"Swath Lifter" For Small Grain

Photos courtesy THE FARMER magazine.

The problem of wet, beat-down small grain swaths that dry too slowly for quick combining has been solved on the Spielman farm near Twin Valley, Minn., by use of a home-made swath lifting machine.

Lloyd Spielman and son Mark, made their hydraulically-driven lifter out of the belt pickup unit from a pull-type combine, four belts and other parts.

"The machine picks up the beaten-down swath, separates it, and lays it back on the field in a swath that looks like it was just swathed," explains Mark. "The pickup was made to feed a combine so it doesn't tear apart the swath like some lifters we've seen."

The Spielmans have used the machine on wheat, barley and oats. "On oats, some grain is shattered out and lost but it's not a big problem, says Mark. "The shatter loss on wheat or barley is hardly anything."

Once the swath has been lifted by the machine, air circulates more easily through the grain. "You run the belts on the pickup slightly faster than your ground speed so, when the pickup fingers contact the swath, they stretch it. Also, the stubble is combed up. The machine does not move the swath to one side where it might fall into the tractor's tracks," explains Mark.

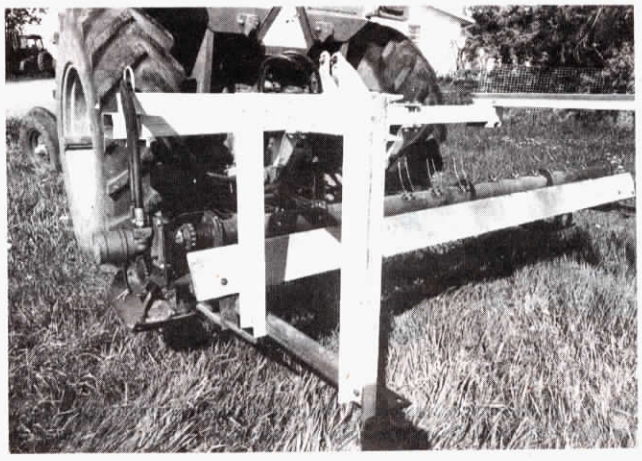
The Spielmans used the lifter on about 100 acres two years ago and figure they would have lost that crop without it. Last year, the machine wasn't needed at all. "When you need it, you really need it. We figure it pays off in the long run to have one of those lifters sitting in the shed, ready to use when needed," Mark points out.

"You can come back and combine much quicker if you've lifted the swath. Quicker drying helps keep the grain from sprouting in the swath. On barley, using the lifter can mean being able to retain malting quality," adds Mark.

The Spielmans have no desire to go into mass production on the lifter but do have fabrication plans available by mail. They've custom built a few for neighbors and find that it takes two men about five hours.

New belts are required, and cost about $300. Items needed, in addition to the belts and the used combine pickup, include some channel iron, bolts, toolbar from a cultivator, a hydraulic motor, coupler and bracket. Although the Spielmans used a Deere belt pickup, just about any make belt pickup would work, says Mark.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Spielman, Route 1, Twin Valley, Minn. 56584 (ph 218 567-8510).



FARM SHOW

"Made it Myself"

Some of the best new products we hear about are "made it myself" innovations born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new invention or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so, where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors?

Harold M. Johnson, Editor

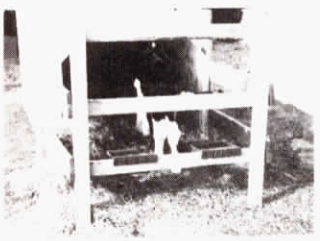
Get Low-Growing Weeds

Gerrit Kroese, Inwood, Iowa, thinks wick-type weed bars do a good job getting tall-growing weeds above the crop but asks, "What about the cockleburs or late volunteer corn that are missed, below the level of the crop?"

To solve the problem and make his last pass through bean fields as effective as possible, Kroese built a frame of salvaged angle iron and mounted a pair of comfortable car seats on either side of the tractor just behind his wick-type weeder. Mrs. Kroeze and a daughter, Nancy, use plastic squeeze bottles to squirt a few drops of Roundup on those few plants left below as they ride by. "We like the drops from the squeeze bottles better than a spray gun because there's less chance for drift," says Kroeze. The set-up cost $15, plus shop time.

Telescoping Calf Hutch Extension

Home-made telescoping fronts made of 2 x 4's and positioned on the front of dairy calf hutches help keep calves out of the weather when necessary, says dairyman Donald Baker of Lineboro, Md.



The hutches Baker uses are 4 by 8 ft., and the telescoping fronts, when extended, create an additional 4 by 4 ft. outside area. When a calf is first put into a hutch, the extension is pushed clear back in, keeping the calf inside. As the calf gets a little older, the telescoping front is extended, allowing the calf outside into the sunshine.

In rainy weather, the hutch extensions are pushed back in (an easy task, says Baker) to keep calves from creating a muddy area in front of their hutches. They're opened again when the ground dries.

Calves are kept in the hutches 8-10 weeks, and the extensions are built so as to keep calves in without netting or fencing. Two feeders are mounted on the lowest rung of the frame.