Detasseler Rebuilt To Side-Dress Fertilizer

Larry Klahn turned a detasseling machine into a highboy for side-dressing liquid fertilizer. His first concept didn't make it past the drawing board, but with more than a few changes, he made it happen.

"I picked up a liquid side-dress coulter bar at a farm sale for only $250," explains Klahn. "It came complete with a rate controller. However, I have some bottom ground that can get wet, and the corn can get too tall before I get in to side-dress. I started looking for a detasseler to mount the bar."

He found a used 4-WD detasseler, but when he asked the company that makes the detasselers about his idea, they dumped cold water on it. "They advised against it, as it didn't have the horsepower needed and the stress would be too much for the wheel motors," says Klahn.

When Klahn saw several companies with drop tubes at a farm show, he did a redesign. He ordered 12 sets of Y-style drop tubes from C&R Supply, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Now the challenge was to modify the detasseler. He started by stripping away the tassel pullers, hydraulic lines, and a bunch of wiring and valving. He added a subframe to the frame for added strength and replaced the OEM engine with a 6-cyl. Ford 300, industrial gas engine.

"It was set up to straddle three 30-in. rows or hydraulically widen to straddle three 36-in. rows," says Klahn. "Neither would let me follow my 12-row planter track."

He widened the front stationary axle to straddle four 30-in. rows and built a new pivoting axle for the rear to do the same.

"I recycled a toolbar from an old Go Devil cultivator to make the axle," says Klahn. "The 3/8-in. thick, 4-in. by 6-in. rectangular tube was probably 50 years old, but still solid."

He fabricated mounts for saddle tanks to carry 400 gal. of liquid fertilizer. The tanks sit on 2 by 6-in. rectangular tubes that attach to the subframe. That left making a toolbar for the Y-drops. He used a repurposed 8-row, 36-in. White Planter with a folding frame.

"I turned it a quarter turn, so when it folds, the wings fold alongside the detasseling machine," says Klahn. "I was able to use the rate controller and hydraulic pump from the side-dressing coulter bar. If I want to use the bar, I just move the controller back."

Klahn turned an old detasseler into a high-boy for side-dressing fertilizer.

In the past, Klahn has used his local co-op to side dress his corn, but they don't have a highboy. This was an economical way to get the option he needed.

"I have about $7,000 in the entire machine, $4,000 of that in the drops," he says. "That's still less than half the cost of another brand, and the folks at C&R worked with me the whole way. I called up numerous times to resolve orifice and plumbing problems."

Klahn is no stranger to fabrication work, the side-dress coulter bar he originally bought was one he had built for a local farmer 6 years earlier.

After his first season using the machine, Klahn is satisfied with his investment. "With the hydrostat in low range, I have a maximum speed of 8 mph and can run with the full 400 gal. of liquid fertilizer," says Klahn. "I'm no longer in a big rush to get side-dressing done."

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Service Buddy Makes Repairs Safe, Easier

For Blake Berbereia, changing knives on cotton stalk shredders was always a messy, dangerous, and impractical job, forcing him to wedge his body awkwardly underneath the machine to complete the task.

To make these jobs easier and safer, he came up with a unique idea called the Service Buddy which can attach to a typical 3-pt. hitch and tractor hydraulic system.

"Hook the Service Buddy to your tractor, connect the hydraulic hoses, and back it under the equipment you need to service," says Berbereia. "Pins lock it into place on the implement's quick hitch and on either side. You can rotate it to 90 degrees and lock it in place for rear access instead of getting underneath. You can also set the whole thing down with everything sitting on the Service Buddy's frame. It's very rigid and safe and would never drop on you."

The top catch link can be adjusted up or down, and the bottom connections inward and outward to match almost any piece of equipment.

The Service Buddy can lift 40 percent of its capacity, or up to 6,000 lbs.

Berbereia has a patent pending on the unit and is taking orders. He expects a short lead time to build the machines.

Service Buddy makes the bottom of implements accessible from the rear and can lift up to 6,000 lbs.

The Service Buddy sells for $3,499 plus applicable state tax and S&H.

