

ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE

"Owner's Report" On Best, Worst Round Balers

Are you satisfied with your big round baler? How could it be improved? Have you modified your baler in any way? How do you preserve your bales? Have you tried making round bale silage?

These are some of the questions we asked randomly selected round 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:

"It needs double twine tie because it takes as long to tie as it does to bale. I think the new models have been improved," says David Bowdle, Clarksburg, Ohio, about his "best buy" 1988 Deere 530 baler. "It does a fine job and anybody with a little mechanical knowledge can run it. We're satisfied."

"We had to put heavier chain on the drive when the factory one wore out," says Floyd Koerner, Jr., Laingsburg, Mich., otherwise pleased with his 1982 OMC 590. "It's an excellent machine that requires minimum upkeep. Makes good 1,500-lb. bales."

"I put a Dakon pickup with a round drum on my 1978 Gehl 1600 baler. It's more like a combine pickup. It's got a low profile and it's easy to change teeth on it and it's quiet in operation. Gets more hay into the baler and saves more leaves. I also put gathering wheels on either side of the pickup. One thing I like about this baler is the off-center pto shaft. It gives you unobstructed visibility of the pickup and makes servicing easier," says Mark Severson, Minot, N. Dak.

Glenn Armintrout, Washington Church, Ohio, is pleased with his 1980 New Holland 852 auto-wrap. "The only improvement I'd like to see is a gauge that would tell you which side of bale needs more hay. You can get this feature on new models."

"We've only used our 1988 Deutz-Allis baler one year but we're very satisfied. It's practically maintenance-free and runs very quiet. Makes tight bales and is the least expensive of all the balers I tried during the 1988 hay season. Can't think of anything I'd improve. I've noticed that the 1989 and 1990 models remain unchanged," says Rene Lalonde, Moose Creek, Ontario, who tried making round bale silage but had trouble when he stored the bales outside. "Stems of hay poked holes in the bags due to wind."

Sanford Vig, Claire City, S. Dak., owns a 1984 New Holland 851. "We're satisfied with it but it needs a better chain oiler."

Mike Bailey, Boscobel, Wis., is pleased with his Deere 530 baler but says, "It needs a faster twine-tie."

"Our 1988 Case/IH 8420 is smooth and quiet-running and makes excellent bales. It's easy to operate and service and has a low horsepower requirement. I wish they'd fit it with a bale kicker so you wouldn't have to back up to eject. I store all bales inside and feed them outdoors in feeders I built on skids with roofs over them. Hay loss is almost zero," says Jack Aungst, Portland, Mich.

Brad Alyea, Woodstock, Ontario, has had good luck with a 1989 Deere 435. "It's performed well for us under all conditions. It's fast, primarily because of the net wrap attachment. Settings for changing bale size and/or density are very easy to use. We've found that the extra cost of net wrap over twine is easily offset by the speed of tying and ease of removal of wrap. We buy our replacement net wrap from Sylfilco in Exeter, Ontario. It's cheaper than Deere's and works just as well. We've tried a lot of different chemical preservatives with poor results on all of them."

"Our 1989 New Holland 848 is one sweet machine. We went with this model because of the small bale size and length (4 ft.), which is better for trucking. We've only used it for one season but the air bags that control density are simple and handy. The oilers for chain and raddle lubrication seem to do the job well. That was our biggest concern with previous models. The only change we've made to the baler is to add gathering wheels to the pickup," says Phil Baker, Mass City, Mich.

Ken Brown, Harrison, Mich., likes his 1986 Deere 430. "It makes tight bales with

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very few breakdowns. Tying speed is a bit slow but they have speeded it up on newer models. We tried baling high moisture hay to make silage bales but the baler can't handle it. Wet hay wraps around the first set of rollers."

"We've made only about 85 bales with our 1990 Deere 435 baler but some of them were wet hay and it did a good job. We're satisfied. We store bales in a 42 by 64-ft. shed open at both ends. We have tried making silage by bagging about 20 bales but haven't fed any of them out yet. Bagging is a time-consuming process," says Melvin J. Coblenz, Uniontown, Ohio.

"We're happy with our 1982 Hesston 5500 but wish it had attachments to eliminate weaving back and forth over the windrow and the ability to wrap bales with plastic while in the machine. We wrap bales with a home-built machine," says Charles H. Lewis, Jr., Hamilton, Ohio.

"Our 1985 Deutz 220 works good on hay but really shines on tough stuff like com-stalks. The high density of the outside of bale minimizes spoilage if bales are stored outside. Can't think of any way to improve it," says Gerry Schuster, Sun Prairie, Wis. He tried making bale silage by bagging high-moisture bales. "It worked okay but is too much work. You have to be extremely careful not to poke holes in the bale."

Daniel Dietrich, Marengo, Iowa, has had good luck with his "best buy" 1990 Deere 535 round baler. "It bales hay in any condition from any size windrow. Has an excellent pickup. We wrap some bales with a Vermeer wrapper and store some inside."

"It makes good bales, is easy to run and easy to get a bale started," says Mike Mente, Tipton, Iowa, about his 1980 Deere 510 baler. "I plan to replace the outside belts with wide ones. We use plastic twine and put plastic covers on some bales. Works fine."

