



Kirby converted a Deere 55 combine into a tractor with 3-pt. hitch and pto on front.

Utility “Tractor” Built Out Of Combine

“I wanted a good-looking machine that I could use for many different jobs,” says Leavenworth, Kan., machinist Wayne Kirby about the rebuilt Deere combine he uses to mow grass, blow snow, and haul loads.

Kirby started with a Deere 55 combine. It had previously been fitted with final drives and wheels off a Deere 95 combine and had an overhauled 304 cu. in. 6-cyl. engine with only 300 hours on it. He stripped the combine down to the axles, engine and cab.

He built a new frame out of 6-in. channel iron, shortening the combine’s wheelbase by 14 in.

He moved the cab back 41 in. and down 26 in. He redid linkages to the 4-speed transmission, shortening them from 6 ft. to 20 in. and relocating levers from the right rear to the right front of the cab.

He mounted the engine directly above the rear axle, to hold down the back of the machine when equipment is mounted on the front lift arms. Kirby built three attachments to fit the combine, including a 12-ft. four-

blade rotary mower, a 7-ft. twin screw snow blower, and a fork lift that lift up to 12 1/2 ft. high, powered by the machine’s live pto shaft.

Kirby built the pto out of the rear end of a Chevy 3/4-ton pickup. It mounts lengthwise underneath the machine and is belt-driven off the engine. A hydraulic cylinder is used to engage the pto by tightening the belt.

The mower, snow blower, and fork lift attach to the 3-pt. hitch Kirby built on front. The hydraulic pump that originally raised the combine header raises the 3 pt. lift arms, while a separate hydraulic cylinder controls the top link. Kirby shortened the combine’s original fuel tank 10 in. and mounted it behind the cab. He also fashioned new tin work for the rear of the machine.

Out-of-pocket expenses were about \$1,200.

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Darker rebuilt an older-model Versatile 5000 hydrostatic drive combine, mounting a 30-ft. McDon double swather table on front that’s driven by hydraulic motors.

Home-Built Self-Propelled Swather

Canadian farmer D.G. Darker couldn’t justify the price of a commercial-built self-propelled swather but he had wanted to own one for years. He finally came up with a cost-effective way to build his own that fit his budget and made use of an old machine that would have ended up in a junk yard.

“I built it for one-fourth the price of a factory-built one and I think it’s as good, or maybe even better, than what’s on the market,” says Darker, about his home-built machine which is fitted with a 30-ft. table.

He first bought an older-model Versatile 5000 hydrostatic drive combine and tore it down to the frame and four wheels, then

took it to a local welding shop where they raised the frame up to 36-in. clearance. Then he took it back to his shop and installed a 4-cyl. Cummins diesel engine along with the hydrostatic transmission. Then he reinstalled the combine cab on the frame and put an air ride truck seat in it.

The last step was to buy a 30-ft. McDon double swather table that’s all driven by hydraulic motors.

“I’ve had very few problems with it,” says Darker.

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Self-propelled “clamp loader” was built from a Massey Ferguson 510 combine and is equipped with a Deere 260 loader and the cab off a 1980 Gleaner L combine.

Combine Turned Into Big Bale Handler

A self-propelled “clamp loader” built from an old Massey Ferguson 510 combine lets Mark Kuehl, Ashton, Idaho, carry two big square bales at a time.

Kuehl calls his unconventional machine the “Beast”. He built it for about \$8,000 including the cost of the loader.

He paid \$1,600 for the combine, which was equipped with a 327 cu. in. gas engine and 3-speed hydrostatic belt-driven transmission. He stripped the combine down, keeping the engine, operator platform, and running gear. He used 4 by 8 steel tubing to build a new frame and fitted it with a cab off a 1980 Gleaner L combine. He also equipped it with a Deere 260 loader. In order to direct-drive the hydrostatic transmission, he had to have a special adapter plate made to fit the flywheel. By direct-coupling the hydrostatic transmission directly to the flywheel he was able to keep the engine in line with the cab without having to turn it sideways.

He used steel tubing to build a U-shaped bale clamp which has one telescopic arm that extends out sideways via a 3 by 24-in. hydraulic cylinder.

“Considering that a used 80 hp tractor and loader sells for \$18,000 to \$20,000 it saved me at least \$10,000,” says Kuehl, who credits his mechanic friends Matt Black, John Scafe, Joe Pilgrim, and Duncan Bollinger for doing most of the mechanical work. “I use it to load bales onto a trailer in summer and to feed them out in winter. I got the idea when I switched from making small square bales to big square bales. I didn’t want to use a diesel loader tractor in the winter to feed cattle.

“My New Holland D1000 baler makes



Bale clamp carries two big square bales at a time. It has one telescopic arm that’s extended out sideways by a 3 by 24-in. hydraulic cylinder.

bales that are 2 ft. high, 3 ft. wide, and 7 ft. long and weigh about 500 lbs. each. As the bales come out of the baler they make a 1/4 turn and land on their side with the strings off the ground. I stack the bales the same way. When I retrieve them for feeding I remove the strings, then pick up two bales at a time and drop them in a feeder. I also make some 1-ton bales. When necessary, I can remove the clamp and replace it with a bale spear. I can also use a loader bucket for other work.

“The loader is powered by the header hydraulics and the bale clamp cylinder by an auxiliary valve. I use foot pedals to raise and lower the arms, tilt the clamp, and move the clamp in or out, leaving my hands free for steering. The hydrostatic drive eliminates clutching or shifting for forward or reverse travel. The engine on back acts as a counterweight to the loader and also allows a clear view ahead of me. By taking out four bolts I can remove the hood and lift the engine and transmission out for repairs.”

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