Reader Letters

In reference to the letter from Dustin Wagner, McNutt, Sask., about Power Mart, the Fargo, N. Dak., manufacturer of big 4-WD Titan tractors (Vol. 22, No. 1), you quoted Jack Johnson, Power Mart's former president, as saying the company was forced to shut down as a result of flooding in the Red River Valley last spring.

Unfortunately, I've learned a vastly different tale. Flood waters did not come anywhere near the facility and I've been told by numerous people (including some former Power Mart employees) the real reason the company shut down was that it was foreclosed on last spring.

This matters considerably to me since Power Mart had committed to repower my Allis 440 4-WD with a Cummins diesel at the time of the foreclosure. They had the tractor for months and I sent deposits amounting to $15,900 so the work could be done. I was finally promised the tractor would be ready to go April 1, '97, more than a year after I'd shipped it there. I was naturally delighted at that news so I paid $3,000 more in good faith to complete the job, believing the tractor would be ready on schedule. However, I found out later the tractor hadn't even been touched at the time the bank foreclosed. I ended up selling it for scrap rather than paying to ship it back home again. Another farmer whose tractor was at Power Mart at the time of the foreclosure is Jerry Humpula, Chesaning, Mich. He tells me he lost $54,000 in deposits for repower work that was never performed on his 1978 Steiger Panther. Along with legal fees, part of which went to prove to the bank that he was the legal owner of the tractor, and rental of another machine last season for his tiling business, he figures he had losses totaling more than $250,000. I've also talked to some parts suppliers for Power Mart who say they were taken to the cleaners for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Neither Jerry nor I would be so angry if the company had simply admitted to us they were having financial difficulty rather than milking us for dough to keep the lights on a little longer, as we believe they did. Jerry is looking into suing Mr. Johnson and/or the company and I'm considering joining him, hoping to recoup my $18,900.

I advise anyone to approach any deal with Power Mart with extreme caution, if they open up again in 1998, as Mr. Johnson stated to FARM SHOW.

The real problems at Power Mart ran much deeper and darker than last spring's flood waters. ***(Merlyn Worcester, 401 N. Pomeroy, Hill City, Kan. 67642; ph 785 421-2148)***

Editor's note: Jack Johnson told us Power Mart "decided not to make another run at it this year," contrary to what he indicated earlier. He chose not to comment on any other points in this letter.

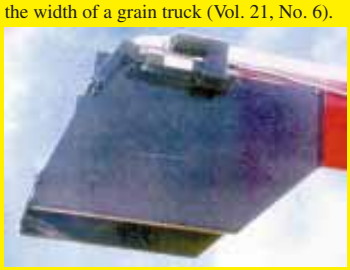
We were intrigued to see our "Rotowiper" featured in the last issue of FARM SHOW (Vol. 22, No. 1). Unfortunately, some of the information was incorrect, which created some headaches for us, the U.S. distributor.

First, the "Rotowiper" is *not* powered, as your headline stated. In fact, the only "powered" component of the system is the electric pump. The roller and foam markers are ground-driven.

Second, the machine is available in widths up to 44 ft., not just 13 ft. We stock 6- to 15-ft. units starting at $1,999. Wider units are quoted on an individual basis.

Just wanted to clear up the confusion. ***(David Smith, Greater Southwest Equipment, 32954 IH 10 West, Boerne, Texas 78006; ph 800 997-9368 or 830 249-4017; fax 7215)***

FARM SHOW recently featured the "Power Deflector" that directs combine grain flow from the discharge end of the auger all along the width of a grain truck (Vol. 21, No. 6).



We thought your readers would be interested to know that we're now manufacturing and selling units, which were invented by Cullom, Ill., farmer Steve Haag. In fact, we recently exhibited them for the first time at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville, Ky.

The deflectors fit all Deere 9000 series and all late model Case-IH combines. They sell for $495. ***(Armin Hesterberg, The Spreader Inc., Hwy. 136, P.O. Box 189, Gifford, Ill. 61847; ph 800 428-9046 or 217 568-7219; fax 7619)***

I feel bobsleds without brakes, such as the "Pied Piper" sleds you featured last issue, are accidents waiting to happen.

In the winter of 1936-'37, Lew Poyier, a friend of ours, helped us haul cordwood with horsedrawn bobsleds equipped with braking systems of his own design. He invented them after accidents killed some horses and drivers of "brakeless" bobsleds.

Basically, the brakes consisted of a crosspiece fitted with metal lugs and a heavy steel rod inserted through the holes where the tongue attached to each runner. Rods were bent down to run parallel to the runner back where it touches the ground. Two heavy rings attached to an eye bolt on each rod connect the tongue to the rods. As long as the bobsled was being pulled, the rings held the tongue up close to the top of the runners. As soon as the sled sped up faster than the tongue, the tongue dropped to the ground and forced the lugs into the ice or snow.

