

Mini round balers work well with smaller tractors and offer farmers and ranchers more options for their hay needs.



Mini Round Bales Make Sense For Small Farms

Big round bales may have made the Allis-Chalmers Roto Baler obsolete, but mini round bales still make sense for small farms and small tractors. Mini round balers from Small Farm Innovations (SFI) can make net-wrapped bales as small as 25 to 30 lbs. with only a 17 or 18-hp. tractor. SFI makes an accumulator for the mini round bales and offers a wrapper as well.

“Our mini round balers let our customers

control the quality and timing of the bales they make,” says Phil Livengood, SFI. “They no longer have to wait for the neighbor or custom hay baler to put up their hay.”

SFI sells mini round balers from two companies in Japan, IHI and Takakita. Livengood points to the difference between those companies and the leading Chinese competitor, IBEX.

“You can go to the IHI and Takakita

websites and learn all about them,” he says. “If I went out of business, my customers could order parts directly from the company. By comparison, you can’t even find where IBEX balers are built in China.”

IHI makes a mini-round net baler. Takakita makes a twine baler. “Most people in the last 20 years have wanted net over twine,” says Livengood. “The IHI net baler is a roller chain type and doesn’t like really tall material. However, the mini round twine baler has a forming chain that bales from tough cornstalks and Johnsongrass to gentle legumes.”

The MRB855N from IHI makes 100 to 150 35 to 55-lb., net-wrapped, 22 by 27-in. bales per hr. It offers six density settings and mounts to the tractor’s 3-pt. hitch. The MRB855N is equipped with electronic auto-wrap but can also be controlled manually. In ideal conditions, using auto-wrap can produce more than 150 bales per hr.

The mini round baler has a self-contained hydraulic pump and requires only pto and 12-volt connections to the tractor. SFI has been selling it since 2007.

The Takakita RB511 DX works with either sisal or poly twine and is equipped with forming chains. It can produce as many as 100 30 to 50-lb., 20 by 29-in. bales per hour. It requires as little as 17 hp. and has

a self-contained hydraulic system. It’s 3 pt. mounted and has an electronic wrapping control.

“It has a bale kicker, so there’s no need to back up when releasing a bale,” says Livengood. “Its 36-in. wide pickup is the widest in its class, making it easier to operate and more productive.”

SFI developed its own accumulator for the mini round balers. It’s designed to mount on front-end loaders and removes the backbreaking work of picking up bales by hand.

“Our accumulator saves time, labor costs and the need for pain medication,” says Livengood. “It accumulates and moves up to eight mini round bales at a time.”

The company also offers a mini round bale wrapper from Takakita. The 110-volt powered wrapper can handle up to 75 bales per hr., has three wrap settings and uses 10-in. wrapping film. The wheeled wrapper has a 33 by 69 in. footprint and is only 36 in. high.

The IHI MRB855N is priced at \$13,200, the Takakita RB511 DX at \$12,900, the SFI accumulator at \$2,200, and the Takakita wrapper at \$4,900.

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The Rawhide portable windbreak comes in two models. One is 150 linear ft. with three 8 by 24-ft. panels to a side, and the 200-linear ft. model has six panels.

Portable Windbreak Makes Working Cattle Easier

With a 220-cow herd, John McDonald knows how difficult working cattle can be. It’s one reason he designed and marketed his portable corrals (Vol. 28, No.5). Now, he’s created and is marketing a portable windbreak that can be used with or without his corral systems.

“When I invented my portable corral nearly 23 years ago, my priorities were strong and useable,” recalls McDonald. “My windbreak came about because of those corrals. Customers asked me to put plywood sheets on my corrals so they could use them as windbreaks. I decided to try.”

What he came up with far exceeded plywood sheets. McDonald recognized that his

windbreak would need to be stable and, like his corrals, require minimal labor to set up or break down.

“I looked at portable windbreaks on the market,” he says. “They were panels that had to be picked up, stacked on trailers and tied down. They required labor and skid loaders.”

