Small Header On Big Combine

Not many farmers mount a 4-row header on an 8-row combine but Bob Nelson and son Tim did it in Carlinville, Ill.

"It was a spur of the moment decision," Tim told FARM SHOW, noting that when they traded their Deere combine in for a 1978 IH 915 they had planned on buying a 6-row header for it but, at the last moment, decided to try to adapt the Deere 4-row to the combine. For a total cost of $35, Tim says they adapted the Deere header to the IH combine so that it can be mounted with just 2 bolts. They also speeded up the entire header by swapping drive sprockets so that they're able to harvest as much with the 4-row as with a 6-row.

"We're able to travel at about 6½ mph, harvesting around 1,200 bu. per hour. We wouldn't get any more with a 6-row head. It also saves us a week to 10 days during harvest by letting us get into muddy fields where we couldn't operate with a heavier 6 or 8-row header," says Tim.

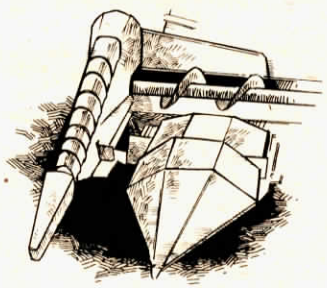
In addition to adapting the head to the combine, the Nelsons also had to swap wheels on the machine. They turned the tire dishes in so that the wheels would fit inside the width of the header, swapping sides so the tread would still go the right direction. They also took the combine ladder off the side of the machine.

Tim says that a new 6-row head for the machine would have cost $15,000 or more while the old head was worth little in trade.

"It may be worth it to hang onto an old 4-row head for use in the field when conditions are muddy and then switch back to a larger header when things dry up," notes Tim.

"Volunteer" Augers Save Corn

"Over the years, volunteer corn has been one of my top corn-growing problems. After eliminating most cultivation and switching to no-till to control soil erosion, volunteer corn became even worse. Stalk and ear loss over the sides of the cornhead were the culprits. I tried low profile cornheads but stalks still broke off and were lost. I finally solved the problem by inserting a pair of counter-rotating augers in the side shields of the combine," says L.J. Schemmel, Jr., Farley, Iowa, who recently won a top prize in a contest sponsored by Ciba-Geigy.



"The auguers are driven independent of the snouts by hydraulic motors. Oil is supplied by the power steering pump. The pump's power is supplied by a shaft on the head and the augers start and stop with it. I used a variable flow valve to regulate rotating speeds and to match the speed of the augers to the ground speed of the combine. This is especially helpful in dealing with lodged corn. I never had to leave the cab to unplug or pull stalks from the head.

"I've run the auger-equipped header over 2,000 acres with no maintenance problems, and a savings of 2 to 14 bu. per acre, depending on the standing condition of the corn. For an investment of less than $500, I'm getting a significant return."

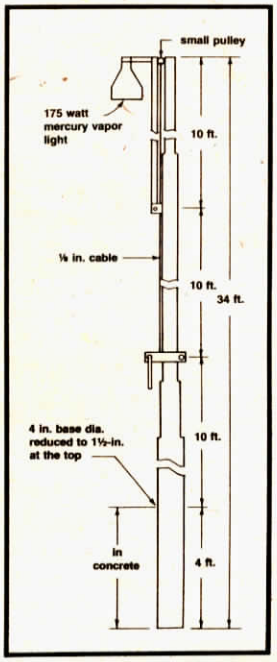
Folding Farmyard Light Pole

John L. Kennedy, Seligma, Ariz., needed a security light on his farm but his local utility company wanted $17 a month to install one. He also knew that once they installed one there would be a charge every time the light needed servicing because he had no means of reaching up that high.

He solved the problem by building a folding light pole. All it cost was $32.99 for the 175-watt mercury vapor light. He salvaged all other materials.

The light pole is 34-ft. tall with a fold at the 24-ft. level so that the top 10 ft. section swings down to the 14 ft. level for easy servicing. The stationary bottom pipe was made from welded-together sections of pipe varying from 4-in. in dia. at the bottom to 1½ in. dia. at the top. It's embedded in 4 ft. of concrete with short pieces of reinforcing rod welded to the bottom to prevent it from turning in the concrete base.

There's a winch at the 14-ft. level and a pulley at the 24-ft. level. Two ¼ by 2-in. brackets act as a hinge for the upper pole. Cable is threaded up from the winch, through the pulley, and to the top of the pole. Kennedy simply cranks the hinged pole down to service the light, standing in the bed of a pickup or on a step ladder.



Drawing courtesy The Stabilizer

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"Government-Built" Machine Shop

"It's a deal no farmer should pass up," says Ron Flatt, a Hallsville, Mo., farmer who took advantage of government grain storage checks for corn held in reserve to pay for a new machine shed and shop.

Flatt explains that he had a dual problem last year. He had grain to store in the reserve program but he didn't want to build any more grain bins. Since he needed a shop and additional machinery storage, he decided to put up a conventional building and let the grain storage payments pay for it.

Morton Buildings, Inc., put up the 66 by 108-ft. building that now holds 70,000 bu. of corn. In order to hold the grain, he had to add a special Morton temporary grain storage package that sells for $6,200.

"I received 26½ cents per bushel per year to store the grain in reserve. If I had held it the full three years of the program, it would have more than paid for the building," Flatt told FARM SHOW. The building and grain package cost $50,000.

If Flatt had not built the shop he would have stored the grain commercially. Then, he says, not only would he have nothing to show for having held all the grain, but he would have to pay out an additional 13 to 14 cents per bushel.

The grain package Morton offers consists of reinforced sidewalls, and braces and cables to protect the building sidewalls from the weight of the grain. Flatt had to dry his grain dryer than normal and installed two aeration fans to maintain even temperatures in the big grain pile. He says it took longer to fill the building than grain bins and it will take longer to empty it.

"Once this corn is released we plan to use one end for a shop and the other end for either machinery storage, or to store grain when needed," says Flatt.

Also, since cost-share regulation may change, check with your local ASCS before you go ahead with a proposed machinery-grain storage building.