

# Mini Baler "Perfect In Every Detail"

By JoKay Mittenberger

In today's busy yet compact world we have mini-this and mini-that. Minivans for economy, mini-cars for recreation, and now we have mini-bales.

Mini-bales? That's what scores of people said when they saw three Hoosiers sitting under a shade tree feeding wheat straw into a mini-baler at a recent Indiana antique tractor show.

According to owner and builder, Robert Colson of Elwood, Ind., there is a lot of demand for his mini-bales of straw at local fairs, steam shows and other country events.

"Florists, churches, craft shops, funeral directors, heck of a lot of people want my bales of straw," Colson laughs. He built his 3/8 scale McCormick-Deering baler in 1982 following his retirement the previous year. With two heart attacks in his history, Colson had to find something to occupy his time. Assisted by friends, Colson displays his baling talents and his finished product and offers them for sale at shows April through December.

Born and raised on a farm, Colson is an admitted tinkerer who has also created a 3/8 scale-case thresher and quite a number of mini wagons.

Colson has produced four of the mini-balers. The other three are now at home in Illinois, North Carolina and Ohio. In his operation he is using the second baler he constructed.

Colson's baler is powered by a five-horsepower engine. He provides the manpower to feed the straw into the machine tying the 6-in. sq., 1-ft. long bales by hand with a pliers. All parts were built from scratch at exactly 3/8 scale.

"We've sold them for rat houses, dog houses, and even a few cat houses," Colson says.

He knows two of his bales have found homes a long way from home — one in Japan and one in Honduras, taken by an exchange student staying in the area.

"I've given away as many bales as I've sold," Colson recalled. "You just can't let a little kid without a cent in his pocket walk away without one when you can see how much he



"Perfect" 3/8-scale baler makes 6 x 6 in. by 1 ft. long bales.

wants one," he says.

For more information, contact: son, Rt. 3, Elwood, Ind. 46036 (ph 317 FARM SHOW Followup, Robert Col- 552-6097).

## A GOOD ONE'S WORTH \$4,500

# Collectors Restore Old Gas Pumps

A few years ago, John Rutske found a Twenties Era gas pump, brought it back to his custom metal-working shop, completely overhauled it and decked it out with chrome metal and a shiny red paint job.

Since then, he's gotten hooked on his off-beat hobby, buying old gas pumps wherever he can, restoring some for others, and finding himself wishing he had more time and money to devote to them.

John says the restorable gas pumps were built from about 1915 to 1929. Unrestored, they sell in a range from about \$250 to \$500. "Like any other collecting," John says, "some pumps are more rare and sought after, such as twin cylinder or twin clock face Canadian pumps. They'll run you about \$2,500 unrestored."

The glass globes that fit on top of the pumps, he says, command prices of \$85, on up to \$1,000 or more. Restoring a pump might take you 100 hours, plus parts, if you know what you're doing. That's why John typically asks about \$4,500 for a completely overhauled, shining gas pump. Though they are in working order, he says people buy them to decorate restaurants or use them as patio or garage lights, even as aquariums.

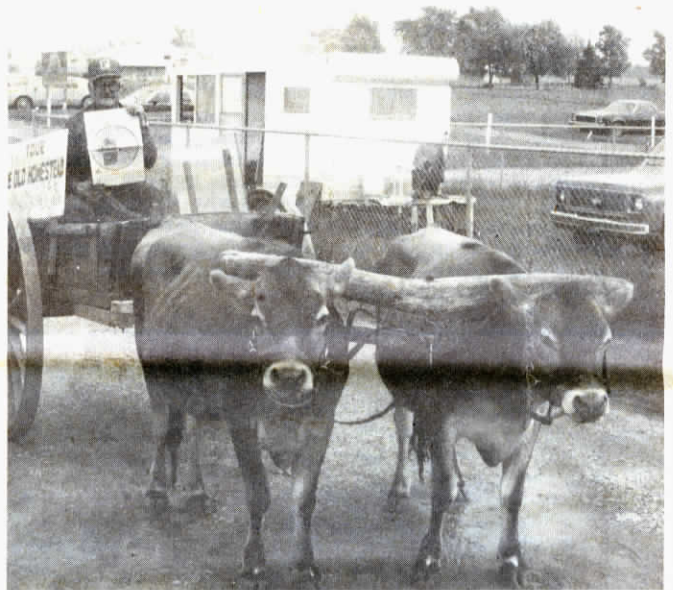
John says he's just a dabbler; some guys really get into it. "There's a fel-



A good restored pump's worth \$4,500.

low down in Oklahoma who's got a collection of 650 pumps and more than a thousand globes."

There's also a book out on the old-style pumps, called *10 Gallons For A Dollar*, written by Bob Lee. It sells for about \$20 from Harlo Press, 50 Victor, Highland Park, MI 48203. To contact John Rutske; FARM SHOW Followup John's Custom Fabrication, Inc., 1401 W. 97th St., Bloomington, MN 55431. (Story and photo reprinted courtesy of Home Shop Magazine, 650 Mt. Curve, St. Paul, Minn. 55116.)



Joe uses his oxen and cart to advertise businesses and products in his hometown.

## THEY'RE IN DEMAND FOR COMPANY PICNICS, FAMILY REUNIONS, AND PARADES

# Retired Farmer Turns Oxen Into Business

When Joe Fry retired from farming a few years ago, he started thinking about the oxen he once trained on the farm as a boy. He decided to "get into the business" again and has found a big local demand for the services of his perfectly matched pair of Jersey oxen.

Joe says he started training the Jersey steers almost from birth. He made the halters and bridles the animals use, as well as the straight bits. The yoke and neck pieces were also handmade to fit the team.

Joe says it takes lots of time and personal attention to train cattle from the day they are born. But if you don't spend the time, he cautions, your

chances of having a well-behaved team are poor.

His team is very gentle and noise from cars, trucks or even crowds doesn't phase them. They start immediately on the command of "gidup" and stop on "whoa". They stand quietly when Joe visits with people they meet.

Since Joe hit the road with his oxen, he can't keep up with the requests he gets for their services at family reunions, company picnics, parades, and even for local advertising.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Joe Fry, 11707 C.R. 62, Middlebury, Ind. 46502 (ph 219 825-2503).