



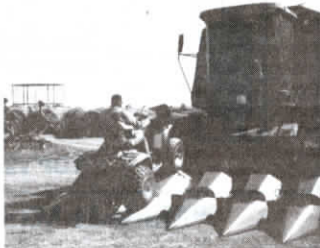
## He Hauls 4-Wheeler On Combine Cornhead

"Saves a lot of time whenever I combine corn by myself," says Paul Ciha, Mechanicsville, Iowa, who hauls his Polaris 350 4-wheel ATV on top of the snouts on his Deere 9500 combine's cornhead.

Ciha uses a screwdriver to pop the "ear savers" off two of the snouts. Then he drives the ATV up onto the header until the front wheels drop down onto the cross auger. He sets the parking brakes to lock the front wheels. The rear wheels set on top of the snouts.

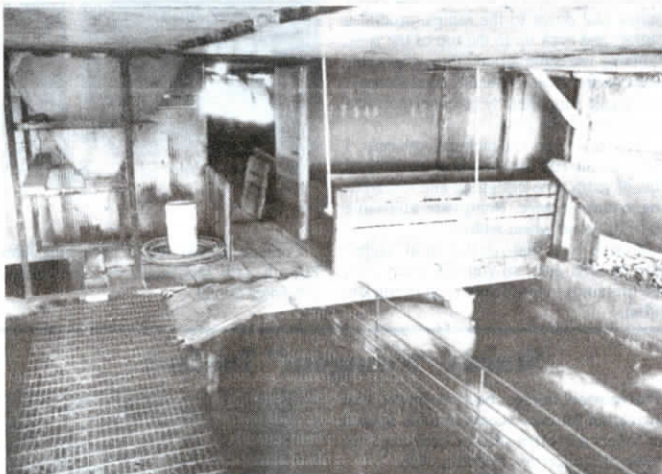
"I get a lot of strange looks on the highway, but it saves a lot of walking," says Ciha, who used the same idea on his Deere 7720 Titan II combine before trading it last summer. "The tin on the snouts is kind of slick so it works best to have the cornhead facing uphill when loading so the ATV doesn't have such a steep climb. Sometimes I tie a rope around the ATV's rack on back and loop it down under the snouts, but most of the time I don't tie the ATV down at all. I've never had it slip off. As long as the cornhead is level it's safe to use.

"I can haul the ATV out to the field, then unload it and drive it back to the house to pick up a truck or tractor and wagons. The ATV has a hitch on front so I can pull it



behind the truck or tractor and wagon back out to the field. Or, when I'm switching farms, I can unload the ATV at one farm and drive it back to the other farm to pick up the other equipment. It also comes in handy if the person driving the tractor and wagon quits early and I have to finish combining by myself. I can drive the tractor and wagon home, then drive the ATV back to the field, load it on the combine, and drive the combine home so it doesn't have to sit overnight in the field."

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## He Feeds Sows Beneath Finishing Floor

John Poirot figures he's reduced the cost of feeding sows by more than half in the last six years.

The Nashville, Ill., farmer did it by letting his brood sows roam beneath his hog house's slatted floor, an area that was once the facility's 4-ft. deep liquid manure pit. All it took to turn the pit into a feeding area was to knock out a 32-ft. long concrete wall

on the building's south side. With the wall removed, sows are able to exit and enter the feeding area as they please.

"I heard of a farmer doing this 20 or more years ago, but I haven't heard of anyone doing it since," Poirot says. "The pit was divided into four compartments to begin with and I feed 20 to 22 sows in each one.

"Wasted feed from hogs feeding above



Photo courtesy Iowa Farmer Today

## "Crust Buster" Breaks Up Chunks Of Grain From Outside The Bin

An Iowa farmer and his three sons came up with a low-cost way to break up chunks of wet grain at the bottom of their bins by simply turning a handle outside the bin.

"It lets us break up chunks of wet grain at the auger inlet from outside the bin. It's much safer than climbing up on top of the bin," says Robert Rottinghaus, who has made "crust busters" for seven different bins.

Most versions of Rottinghaus's "crust buster" are mounted below raised bin floors. Rottinghaus cuts a small hole in the wall of the bin just under the floor and cuts another hole into the floor next to the auger inlet. A 1-in. dia. steel pipe runs under the floor and welds into place, then a 7/8-in. dia. greased steel rod is inserted into the pipe. Each end of the rod is then bent at a 90 degree angle. Turning the end outside

the bin causes the bent end of the rod inside the bin to rotate back and forth and break up the crusted grain.

"I usually bend the rod about 12 to 16 in. from the end and leave it long enough so that I can also push or pull it about 1 ft. It breaks up wet grain over a 2-ft. wide, 1-ft. long area. It isn't necessary to use a pipe under the floor, but if a pipe isn't used some kind of bearing support is needed to keep the rod rigid when it's moved back and forth.

"In bins without raised floors I simply lay a 7/8-in. dia. hot rolled rod on top of the floor and use some kind of bearing support to keep it in place. The sweep auger goes right over the rod."

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the sows falls through the slats and the sows eat it for supplemental feed," he explains.

Along with slashing feeding costs for his sows, Poirot is realizing other benefits as well. For one thing, he no longer has the fly and odor problems associated with stored liquid manure. (Excess now seeps out a drain and gutter system in the end of the building to his lagoon, which keeps levels on the lower feeding floor at a constant 2-in. level, he says). For another, Poirot feels his herd has built up some scours im-

munity because sows also get some of the animal wastes that fall through the slatted floor with the feed.

Poirot normally removes sows from the feeding area one month before farrowing.

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