

Look What They're Doing With Harvestores!

EXPENSIVE-TO-MAINTAIN BOTTOM UNLOADERS ELIMINATED

They Turn Harvestores Into "Regular" Silos

By Mark Newhall, Editor

"We could replace these top unloaders every year for less than the cost of maintaining Harvestore's bottom unloader and the feed quality is as good or better than ever," says Curtis Tabor, of Souder, Mo., a dairyman who converted two of his three 25 by 80-ft. Harvestore silos to top unloading using a conversion kit sold by Hanson Silo Company, Lake Lillian, Minn.

Tabor built his three Harvestores in 1978 but quickly became disenchanted with their performance. "Not only do they require a tremendous amount of expense to maintain, but the feed quality is poor and the unloaders are very slow. A dome of feed forms over the unloader and is exposed to outside air often causing spoilage. And because the unloader is at the bottom of the silo you have to dig it out every time it breaks down."

Tabor is pleased with the advantages of top unloading. "You can put forage in at a much higher moisture content and feed is always fresh since you can cut it evenly off the top each day. Forage stays packed tighter because it settles and isn't continually shifting downward. One of the biggest advantages of converting to top unloaders is that we can feed out three times faster than with bottom unloaders," he says, noting that he plans to convert his third Harvestore in the near future.

Tabor converted the silos himself with lots of advice from Hanson Silo Company. He has built six poured concrete silos since putting up the three structures and says he won't ever put up another Harvestore.

Ron Buchanan, vice president of marketing for Hanson Silo Company, says the company has converted a number of Harvestores. "The primary complaint is the cost of maintaining the unloaders but most farmers interested in converting have also experienced structural problems," notes Buchanan. "There's a glut of Harvestores on the market right now in part because they don't work the way farmers were told they would."

What accounts for the number of happy Harvestore owners?

"One reason is that not many farmers are willing to admit they've made a mistake once they've spent that much money. Also, problems don't always show up in the first few years. Most Harvestores were sold in the last 10 to 15 years so some of these problems are just starting to peak. I think that in the next few years there's going to be a tremendous demand for our kind of conversion kit," says Buchanan.

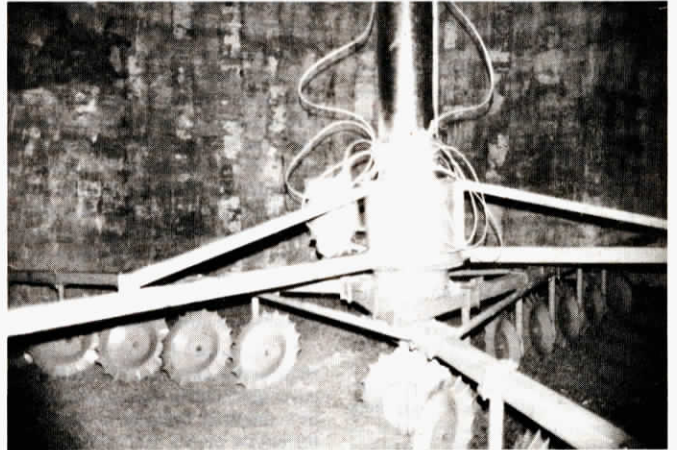


Company converts Harvestores to top unloading for less than the cost of a rebuilt bottom unloader (see other pictures on p. 1).

Hanson Silo Company tells farmers they can convert their Harvestores to top unloading for less than the cost of buying a rebuilt bottom unloader, which is usually around \$18,000. Doors, chutes, and other needed hardware costs approximately \$4,000 and the cost to ship and install the equipment is about \$2,000. A new 25-ft. unloader, specially manufactured to fit the Harvestore, sells for \$9,000, bringing the total cost of a conversion kit to about \$15,000. The cost can be lessened somewhat by selling off the used bottom unloader. The company recently took one in on trade and sold it for \$6,000.

Buchanan says it wouldn't normally pay to buy a used Harvestore and convert it to top unloading. "A used Harvestore costs around \$12,000 to buy and between \$10.00 and \$15,000 to clean and set up. Add on the cost of the conversion, and you've got considerably more than you would spend if you simply put up a new stave silo for about \$20,000 plus the cost of an unloader," he says.

Once converted, both Tabor and Hanson agree that the Harvestore isn't any better than any other silo on the market. "It's no better than a conventional concrete stave silo but at least it doesn't cost you an arm and a



Discs on Neuero unloader for Harvestores distribute and pack forage when filling, eliminating air. The discs also dig out forage for unloading, sending it up the suction pipe at center.

PACKS MORE SILAGE INTO STRUCTURE AT HIGHER MOISTURE CONTENTS

Air System Replaces Bottom Silo Unloaders

A forage handling system that uses air and packer wheels to load and unload silos is replacing expensive bottom unloaders in Harvestores throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe.

The Neuero Corp., a German-based company with headquarters in West Chicago, Ill., says farmers are doing away with the breather bags in their sealed silos and sealing up the bottom unloaders in order to convert to the convenience of air handling and the increased storage capacity possible with the Neuero system, which FARM SHOW first featured nearly 4 years ago.

"Our equipment works well in Harvestores because it does away with the expensive maintenance of bottom unloaders and packs the silage as it's loaded. As a result, Neuero-equipped Harvestores hold 1/3 more silage," says Neuero representative Mike Hill, noting that silage is so tightly packed all oxygen is squeezed out and spoilage eliminated. "The quality of our silage is as good or better than any so-called sealed unit."

Silage is packed by a large disk assembly that raises and lowers along with the blower/suction pipe of the air system. For unloading, the disk assembly tears up the forage, even if

frozen, and moves it to the system's central suction pipe. One blower system can be used to serve two silos with an unloader in each unit. When unloading, the blower simply sucks the silage out and blows it into wagons or to a feeding system.

One big advantage of the Neuero system is that it can handle forage of a longer length as well as higher moisture contents. "We can handle forage cut at lengths of 4 in. and material at up to 70% moisture, neither of which a bottom unloader can do," says Hill, noting that the Neuero conversion kit for Harvestores has been particularly popular in Europe because farmers there prefer the longer chop length.

To convert a Harvestore, the company cuts doors into the side of the structure as well as holes in the top to accommodate the unloader. Vent holes are needed to allow for the suction of the blower/suction pipe. A feeding system can be connected to the unloader blower that'll carry feed "on air" as far as 300 ft. from the silo.

The Neuero system can be installed in existing silos for anywhere from \$13,000 to \$20,000 depending on the set-up. That includes the blower with 40-hp. electric motor and the filling and unloading system. The replaced bottom unloader can usually be sold. The system can also be installed in less expensive concrete, or other types, of silos.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Neuero Corp., 1201 Hawthorne Lane, West Chicago, Ill. 60185 (ph 312 231-9020).

leg to maintain and operate," notes Tabor.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hanson Silo Company, Lake Lillian, Minn. 56253 (ph 612 664-4171).