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Underground "Earth-Tube" System Heats, Cools Calf Barns

To reduce heating and cooling costs for her calf-raising operation, Colleen Vanderloop of Brillion, Wis., researched earth-tube heating systems that she first heard about in the early 2000's.

After visiting two farms with variations of the underground heat system she designed a system that would work with her barns.

To begin, Vanderloop had 21 12-in. dia., 210-ft. long corrugated pipes buried 8-ft. deep with 8-ft. spacing leading from a nearby field to her barns.

"They need to be at least 8 ft. deep because that's where the temperature stays steady," says Vanderloop. "Fresh air is pulled into the tubes in the field and travels through them into the barns. Since they're corrugated, the air circulates and either cools or warms the air depending on the season."

The field end of each pipe begins 3-ft. above ground and is rain capped to keep out birds and debris while allowing air to flow into the underground pipes. The pipes join up at a manifold that tapers up to 48 in. dia. before entering the barns.

"Fans move air through the system and into the barns, pushing it into the positive pressure tubes like a furnace in a house," Vanderloop says. "We have exhaust fans that suck the air from the barns as well to keep air circulating."

The air reaches the barns at approximately 52 F on average during the winter, so no supplemental heating is required for the older animal housing. The barn for the younger calves is heat supplemented an extra 10 degrees with boilers, in-floor heating, and a radiator and fan system.

The field end of each pipe begins 3-ft. above ground and is rain capped to keep out birds and debris while allowing air to flow into the underground pipes.

"We've found our fuel savings to be very worthwhile," Vanderloop says. "We've been using our system consistently since 2017 and it's been trouble-free. We haven't had to touch it."

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Cargo Platform Fitted To 3-Pt. Lift Arms

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Like other FARM SHOW readers, this writer is always finding ideas in every issue that can make farm work simpler, more fun, or more interesting. For me, that sometimes happens before the idea even appears in an issue. That was the case when John Hohmann told me about his 3-pt. shelf and tool holder.

Hohmann has a knack for finding simple solutions to tractor life. He built a simple carry-all for supplies like baler twine and cans of fuel. He also turned a piece of angle iron into an easy-to-reach tool holder on his fender.

"For years, I've been driving my tractor one-handed while balancing cans of fuel, extra batteries, baler twine, and more," says Hohmann. "I built a 20 by 30-in. platform to rest on the arms of my 3-pt. hitch. I rimmed it with 2 by 2-in. edges to keep items from falling off."

Hohmann used 1-in. boards for the shelf. He added 2 by 2's under the platform to rest against the 3-pt. arms and stabilize the platform.

I was so impressed with the simple solution that I built one for myself. I made a few changes to match my needs. When I head to the woods, I carry my chainsaw and supplies in my loader bucket. That means I have to empty the bucket to use it to move a log or brush out of the way. I could see Hohmann's shelf solving that hassle.

I made mine a little bigger, 30 by 30 in., out of 1-in. boards. I added 8-in. high, 1/2-in. plywood sides with a gap for two chainsaw bars. That left room for the chainsaw bodies as well as the fuel mix, bar oil, and other chainsaw gear. I also had room for a log chain and my battery-powered winch (Vol. 44, No. 6).

One of the things that Hohmann liked about his was the light weight and ease of taking it on and off. He admitted that he needed to drive with some care over rough ground to be sure the platform didn't bounce off.

Hohmann built a 20 by 30-in. platform to rest on the arms of his 3-pt. hitch.

Mine is heavier to be sure. In addition to the under-shelf 2 by 2's, I added eye bolts to let me pin the shelf to a lift arm. This ensures it doesn't bounce off when I hit an unnoticed gopher mound.

Hohman's other idea caught my attention as well. He mounted a short length of angle iron to a rear fender after drilling holes for extra drawbar pins. I did the same for a drawbar pin, 3-pt. hitch pins and my chainsaw tool. Like his supply shelf, it's a super simple fix for a shortage of space on his tractor and mine. I'll be interested in hearing what FARM SHOW readers do with Hohmann's ideas.

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