parts," says Haack. "If it isn't properly adjusted, it can cost you thousands of dollars in time and frustration. The manuals give you instructions for each adjustment and explains how the bale wagon operates."

He encourages calling to discuss your operation and the best bale wagon for it. That goes for bale wagons found locally, as well as those he has for sale.

"Just give me a call if you find one locally," he says. "Send me pictures, and I can tell you what to look for. Each model has its strengths and weaknesses."

While the Sod Buster website is mostly dedicated to New Holland bale wagons, other items from tractors to grain carts and even an occasional TMR mixer may be listed. Likewise, the company also sells parts for hay-making equipment from a wide variety of brands.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sod Buster Sales, 33505 Gingras Springs Rd., Polson, Mont. 59860 (ph 406 883-2118; mobile 406 249-8565; toll free 877 735-2108; lonnie@sodbustersales.com; www.sodbustersales.com).

5-Gal. Bucket Fence Wire Reels

"We use a lot of portable fencing on our ranch, grazing cows on small areas and moving them around frequently. We have a lot of ditch banks, rough areas around hayfields, and other areas where we can't cut hay, but cattle can graze," says Heather Thomas, Salmon, Idaho.

"We use step-in posts and woven wire fencing. Sometimes we don't have a spool available, and we still want to roll it up in a way that it can be easily unrolled again without tangling. This past summer we hit on the idea of using a plastic bucket and it worked great. We just set the bucket upside down over a post and pull the wire out to unroll it. The buckets rotate easily on top of a post. It's good to use a bucket with some kind of rim to keep the wire from sliding off the bottom.

The bucket rests over the top of a fence post and can freely turn to feed wire.

"You can roll a lot of wire up on a 5-gal. bucket and the handle makes the wire easy to carry around."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Heather Thomas, Box 215, Salmon, Idaho 83467 (ph 208 756-2841).

New-Style Quick-Tach Hydraulic Couplings

You can speed up hydraulic couplings with new-style quick couplers from Faster, Inc. that combine multiple lines in a single complete connection. The connections vary from standard to customized designs.

The new MultiFaster product line allows standard push-pull male and female couplings to be connected at up to 6,700 psi. Other benefits include eliminating misalignment, enhanced seal reliability, backward compatibility with single hose lines and easier cleaning due to the dirt cover.

The latest MultiFaster generation has improved ergonomics and auto-connect capability without exiting the machine cab. There are also quick-connects for grease lines and electric lines.

Customers can create the MultiFaster product they need by using an online configurator where they indicate general parameters, fixed or mobile plates, preferred release levers, couplings and more. A 3-D model is produced along with a specification sheet and step-by-step directions.

When satisfied, a customer can request a quote.

New fasteners speed up hydraulic coupling and eliminate misalignment.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Faster Inc., 6560 Weatherfield Ct., Maumee, Ohio 43537 (ph 419 868-8197; toll free 800 231-2501; infousa@fastercouplings.com; www.fastercouplings.com).

Soil Health Tool Talks Back

A new soil health tool called GNT Bio Machine lets soil microbes talk back by measuring the CO2 they produce. Nicknamed the Soil Talker, the simple device reveals what is happening in the soil.

"The more CO2 released from your soil and thus detected by our sensors, the healthier your soil," says Jason Snavely, co-developer of the GNT Bio Machine with Dr. Rick Haney. "Consultants using the Soil Talker commonly see CO2 readings of 1,000 to 1,200 parts per million (ppm) in conventionally tilled fields. No-till, cover cropped fields will produce readings in the 4,000 to 6,000 ppm range."

Until his recent retirement Haney was with the USDA, where he developed what is known as the Haney Soil Health Test. It has been used by tens of thousands of farmers and ranchers to help them manage soil health and their crop production systems. An important element of the test was the 24-hr. CO2 Burst test. The Soil Talker provides the same results in seconds.

"Our latest version utilizes a small pump that pulls the CO2 across the sensor for an instant reading," says Snavely.

The Bio Machine refers to the instrument with its CO2 sensor, a microprocessor and a digital display for the results. The GNT portion of the system is a tube or chamber that is inserted in the soil. It provides a space for ambient CO2 in the soil to pass through. As levels change in the soil, they change in the chamber, thanks to holes of a specific size, location and number.

"Data collected from GNT Bio Machines scattered around the country has been calibrated to more than 45,000 results from the Haney Soil Health Test," says Snavely. "Our standard sensor evaluates CO2 at levels of up to 10,000 ppm. However, one client had soils with a reading of 17,000 ppm. A growing number of regenerative farms are testing at levels above 10,000. As a result, we plan to offer sensors that read up to 100,000 ppm."

At this point, he describes the Soil Talker as a tool in the art of farming, providing insights and disclosing trends over time. He suggests using the tool to compare soils in fields managed differently or even in fence rows. "Look at the reading you get in a conventionally managed field," says Snavely. "Compare it to one from a no-tilled field with cover crops and one from a fence row."

Soil health is monitored through CO2 levels using the Soil Talker field testing device.

In the future, the tool will include more definitive information. Haney, Snavely and their network of soil consultant cooperators now working with the tool are developing applications that include assessing organic N, carbon, soil structure/water infiltration rates and more. The first two involve calibrating readings to data from the Haney Soil Health Test and use the existing GNT soil chamber.

The Soil Structure Microbial Activity Test (S2MAT)evaluates soil structure based on microbial respiration before and after a rainfall. It will utilize a specially developed soil chamber.

"CO2 respiration is inhibited when soil pore spaces fill with water," explains Haney. "CO2 that increases immediately after a rainfall is indicative of excellent infiltration and soil structure."

The GNT Bio Machine or Soil Talker is only available in limited quantity by special order from Snavely's Drop-Tine Seed Co. This is likely to change in the future, as demand is rapidly ramping up. The co-developers are establishing a new company devoted specifically to the Soil Talker.

Some aspects of the Soil Talker (including a website) are still being refined; however, as it is today, Snavely anticipates a price of around $3,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Drop-Tine Seed Co., 56 Oman Rd., Bloomsburg, Penn. 17815 (ph 570 204-4064; Jason@droptineseed.com).