

IH Tractor Repowered With Bus Engine

“When I found out it’d cost more than \$6,000 to overhaul the engine on a 756 Farmall that I’d bought very reasonably, my buddy Barry Schimke and I decided to repower the tractor with an old school bus engine,” says Wisconsin farmer Mitch Fenske. The adventuresome mechanics pulled a DT360 engine from a 1990 International school bus. Even though the bus engine at 180 rated flywheel hp. is a full 100 hp. more powerful than the original tractor engine, no major modifications were needed for the install.



No major modifications were needed to the Farmall to accommodate the bus engine.

“Neither of us had done something like this before, so we just got after it bolt by bolt,” Fenske says. After about 200 hrs. on the project, Schimke and Fenske fired up the repowered tractor to enjoy the sweet sound of success.

“With a straight pipe on its original exhaust manifold coupled with the turbo, the 360 has a lot stronger sound than the original D310 that was in the tractor,” Fenske says. “We’ll use it around the farm to cut, rake, and bale hay, maybe even take it to a few tractor pulls and turn some heads,” he adds.

Fenske says they used the original 756 frame rails and other than enlarging a few holes and using a 666 front cover, the install didn’t require any special modifications, mainly because they swapped an International tractor engine for an International bus/truck engine. They used the tractor’s radiator, fuel tank, starter, and electrical system for the repower engine. No special parts were needed to bolt the engine to the rear end of the tractor other than a 66 or 86 plate. They left the turbo manifold outside the frame rails and ran the stack up outside the head. They did away with the original air system and plumbed a new K&N filter under the hood.

Fenske grew up on a farm and says, “I always thought repowering was interesting, and I’ve modified other equipment, but nothing this extreme. When I was younger, I thought it would be cool to put a Detroit



756 Farmall repowered with DT360 engine from an International school bus.

6-71 in a Farmall. My dad told me that if I put anything other than an International engine in this tractor, he’d disown me. I’ll have to make a few modifications to the hood of this one and then get everything cleaned and painted this winter.”

Other than his and his friend’s time, Fenske says he spent very little out-of-pocket. “I paid \$1,400 for the school bus and sold enough parts that the engine was basically free. I recently found another International bus and will use that engine to repower an 856 with a twin-turbo. On this project, I learned that the company changed bell housings on IH tractors built after 1994, and a swap like mine using a truck engine won’t work.”

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Self-Propelled String Trimmer

Once John Krueger had stripped the deck off an old zero-turn mower, he saw its potential as a self-propelled string trimmer. He had fixed it up with safety rails for getting on and off and a set of LED lights. He just had to mount a string trimmer and figure out how to power it.

“The zero-turn still had the electric clutch that activated the mower on the deck I’d removed,” says Krueger. “I could use it to turn the string trimmer on and off.”

Krueger made an extension from 3-in. box tubing to mount the power head from an old DR trimmer head to the side of the zero-turn.

To power it, he mounted a double-wide pulley, salvaged from an old International truck, under the zero-turn. A belt runs from the pulley that had powered the mower deck to the idler. A second belt runs from the idler

to the trimmer head.

“The idler has a spring on it to keep the belt tight,” says Krueger. “However, I have a chain running from it to me. If the belt needs more tension, I just pull on the chain.”

The extension that holds the trimmer head hinges at the frame. This allows the ball under the string trimmer to ride up and over obstacles.

“It can raise and lower about 4 to 6 in.,” says Krueger. “Normally, the belt holds it in place. However, if it does raise, the spring on the idler lets the belt give and take.”

Krueger admits to being a hoarder, with lots of little parts lying around. They included everything he needed to mount the string trimmer.

“I can’t run the engine very fast, but that isn’t a problem with the zero-turn,” says



Krueger made an extension from 3-in. box tubing to mount the power head from an old DR trimmer head to the side of the zero-turn.

Krueger. “I can run it pretty slowly. It saves a lot of steps and works great for trimming around fence lines and around trees, as well as on our long driveway.”

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