

Merkle replaces factory cast iron axle housings (left photo shows broken housing) with new housing machined out of solid steel (on right) with welded-on flange.

**"PERMANENT REPLACEMENT"
FOR CAST IRON PART**

All-Steel Axle Housing For Versatile Tractors

"We started making replacement axle housings for Versatile tractors because we didn't want to replace the broken housings on our own tractor with manufacturer's parts which would not have solved the problem," says Kent Merkle, a farmer and machine shop operator from Ohio City, Ohio, who makes "better than new" all-steel replacement housings for Versatile tractors that he says are "3 to 4 times stronger than original parts".

Merkle says the axle housing problem with Versatile tractors is widespread. "I've broken all four housings on my Versatile 900 and, since I started selling all-steel replacements, I've got customers from all over the country solely through word-of-mouth advertising. The sad thing is that when the axle housing breaks, you can also break the outer planetary hub and damage the axle and differential. Ford New Holland knows they've got a problem so they've lowered the cost of replacement parts to try to keep customers happy. The problem is that if you replace the broken housing with manufacturer's parts, you're likely to have the same problem again because, although the company has made a few design changes, it's still a cast iron part that's not strong enough for the tractor."

Albert Preston, Wenona, Ill., has had three broken axle housings on his Versatile 895 tractor and two broken housings on his Versatile 850. "We were told that ours was an unusual, isolated case. Baloney! This is a serious, widespread problem which Versatile refuses to recognize. We had two broken housings on our 850 since we purchased it new. My son won't even drive our 850 for fear that another axle will break. When it does, the tractor suddenly stops and drops down, exposing the driver to possible severe injuries. If this breakage happened on the road, no telling how many people might be injured."

Joe Park, Tupperville, Ontario, told FARM SHOW his 1982 Versatile 895 is a "best buy" except for the axle housing prob-

lem. "The tractor has tremendous power. The problem is that I've broken three axle yokes - two on the front right and one on the front left. My dealer fixed the first two free but I fixed the third one for a cost of \$1,100. Ford New Holland won't recognize the problem. They told me I was the first person who'd ever had that type of breakdown."

Merkle says the housing most often breaks between the spline and the seal ring but it can also break between the housing and the 10-in. dia. flange that bolts to the tractor frame.

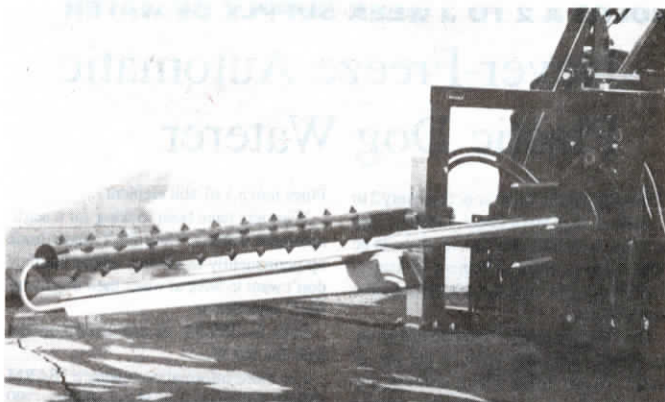
Merkle machines his heavy-duty axle housing from a solid 6-in. dia. block of steel. He says the original cast part has 7/8-in. thick sidewalls. His machined part has 1 3/4-in. thick sidewalls. He also solves the problem with the flange by welding it to the housing, making it much stronger than the original part, which is cast with the rest of the housing.

"It takes 40 to 50 hrs. for us to machine each replacement housing. Our housing weighs 175 lbs. versus 125 lbs. for the original part. Once installed, you're likely never to have a problem again. We made our first all-steel replacement housing six years ago and it's never had a problem. Now that we sell them, we back them with a 2-year warranty," says Merkle.

He says some of his customers replace the original axle housings before they break. "By installing all-steel housings now, you can avoid future down time and damage to hubs, axles and differentials."

Merkle's axle housings to fit Versatile models from 700 to 935 sell for \$1,395. Housings to fit 945's and larger sell for \$1,900. Ford New Holland sells replacement housings for \$650 to \$800 apiece. "Their parts cost less money but ours solve the problem permanently," notes Merkle.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Merkle Machine, Rt. 1, Box 100, Ohio City, Ohio 45874 (ph 419 238-4790 or 419 965-2733).



Rotating bale spear spins bale against studded roller which peels off layers of hay.

**MOUNTS ON FRONT-END LOADER AND CAN
BE USED WITH BALE FEEDERS, MIXERS**

Big Bale Unroller For Front-End Loaders

A new "high lift" round bale feeder that mounts on a front-end loader lets you reach high to unroll bales into bale feeders and mixers.

You can use the hydraulically operated "Big Bale Dispenser" to pick up bales weighing up to 3,000 lbs., if your tractor is big enough to handle the weight, and transport them to feeding areas. To unroll, you remove the strings and start rotating the bale spear and studded roller that peels off the layers of hay. You can unroll a bale in 2 min. or less. The unit can also be mounted on a 3-pt. hitch.

"Other big bale unrollers are 3-pt. hitch mounted only," says J.C. Bergen, general manager. "This is the first big bale unroller that can be mounted on a front end loader. It conserves a lot of feed because you don't always have to unroll and feed bales on the ground like with 3-pt. unrollers. Also, the bale isn't cut or shredded so no feed value is lost. Hay is fluffed for easy consumption."

The speed of the studded unrolling cylinder controls the thickness of material removed from the bale. Bales may be unrolled partially or completely. "You can unroll as much hay as you want to, stop at any time, and return unused portions of the bale for later feeding," notes Bergen.

The unit is completely controlled from the tractor seat with hydraulic solenoid valves. It converts from open to closed center hydraulic systems with the flick of a switch and can be removed from the front-end loader in five minutes or less. A universal bracket allows mounting on most front-end loaders.

Sells for \$3,391 (Canadian dollars) F.O.B. Winnipeg.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Inland Steel & Forgings Ltd., 675 Washington Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2K 1M4 (ph 204 667-7854).



Side-mount lets Hagen pull picker alongside tractor and put a 3-pt. mounted rock digger on back.

Side-Mounted Rock Picker

"My rock picker's much easier to operate since I mounted it on a side hitch and I can operate my 3-pt. mounted 'rock naber' for digging out big rocks at the same time," says Larry Hagen, Gatzke, Minn.

He used an 8-in. I-beam mounted across the front of the tractor for the side hitch, bracing it back to the front of the tractor drawbar with 1 1/2 by 3-in. thick wall tubing. He also put a spreader bar between the

back of the tractor and the back of the picker so it follows the tractor when turning or backing up.

"Tractor tires don't run over smaller rocks ahead of the picker so they're easier to pick. And having a 3-pt. digger on back lets you do everything with one tractor," notes Hagen.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Hagen, Rt. 2, Box 78, Gatzke, Minn. 56724 (ph 218 459-3444).