

"Owner's Report" On Best, Worst Balers

Are you satisfied with your baler? How could it be improved? Have you modified your baler in any way? What equipment do you use to transport bales? Have you tried making round bale silage?

These are some of the questions we asked randomly selected baler owners in an effort to highlight those balers that perform with flying colors, and to pinpoint the "lemons" that fail because of poor performance or failure of the dealer or company to provide service.

Here's how the survey shaped up:

Big Round Balers

"I'm extremely pleased with the hydraulic knife on our 1990 New Idea 484 round baler which cuts the bale in half after it's made, making two easy-to-handle bales," says David Marshall, Kirkton, Ontario. "I'm also happy with this baler's reliability and bale-forming ability, even in light windrows. One area that could use improvement is that real tough hay wraps around the rollers."

• Daryl Winkler, Calgary, Alberta, is pleased with his 1991 Deere 835 round baler. "It works well under most conditions, making good tight bales. One option I should add is converging wheels to help bring in wide windrows. I use a tandem truck to haul six bales at a time. A hoist dumps them off the back."

• David S. McKean, Stillwater, Minn., owns an Owatonna 595 round baler. "It's been quite reliable but I don't like having to grease the pickup bars. It's time-consuming and awkward. I haven't tried making bale silage because Owatonna has a fixed size chamber so baling high-moisture haylage wouldn't work real well. I built my own bale transport. It's just a wooden frame mounted on an 8-ton running gear. Easily hauls six 1,500-lb. bales."

• "My 1978 Massey Ferguson 560 is the only baler I've ever owned. My only trouble has been with the belts. They aren't wide enough and need better belt guides. I doubled the width of the two outside belts and also vulcanized all belt splices. I haul bales on a 27-ft. flatbed trailer, loading them with a Case 580 backhoe tractor with a bale spear on the bucket," says Clarice Myers, Jr., Battletown, Kent.

• "My best buy round baler is a 1986 IH 3650. It works good, is fast, always gets the bale started, and has been trouble-free. I can't see any way to improve it," says Alvin Kallas, Leola, S. Dak.

• Marvin Wilkinson, Hot Springs, S. Dak., has had good luck with his 1980 Hesston 5540 round baler. "It's fairly simple to service and operate. Reliable. One improvement it needs is gauge wheels on the pickup but I haven't modified it in any way."

• "We make about 1,500 round bales a year for our own use and, other than belts, have not had to replace any major components since buying it in 1979," says Harold Sorrell, Flemingsburg, Kent., about his Gehl 1400. "Bale size is perfect for hauling and stacking. We bale straw for bedding barns and one person can unroll a straw bale by himself."

• "It'll bale hay at any moisture content," says William Nova Johnson, Queen City, Mo., about his 1988 New Holland 855 round baler. "I can bale anything at any time. We use bale spikes on our pickup and tractor to handle bales."

• "I wish it had more adjustment on the pickup for use in swamps or other wet areas. Dual wheels would help too," says Harold

Knudson, Brook Park, Minn., otherwise pleased with his 1990 Gehl 1865 round baler. "It makes tight bales and does a good, clean job under most conditions."

• Jim Dinklage, Milburn, Neb., says his 1983 Vermeer 605H will not bale wet hay. "If you try, it wraps on the drive roll. Actually, I don't mind the wrapping because I know that if the roller wraps, conditions are too wet to bale and the hay probably wouldn't keep."

• "I've baled just about everything with my 1981 New Holland 846, including cornstalks and wet alfalfa put up as 'baleage'. I like this chain-type baler except for the floor chains, which require high maintenance. I'm thinking of installing some type of automatic oiler for the chain," says Richard Swiontek, Bancroft, Wis. "I especially like the auto wrap feature on this baler. A buzzer goes off and the baler wraps twine with two arms. If they had this feature on new models, I'd probably trade this one in. "I made bale-hauling wagons out of trailer houses with a regular wagon front axle on front. Each bale wagon hauls 14 bales. I also haul bales on the back of a schoolbus with the body cut off. It also holds 14 bales, and with automatic transmission, makes a good bale hauler."

• "I'm well-satisfied with our Owatonna 595 round baler which is now made by Gehl. It's virtually maintenance-free. It has rollers instead of belts and the main drive chains are self-oiled. It's simple to operate and does a good job. The only problem is that it won't work in tough stalks. I understand the new model made by Gehl does a better job," says Merle Rost, Ivanhoe, Minn. "To haul bales, I extended the reach on wagons and fitted them with 35 to 40-ft. long power poles. Makes it easy to haul 6 or 7 bales at a time. Loading and unloading bales is a breeze with my Ford 276 bi-directional tractor."

• "I recently traded a 1978 New Holland 850 baler for a Case-IH 8480 round baler. The 850 was a good trouble-free baler but had trouble baling straw behind a rotary combine. The new 8480 works well in straw. We made 350 straw bales and 56 hay bales last year so we don't have enough information yet to know how it will hold up," says Les Case, Portage La Prairie, Manitoba.

