A 12-wheel Flex Rake pulling a large square or round baler can cut haying time and production costs by a third or more.

Flex Rake Designed To Cut Hay Production Costs

"Our invention was born out of necessity about a decade ago after listening to local farmers talk about wanting a dependable way to increase production, save time and not lose hay behind terraces," says Joe Waldorff, Elba, Ala. "Their input led us to design and build a flexible rake that could work on flat or hilly fields with multiple terraces."

Waldorff says he and a few others formed an LLC, started welding and bolting components together, and the rest is history. Now the Flex Rake is used by customers in several U.S. states and Canada. "Over the years we've improved the rake as needed so it's by far the strongest implement on the market, with great features and options incorporated into a superior design," says Waldorff. "The dominant feature of a Flex Rake is that a producer can combine raking and baling square or round bales into one operation, behind one tractor. That means tremendous savings in time, labor and fuel."

Flex Rake has a rugged central box beam that houses hydraulic hoses, the baler wiring harness, and a pto drive shaft supported by three bearings. The rake arms, carrying individual wheels with individual suspension, pivot up and down from the main frame. Waldorff says that flexibility allows the rake wheels to follow the land contour, gathering hay without waste. When a Flex Rake is fully closed for road transport, the dolly wheels at the end of the rake arms ramp up so tines have ample clearance above the roadway.

The company produces 8, 10 and 12-wheel models, but Waldorff says the 12-wheel rake is the most popular. "Our 12-wheel model can start gathering an 8-ft. wide swath, and as it hydraulically opens, it can be stopped at any width up to 28 ft., right from the tractor seat at any speed."

Every rake is made to order with high capacity or standard tines to accommodate different crops. Hydraulic hoses and a wiring harness that match the customer's baler are also custom-made.

The windrow width on a Flex Rake can be changed by adjusting either wheel row independently. The windrow can also be offset to either side to accommodate baler off-tracking when baling pivot irrigation circles.

Hay deflectors installed in front of the rake spinners keep hay flowing smoothly toward the baler, keep the rakes clean and prevent wrapping. Waldorff says "another advantage is that the spinner wheels are set closer together and at a lesser angle than conventional rakes. This allows for more efficient and cleaner raking as well as extending the operational life of the spinners."

Flex Rake sells direct to customers without any middlemen because Waldorff says, "We don't want people to chase a dog's tail for three days to get an answer. We deliver the implement ourselves and make sure the operator knows how to run it. Our customers are saving up to a third of their production costs and putting their hay up faster."

Waldorff says the company has streamlined its production over the years and made repair issues simple to handle. "We get very few repair calls, and when we do, we handle them right away because we know that dry hay can't wait."

Flex Rake's pricing ranges from $25,000 and up depending on the size and options a buyer chooses. Rake delivery has been within six weeks, but Waldorff says recent supply chain issues may extend that.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Flex Rake, Elba, Ala. (ph 334-488-0112 or 334-790-3582; flexrake@yahoo.com; www.flexrakellc.com).

Duals Wheels For Garden Tractors

Chuck Shelato designed duals for his zero-turn mower and garden tractor. After posting a YouTube video, he launched a business building them for others. The key selling point is easy alignment.

"Full-size tractors have J-bolts and spacers between the rims, and that's what I try to emulate," says Shelato. "My key ingredient is my tie rings. The second thing is where they go. I put them down next to the valve stem. With my open throat design, you can reach through to air up the tires."

Shelato notes that his duals are especially popular with people who drive on slopes. In his area, a lot of people have high banks, and stability is a problem.

"The duals lower my center of gravity," he says. "They also increase my traction." What they don't do, he stresses, is carry more weight.

"Armchair engineers drive me crazy, suggesting duals will overload an axle," says Shelato. "Adding weight is not the point."

Shelato suggests four lug extensions on heavier zero-turns and compact tractors. Lighter machines need only two to hold the tie rings tight. His first tie rings were built with 20-ga. steel, as it was the heaviest he could form in his home shop. He would wind it like a clock spring while fitting it to the rim-size form.

"After a few months wrestling with the 20-ga. steel, I found a slip ring roller locally," says Shelato. "With a few modifications, I could use 10-ga. steel. Now everything that goes out has the heavier, 10-ga. rings."

The only promotion Shelato has done for his small-scale duals is to post videos on his YouTube channel and his personal and High-Noon Group Facebook sites. That has been enough. He has shipped dual kits from N. C. to points as far as Maine, Minn., Utah and Texas.

High-Noon Duals offer a bolt-on kit with tie rings and hardware.

"My kits range in price from $70 up to an $1,100 custom kit for a Deere 111 used to mow canal banks in Fla.," says Shelato. "I tried to talk the latter out of doing it, but his attitude was spending $14,000 on a 4-WD or have me build him a set ASAP."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, High-Noon Duals, 128 S McCoy Rd., Salisbury N.C. 28144 (ph 704-798-5014; shelato61@gmail.com).

Weed Wiper applies herbicide to the bottom of leaves and stems to target weak points of plants and comes in three different versions.

"Wiper" Kills Weeds On Contact

The Weed Wiper kills every weed it touches without harming the rest. This lets you save time and money on chemicals while eliminating the threat of chemical drip and drift.

This aggressive yet economical method of applying herbicides will work to control weeds growing above row crops, in vineyards, orchards, hay and pasture fields, food plots, wildlife habitat establishments and other field situations.

The Weed Wiper applies herbicides to the bottom or undersides of leaves and stems, ensuring that they target the weakest portion of the plants to kill them efficiently. The steel rotating drums on the underside make it possible to keep the carpeted material highly saturated for maximum effect on targeted weeds. The constant rotation also ensures you won't have to deal with drips.

Shields built around the sprayer will control the spray direction and reduce the risk of drift onto desired crops. It's also possible to adjust the height of the Wiper to hit weeds at multiple stages of development without harming the plants below.

Expect to get good results going between 4 to 8 mph. Those using the Weed Wiper on turf can run it faster - up to 15 mph.

GrassWorks currently offers three types of Weed Wipers for sale. The heavy-duty model is a popular choice for farmers with scattered property that need to bring their equipment through narrow gates or alleyways. This model is also the company's most popular rental unit and is commonly used by soil and water conservation districts, cattle associations, and farm supply and feed stores. Standard sizes are 10, 12 and 15 ft. Other models include one with a 3-pt. tractor mount, a pull-type model for use with a four-wheeler or small tractor in hay and pasture operations, and a "Flex Unit" that can be built in sizes from 15 to 50 ft. based on your customization requests.

GrassWorks manufactures all its equipment in the United States. International orders are also possible. Most sales are direct-to-consumer, although the company works with a few select dealers.

Pricing per unit varies based on your location and customization requests.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, GrassWorks Weed Wiper, 8703 E Farm Road 80, Strafford, Mo. 65757; ph (888-809-4737; sales@weedproblems.com; www.grassworksmanufacturing.com).