



Wagon shown at left was built using the axles off a Ford F-600 2-ton truck. Middle wagon was built from scratch using two Massey combine axles. Front axle on wagon at far right is off an F-600 Ford 2-ton truck; the rear axle is a concrete mixer's tag axle.



This 225 bu. wagon was built using axles off a 2-ton International truck.

He Uses Pickups To Make His Own Grain Wagons

Old pickups can be converted into cheap running gears for gravity wagons, says Ron Stadler, Monroe, Mich.

FARM SHOW previously featured a story on how Stadler used the frame, wheels and axles off a 1978 Ford F-350 pickup to provide the running gear for a 175-bu. gravity wagon (Vol. 26, No. 2). Since then he has built several other wagons and, along the way, perfected his techniques.

"It's a relatively cheap way to come up with gravity wagons," says Stadler. "You can buy decent used gravity wagons at auctions for \$1,000 to \$1,500. Over the years I've used this idea to build a total of seven different

wagons."

Several of Stadler's wagons are built from 1 to 2 1/2-ton Ford pickups. With some models the front axle has to be moved backward, or the frame cut in half and re-halved by sliding it forward and welding it together. "You need to have a strong pull point and the ability to connect the steering linkage to the existing tie rods. Even old combine axles will work," says Stadler. "The bottom line is that pickup and truck axles cost a lot less than commercial wagon running gears."

To build a wagon out of an F-350, for example, Stadler first strips everything off the pickup except the frame, wheels and axles.

He leaves the front axle intact but moves the pickup's rear axle ahead 4 ft., then welds it solid to the frame and also welds steel reinforcing onto parts of the pickup frame to take some of the load off the axles. He removes the pickup's front springs and reinforces the front axle as well. He uses 2-in. tubing to make a tongue and connects it to the front axle via a clevis-type hitch. The wagon still uses the pickup's original tie rods for steering. The tie rods are tied into the tongue with 3/8 and 7/8-in. bolts. He welded in a pair of homemade, L-shaped steel cradles that support the sides of the wagon. A hitch welded onto the back end of the running gear allows

him to pull another wagon behind.

According to Stadler, it's important to gusset the weld braces in order to help take the load off the front wheel axles. "Some front ends weren't made to carry real heavy loads. Two ton and heavier models may not have to be reinforced as the axles are already heavy enough," he notes.

Stadler says 2-ton truck axles work great with this idea because they're built heavier, have straight frames, and are easier to weld on.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron Stadler, 7400 N. Custer, Monroe, Mich. 48162 (ph 734 587-3458).

Disc Mower Head Cuts Small Grain Silage

There are many reasons why Martin A. Bruce of Darfield, New Zealand, designed and built his first "rotary front" attachment for silage harvesters.

His header consists of a disc mower rather than the traditional double knife sickle-drive.

"In about 1997-1998, whole crop silage made from small grains became popular in New Zealand. But many people found conventional heads were not efficient or reliable," Bruce explains. "You can only go 4 to 5 mph."

However, with a disc-type head, Bruce says you can travel 12 to 15-mph in a light crop and still make a nice, clean cut. Also, it requires a lot less maintenance.

According to Bruce, "sickle bars require knife sharpening two or three times a day to keep them cutting small grain crops efficiently. The disc mowing knives only need sharpening every few days."

He says New Zealand farmers aim to take off their grain silage at 35 to 40 per cent dry matter, while the plants are still green, but the grain kernels are at a cheesy dough stage.

In 1999, Bruce got to work building a better system. He bought two new Claas 8 1/2-

ft. disc mowers and combined them into a single 16 1/2 ft. cutting head, which he fashioned to be compatible with his Claas harvester.

"The following year, I modified the design for other custom harvesters," Martin explains.

"I've now made 22 of them, with most being in the South Island of New Zealand. Two are in North Island, and one is in the UK. One is on a Deere, one is on a New Holland, and the rest are on Claas machines. Through several improvements over the five years, I've now got something that is reliable and does a good job. I've tried to keep parts common with Claas mowers, and to have readily available gearboxes and drive shafts."

The driveshafts and gearboxes are all "Waltersheid," which are manufactured in Germany. A local engineer in Darfield, NZ, manufactures the rest of the machine.

"We can custom build for different machines, and make them different widths. We accept international orders," Bruce adds. "Claas has now started manufacturing their own disc header which is possibly less expensive, but the advantage we have is that we can make them suitable for John Deere



With mower header, Bruce travels 12 to 15 mph in a light crop and still makes a nice, clean cut.

or New Holland equipment, too."

The price for Bruce's 16 1/2-ft. "Quickcut Whole Crop Head" is about \$52,000 U.S. (\$74,000 NZ), plus freight. He says there's an opportunity for someone in North America to start manufacturing to supply the North American market.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Martin A. Bruce, Hororata, RD2, Darfield, Canterbury, New Zealand 8172 (ph 011 64 3 3180 778; email: mabruce@xtra.co.nz).

Power Pellets Knock Out Problem Brush

You don't need a big piece of equipment to knock out problem brush like cedar, mesquite or multi-flora rose. Just drop a few Power Pellets from Pro-Serve, Inc., around the trunk or stem and wait for them to go to work. They have a low toxicity rating for mammals and do very little damage to grass and other vegetation.

"We have goat farmers and horse farmers and others using the stuff, and there has never been a problem with livestock," says Dave Alberg, director of sales and marketing, Pro-Serve, Inc. "The only problem we ever have

is in areas where pack rats live because they steal the pellets."

The active ingredient is less toxic than aspirin, yet effective on shrubs and trees. It works best in the spring when root systems are extremely active. Pellets dropped on the surface dissolve into the root zone and are absorbed by the root system.

"It's easy to use," says Alberg. "If you are treating single stem plants like eastern cedar, use 1 1/2 tabs per inch of diameter. Drop them half way from the stem to the drip line. You can drop by the base, but it's not as effective."

With clump shrubs like multi-flora rose, Alberg suggests two tabs on opposite edges of the clump for every three feet of height. Tablets come in three sizes of containers ranging from a 130 count for \$22 or about 17¢ each to 3,900 for \$320 or about 8¢ each.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dave Alberg, Pro-Serve, Inc., 400 E. Brooks Rd., Memphis, Tenn. 38109 (ph 901 332-7052 or 877 776-7375; email: Proserve@headgap.com; website: www.pro-serveinc.com).



Pellets have a low toxicity rating for mammals and do little damage to grass and other vegetation.