The Rawhide portable windbreak comes in two models. One is 150 linear ft. with three 8 by 24-ft. panels to a side. The 200-linear ft. model has six panels. Both are carried on a trailer with a gooseneck hitch at one end and torsion axle suspension at the other. It can handle both highway speeds and rough pastures.

Both models can be equipped with a built-

in 19 by 24-ft. loafing shed roof. In transit, the roof folds down over the folded-up panels. While the roof is optional, McDonald says it’s ordered with most windbreaks.

When the trailer is pulled into place, the roof halves are raised hydraulically, and the connected panels are lowered to the ground. The operator rolls them out and away from the trailer on double, solid rubber wheels. The trailer remains on the leeward side of the panels.

Panels must be porous to properly break the wind, allowing some wind through. Each Rawhide Portable Corral panel has a lateral 5-in. slot midway top to bottom. Spaces at hinge points between panels also allow wind through, as does the wheel height space below the panels. Each panel is perimeter framed and cross framed with 14-gauge, 2 by 2-in. square tubing. The ridged skin on the panels is 16-gauge steel siding.

Panels are held in place by 8-ft. braces mounted to the vertical frame member above the wheels. Braces are designed to be chained to screw anchors drilled into the ground.

A built-in electric-over-hydraulic system provides hydraulic power. It comes complete with a 20-watt solar panel to charge the deep-cycle batteries. An inverter supplies 110-volt AC for the charger and the cordless drill used to sink anchors.

“We advise placing the braces away from prevailing winds, and we want the anchors used in case the wind direction changes,” says McDonald. “We include the drill, designed for planting trees, in the package because if

it isn’t there, people aren’t as likely to use the anchors.”

The windbreak has shown it can handle strong winds. “With 50 to 60 mph winds, the end panel has whipped around in a way that changed shape, but the windbreak stayed in place,” says McDonald. “We had a 35-mph wind and set out flags on the opposite side of the wind. They were 10 to 15 ft. from the panels and at the height of the lateral slots and never moved.”

While he expected his portable windbreak to be popular with rotational grazing operations, it’s also proven popular with traditional open-range systems. “Customers will rotate the windbreaks with the cattle as they move to fresh grass,” says McDonald. “We designed it to be moved, but we have guys set them up by their buildings and keep them there. They’re ideal for cattlemen leasing places where they winter cattle. If they lose the lease, they can take the windbreak with them.”

The six-panel Rawhide Portable Windbreak with roof panels is priced at \$28,000, and the eight-panel model with roof is priced at \$32,000. For an additional \$8,000, the windbreak is available with a calving option that includes a headgate, maternity alley, and post-calving pen.

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Riding Mower Axle Makes Heavy-Duty Trailer

When Dwayne Hanuszak couldn’t find a heavy-duty dump trailer, he built his own using the axle and wheels from an old riding lawn mower.

“I had an old MTD riding lawnmower that I wasn’t using anymore,” says Hanuszak. “The engine was gone, but the axle and rear wheels were in good condition. I thought they would be good for a trailer.”

Hanuszak made a frame for a 48 by 40-in. trailer out of angle iron from an old field rake. He added plywood for the bottom and sides and 2-in. square tubing for the tongue.

“I bolted a couple of pieces of truck frame to the axle,” says Hanuszak. “I was able to use holes that were already there, just ahead of the axle where the body of the lawnmower sat.”

Hanuszak bolted the box frame to the truck frame pieces, making sure the box was balanced for easy tipping. The tongue is pinned to a clevis-type connection to pivot at the axle.

“I have a release arm on the front where the tongue attaches,” says Hanuszak. “It’s spring loaded. I pull it, and the trailer dumps.”

Hanuszak hauls dirt and other materials with the trailer. “I haul a 35-gal. drum filled with water for watering my garden,” he says. “It’s heavy enough to handle that easily.”

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