• David Matejovsky, Wolf Point, Mont., says his 1991 Deere 535 round baler is "an excellent machine" but he has a suggestion for improvement. "All balers should have a monitor on the twine so you could tell when there's a problem. I've had it happen where the twine catches on a weed or whatever and twine ends up running all through the bale."

• "Our 1991 New Idea 486 big round baler has performed well in grass, clover, cornstalks, soybeans, and rye. We've had some trouble ejecting bales if hay is damp but it hasn't been a big problem. I can't drive as fast as my neighbor does with his

Deere 435 but I can make a bale every 3 min. in good hay," says Mike Miller, Indianola, Ill.

• "I've had good luck with my Vermeer 605F baler. It makes good solid bales and starts bales real well. The pickup is the weakest part of it. I had to completely rebuild it. The problem is that the grease fittings on it are almost impossible to get to. Otherwise I'm pleased and would probably buy another if I were in the market," says Wayne A. Doolin, Lancaster, Kent.

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Robert Fasig, Lakeville, Ohio, about his 1982 New Holland 851A. "I'm sure more recent models have been greatly improved. One thing we've tried is bagging hay. The first time we lost a lot of it due to rodents making holes in the bags. Last year we tried wrapping hay and it worked great."

• "We're well-satisfied with our 1987 New Holland 853 round baler," says Lynn Krick, Lenhartsville, Penn. "We've baled almost 3,500 bales of corn stalks, straw, bean stalks, hay, and high-moisture hay.

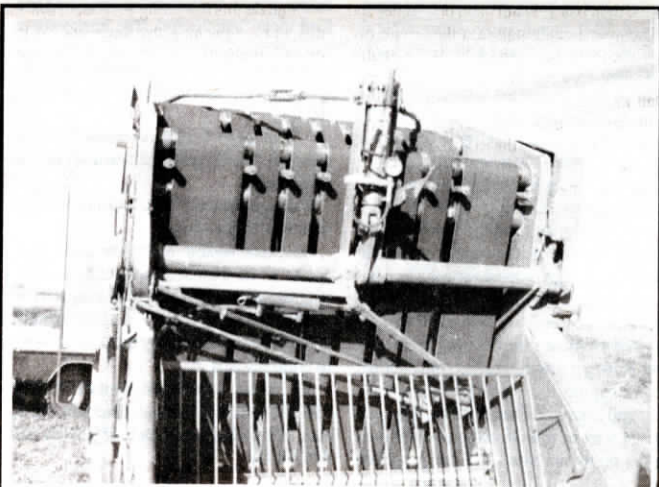
The only thing it could use is stronger bars in the bale chamber chain.

• "We've made over 180 high moisture silage bales. It worked out good with the exception of a few bags that mice chewed through, spoiling the hay. The baler performed well in high-moisture hay and cows loved the bale silage."

• "Our hay is custom-baled but we used Ag Bag individual bale bags to make bale silage when our hay crop got wet. It proved to be a good way to save a crop but it's definitely a 2-man job to bag and tie the bales," says Scott, Jung, Cosby, Mo.

• Dick Kralis, LaMonte, Mo., owns a 1988 Vermeer 605 round baler. "It makes a neat, light bale but they need to improve its ability to start bales. I've tried placing straps and small rollers between the belts to stop the overlapping when the bale is being started. But everything I try seems to catch bits of hay that build up till I have to stop to clean it out. I have another idea I plan to try this summer that I hope will stop the belts from overlapping when starting a bale."

• "It starts bales easily in any and all conditions and the bales are easy to handle," says Gary Woita, Atkinson, Neb., about his 1988 New Holland 855 round baler. "Bales average 1,200-1,400 lbs. and do not require large equipment to handle. The baler has a bale kicker so you don't spend time backing up. One problem is that this baler is noisy. The automatic chain oiler should put more oil on the main chain. We've fitted the baler with a liquid preservative applicator for Pioneer inoculants and it has worked well."



Add-On Twine Tie Arm For Vermeer Balers

"Before I added this twine tie arm it took about as long to tie a bale as it did to make it," says Jack Lenoir, Cut Bank, Mont., about the double twine tie arm kit he rigged up on his Vermeer 605 F round baler.

The modification included a second twine-tie arm and two large twine boxes that each hold 4 to 5 balls of twine.

"The baler originally wrapped so slow I would get in a hurry and not put enough twine on which made the bales hard to handle later," says Lenoir. "Also, with two strings tied on the bale if I ever break one, the other one will hold the bale together."

"Both arms wrap the bale at the same time so I can wrap the bale twice as fast. I made the conversion in the spring of 1989 and have since converted two more balers for neighbors who are very satisfied with them. My double twine tie arm would also work on Vermeer 605 Super F, G, and H balers. Of course, most newer round balers now have double twine tie arms," notes Lenoir, who adds that he's willing to make a do-it-yourself kit available on a custom basis if there's enough interest.

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