"We're very satisfied with our 1988 Deere 430 baler but it needs a double wrap needle," says Carl Setlak, Standish, Mich.

"We're well-satisfied with our new Gehl 1465 round baler, although it was recalled last winter for a new twine wrapping cut-off. The smaller 4 by 5-ft. bale size lets you load them two wide on trucks. The density is good but it needs a gauge to let you know density's the same bale after bale. Some of the twine guides were made from chain link. I changed them to ceramic and increased the numbers of them. The magnet plate was too weak causing double cycling when dumping bale. I braced it," says Bud G. Beeler, Fremont, Mich.

"I've seen round balers get steadily better over the years. We've already baled 7,000 bales with our latest 1987 Deere 530 and it's the best one ever," says Norman Farrington, Olin, Iowa. "My first round baler was an IH 241. I baled 3,500 bales with it in 3 years but had quite a bit of trouble. Then I had a Deere 510 for 3 years and made 7,000 bales but had a lot of trouble with wet hay and belts. My next baler was a Deere 530 that I used to make 8,000 bales. My biggest problem with it was when the main tube with all the tension rollers on it broke. Now I've had my current baler for 2 years with little trouble but one problem is that it needs a stronger back endgate. I cracked mine when I lowered it back down onto a bale that had rolled back towards baler. I added angle iron to strengthen it. I'm anxious to try a new Deere 535 with either two twine-tie arms or net-wrap for increased speed, as well as the bale kicker for ejecting bales so you don't have to back up. We've sleeved a lot of bales for storage, using bale sleeves from Ambraco Co., Dubuque, Iowa. They more than pay for themselves in hay saved. We also use a Vermeer plastic wrapper. It's a well-built, heavy machine. Requires less labor than sleeving."

Joe Gillmore, Springville, Iowa, says his 1983 M & W 1800 baler has been a "best buy". "It requires little maintenance, is easy to pull with minimal horsepower requirement, and the density of bale is easily modified to accommodate hay conditions. We did have to reconstruct the pickup because it wasn't heavy enough to handle chopped corn stalks. We bought the baler with a plastic wrap attachment and were very satisfied with it at the time but the price

of plastic has tripled in the last few years to over \$5.00 per bale. We now tie bales with twine and cover stacks of bales with plastic tarps. It's much cheaper."

"We're generally well-satisfied with our Hesston 5800 round baler. One modification we made was to weld strips onto the steel roller to take hay in better. We store bales inside on wooden pallets, eliminating spoilage," says Herb Burke, St. Anthony, Ind.

"Hay wraps under the belts if the unit is turning a corner and the hay is grassy," says Roger Neumann, Kewaskum, Wis., about his 1988 Gehl 1465. "It makes excellent bales with good density and size but the

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time required to dislodge hay wrapped under belts on this machine is a big problem. We put a preservative applicator on the baler to use last year when we had poor drying conditions. It worked fair but getting the rate adjusted accurately during a busy season is a headache. We also plastic-wrapped about 60 bales using a Kverneland Sila-Wrap machine we rented. It was basically a salvage attempt to preserve a crop that had been rained on twice. Worked out fairly well."

Terrance Rohr, Dickinson, N. Dak., owns a 1981 Vermeer 605F. "I'm quite satisfied with it except that the pickup attachment is poor. It won't hold hay from a light windrow. If the hay is short, it loses it out the endgate. I've tried bagging high moisture hay to make silage and, although the sheep liked it and did well on it, it's a labor intensive practice. Cutting, baling, hauling and bagging all at once requires 5 people. I used an Ag Bag system. Worked fine but I had some mold on bales."

"We like our 1987 New Holland 855 except that the main bale chain wears out too fast. We make 700 to 1,000 bales a year

"Remote Control" For Baler Pickup

Replacing the screw jack that raises and lowers the pickup on a 1980 Vermeer 605F round baler with a hydraulic cylinder lets Larry Nemeth, Yellow Creek, Sask., raise and lower the pickup from the tractor cab.

"I have a lot of low, wet ground on my farm so when the baler sinks into mud the pickup teeth dig into the ground," says Nemeth. "I wasted a lot of time getting off the tractor to turn the screw jack by hand to raise the pickup. When I reached higher ground I had to get off the tractor and turn the screw jack again to lower the pickup. The hydraulic cylinder makes it easy to always stay at the right height without getting off the tractor, saving time, pickup teeth, and hay."

When Nemeth removed the ratchet jack, there was only room for a 5-in. long hydraulic cylinder. So he cut 3 in. off a 2 1/2 by 8-in. cylinder, then welded the yoke back on the cylinder and "pinned" it to

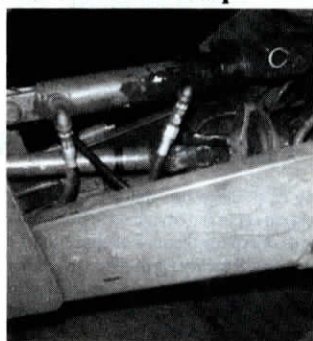


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mounting holes for the ratchet jack. The cylinder hoses are connected to tractor hydraulic outlets.

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