Mr. Poyier's brakes saved lives and I'd be much more comfortable if the bobsleds you featured were equipped with a similar braking system. ***(Robert R. Mitchell, 35405 S. Haney Rd., Kennewick, Wash. 99337-7191; ph 509 586-7891)***

Editor's note: Mr. Mitchell sent a copy of his letter to Prescott Mouldings & Wood Products, manufacturer of the "Pied Piper" bobsleds. Here's how company representative Reg Holman responded:

"Thank you so much for drawing attention to a feature of our sleds we neglected to include in FARM SHOW's article. We do, in fact, offer a sled-runner brake as an option. There are two reasons for making brakes available as optional rather than as standard equipment. One, some of our customers use the sleds only on flat ground. Two, it keeps cost down for those customers who don't need a brake. The brake can be purchased for one runner or two and sells for $20 a pair.

"We'd also like to add that we feel hauling any load requires the operator to exercise responsibility, whether it's with a team of horses, a 5th wheel vehicle, a snowmobile or 4-wheeler, because terrain can vary so widely.

"We're curious about the concept of the 'automatic' brake [Mr. Mitchell] described and plan to learn more about it."

I love to work on old farm and lawn tractors and here are a couple of my recent projects.

I restored this old Massey Harris Pony tractor in my spare time. I converted the electri-

cal system from 6 to 12 volts and built and installed a 3-pt hitch and hydraulic lift from an electric/hydraulic unit from a 2 1/2-ton truck tailgate lift. I built a one-row crop cultivator and front lift from a front blade from a 4-row cultivator. I also built a 3-pt. single bottom turn plow from a 1-pt. Cub Farmall turn plow. I installed a pto and pulley off an old Avery frame and rear end I bought.

I also reworked this old 16 hp Montgomery Ward lawn tractor that was built by Wheelhorse. I repowered it with a 20 hp Onan

2-cyl. engine and beefed up the speed with sprockets and chain since it has a shaft drive instead of belt-drive.

Incidentally, I'm 65 years young and am still a farm boy at heart. I love FARM SHOW more than any other magazine I get for the home-built experimental machines, both small and large, and the farm toys you feature regularly. ***(Roy Gray, 22382 Crosse Keys Rd., Newsoms, Va. 23874-2833)***

I've been checking grain loss out the back of my combine for 25 years using a piece of canvas 10 ft. long and as wide as the combine. I fasten one end to a pipe and fasten a rope or chain on the pipe to form a V that can be attached to the bottom of the combine. You can mount a grapple fork release under the combine to trip the canvas.

To use, you roll up the canvas on the pipe and trip it to unroll while the combine is traveling. The canvas rolls out flat and catches the material coming out of the back. Doesn't cost nearly as much as commercial units that do the same thing and works just as well. ***(Edwin Bredemeier, R.R. 1, Box 13, Steinauer, Neb. 68441-9755; ph 402 869-2334)***

Here's a language issue that really gets under my skin.

It's the use of metric measurements in Deere equipment manuals, which use metric *first*, then English here in Canada. Deere sales literature uses English extensively but, for some reason, the lingo switches to metric in operator's manuals, which could even be considered a safety issue.

Plus, it seems to me to be rather insulting and manipulative, especially since some of the metric measurements we used are even falling by the wayside. I've contacted the company about this but have received no satisfactory answer.

Is this common with other farm equipment manufacturers? Is it an issue in the U.S.? I'd welcome any comments. ***(Ed Curry, Box 70, Youngstown, Alberta, Canada T0J 3P0; ph 403 779-2185)***

I use a small 3 to 4-watt light bulb placed inside each of my boots to heat them in the winter when I'm not wearing them. I have a spare pair of boots I also heat with lightbulbs in case my feet get cold and I always try to stick a dry pair of socks in the boots being heated for added comfort.

I've worked out what size sockets, lamps, wires, plugs, etc., you need to get the correct heat inside boot. I'd share my notes with FARM SHOW readers if there's interest.

Incidentally, this idea would probably need U.L.-approval before it would take off commercially. Plus, boot and shoe people tell me they're not interested in my idea. I just laugh and tell them my feet probably stay warmer than theirs all winter long. ***(Robert D. Layton, 756 Crestview Road, Vista, Calif. 92083; ph 760 726-1706 or 7389)***

I built this roll tarp/drill fill combo for my 1982 Ford F350 1-ton truck with 11 ft. box because the truck was too small to accommodate an endgate drill fill auger.

I wanted to be able to roll up the tarp, which replaces the old tie-down tarp I used before, normally with the Smith-Roles 5-in. dia. 14-ft. long drill fill installed in the truck box. So I built a lengthwise frame and crossmembers

out of 1 in. sq. tubing to support the tarp. I had the 11 by 9-ft. tarp custom-built for me out of fabric at a local shop. Mounted on the right side of the box, it rolls up manually with a crank and universal joint I took off an old Cockshutt cultivator.

I had the drill fill around and mounting it in the truck box didn't really require anything fancy since I used existing mounting brackets. A flat plate covers the hole in front of the box when I remove the drill fill.

The system works great for filling my 24-ft. Melro-drill and protecting seed from the elements.

I paid $70 for the tarp fabric and paid $300

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