The 6,000-lb. Bale Hawk, powered by a Deutz engine, uses rubber belts to gently scoop, handle and transport three 1,400-lb. bales at a time.

Prototype Robotic Bale Collector

Last summer, Vermeer Corporation showed off the Bale Hawk, their new automated bale handling system, to a select group of farmers and dealers.

Mark Core, VP of Vermeer Corporation, explains that due to labor shortages, interest in automated tools is high.

"You set up a geofence, and define your field area in GPS," says Gregory Laughlin, senior software engineer, Vermeer. "The Bale Hawk moves through that area and collects bales to be stacked in one place."

The machine uses a Light Detection and Ranging (Lidar) system, to recognize bale shapes in the defined area, moving from the outside toward the center gathering round bales and placing them in rows for later pickup and transfer.

The 6,000-lb. Bale Hawk, powered by a Deutz engine, uses rubber belts to gently scoop, handle and transport three 1,400-lb. bales at a time.

Laughlin says the vibration of the machine has been an issue for the Lidar units but he's confident special equipment can be built to counteract the problem.

The Bale Hawk is not yet available for sale.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Vermeer, 1210 East Vermeer Road, Pella, Iowa 50219 (www.vermeer.com).

The NCI Model 47H Tandem Axle Spreader is the heaviest-duty model in the brand's Spreadit Series. This fertilizer and lime spreader offers a 233-cu. ft. capacity for a maximum weight of 10 tons.

Twin Axle Tandem Spreader

The Newton Crouch company has been in the spreading and spraying business since 1940. They claim their spreaders yield the flattest, most uniform spread pattern in the industry. Their products are used throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Mexico, Columbia, Japan, Belize and Thailand.

All Newton Crouch spreaders and sprayers are designed with as few moving parts as possible to make for low-maintenance, simple operation. They also come equipped with variable-rate and controller-driven technology. Most equipment is compatible with mounting on a chassis, pull-type or 3-point hitch.

The Newton Crouch Tandem Spreader has two axles, making it a versatile tool for spreading fertilizer, lime, plaster and dry chicken litter.

The NCI Model 47H Tandem Axle Spreader is the heaviest-duty model in the brand's Spreadit Series. This fertilizer and lime spreader offers a 233-cu. ft. capacity for a maximum weight of 10 tons. It features a stainless-steel hull with steel dishes, blades, gate jack cover and conveyor.

Both axles are tandem and set up with heavy-duty slipper springs for security. Overall, the machine allows for a spread pattern of 80 ft. (or 50 ft. with dual spinners).

The spreader's heavy-duty dishes have a 3/16-in. thickness and 24-in. circumference with six blades of 1/4-in. thickness. Likewise, the trailer-length frame fully supports the hull for better stability, and the trailer itself is made of tubing and protected with a powder-coated blue base. It comes with a 7,000-lb. drop leg jack, and the hull is bolted on for easier trailer maintenance. Choose between conveyor widths of 16 or 24 in. with a clinched chain.

Finally, the NCI Model 47H includes a Newton Crouch exclusive hydraulic system with an anti-cavitation device, pressure relief valve, and check valve. In this way, it's designed to prevent you from accidentally hooking your spinners to the tractor backward and can be used for either an open or closed system. There's also an adjustable flow control to prevent overspreading.

All Newton Crouch spreaders utilize common, everyday parts when possible, making them field serviceable.

Newton Crouch also provides training, service and parts. It's also possible to request custom-made equipment based on the specifications you provide. Pricing depends on the features you choose, and an estimate is available by request.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Newton Crouch, Griffon Office, PO Box 17, 890 East Solomon St., Griffin, GA 30223 (ph 800-241-1350; samantha@newtoncrouch.com; www.newtoncrouch.com).

A 54-in. or 78-in. platform to carry mowers and other equipment is an option on the recently introduced Mulch Mate trailer.

Mulch Unloader Speeds Landscape Projects

Gary Islelie says his landscaping business always had problems finding seasonal workers, so instead of searching long hours for extra help, he bought a Mulch Mate mechanical unloader to save time and labor. Now he can unload 10 yards of mulch with two or three workers in just over 10 minutes. Without the unloader, he had four or five people needing at least a half hour or more to unload the same amount. Islelie says the Mulch Mate not only saved time, but it was also easier on the backs of his crew because they weren't using shovels to scoop mulch, rocks or topsoil from a truck bed.

Dawson Manufacturing, which produces the Mulch Mate, recently expanded on that idea by partnering with Belmont Trailer to produce a trailer-mounted version of their device.

The 12-ft. long trailer has a 10-ga. metal floor and 42-in. high 12-ga. walls. It rides on dual axles positioned for the correct tongue weight whether the trailer is loaded or empty. The deck is mounted high enough to allow standard wheelbarrows to fit under the Mulch Mate unloading chute. A 54 or 78-in. optional platform can be added in front of the box to carry a mower or other equipment. Equipment loading or unloading is done on a fold-down ramp.

The patented Mulch Mate and the hydraulic box lift operate with electric power supplied by 12-volt marine grade batteries. The entire rig rides on two 7,000-lb. Dexter axles with 235/80R16 'E' rated tires carrying the heavy-duty rectangular steel frame.

The company says most landscapers can add $7,000 to $10,000 in profit to their bottom line by using a Mulch Mate compared to hiring additional workers.

Dawson also produces a Truck Mate version of the unloading device that mounts to the hitch receiver on any standard pickup when the endgate is removed. The open conveyor unloads materials to the left or right side of the pickup and can also swing away so material can be dumped directly on the ground.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mulch Mate, Dawson Manufacturing, 899 Airport Park Road, Glen Burnie, Md. 21061 (ph 888-776-8524: www.mulchmateusa.com).

Home-Built Cab Makes Snow Blowing Easier

With plenty of snow and cold winds, last winter turned out to be a good test for Mike Heron's home-built snowblower cab in Saskatchewan.

"The problem is blowing snow hits your face and it's always windy here. I wanted to keep the cold air and snow off my face," Heron says.

He started by removing the plastic bladder to use the steel tube frame of a 275-gal. tote. Heron cut some of the tubing to create openings for windows and a door. He made a cardboard template for a pattern to cut plywood, so the cab fits snugly on his Deere garden tractor. To cover the rounded corners, he made kerf cuts into the plywood, without cutting all the way through. Then he wet it with water to soak in so he could bend it in place.

"I had to experiment to get the depth of the cuts right," Heron says.

He screwed the plywood shell on the frame and added 1 by 4's around the openings to staple heavy plastic coverings for the side and back windows and door. Plexiglass covers the front opening for the windshield. The cab secures to the tractor with a bracket on the front and back fender.

"There is also a hinge so I can tip it up and over the back," he adds.

Besides stopping the wind, the cab captures a little heat from the tractor's engine, Heron says. He also appreciated the seat his wife reupholstered for him.

Heron built his snowblower cab from a 275-gal. tote and plywood.

"It made snow blowing easier," he said, adding he may add manually controlled windshield wipers, though he didn't have any issues with snow on the windshield last winter.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Heron, RR 1 Site 1, Box 1, Main Station, Lloydminster, Sask., Canada S9V 0X6 (ph 306-821-6367; m.heron@sasktel.net).