

Monitor “Automates” Older Round Baler

For less than \$100 Dale Spoerl, Elizabeth, Ill., made a bale monitor that helps make uniform bales with his Vermeer 605F round baler.

Spoerl mounted a pair of 12-in. wheels on back of the baler, pressing up against the baler belts. The wheels pivot freely on spring-loaded steel arms. An electric switch on each arm wires to a control box on the tractor. When one side of the baler fills up, the belts on the opposite side of the baler become loose. That allows the wheel to move forward and triggers a switch that activates a pair of flashing red lights on the control box, one for each side of the baler.

Spoerl also made an indicator that lets him know when the baler is full. The indicator is hooked up to the original bale size indicator with a length of chain. When the chain gets tight it closes a switch and turns a yellow light at the center of the control box, letting Spoerl know that the baler is full.

“I made it because I got tired of having to look back all the time,” says Spoerl. “I made the control box by mounting truck running lights inside a plastic toolbox with arrows pointing into it. I used the 14-in. dia. wheels because that’s what I had, but they wouldn’t have to be so big.”

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Arrows on control box in cab tell Spoerl when each side of baler is full.



A pair of 12-in. wheels sends signal to control box.



Brecht copied Deere’s basic pallet fork design but beefed it up.

Quick-Tach Pallet Forks “Better Than Deere’s”

“My homemade pallet forks offer all the advantages of Deere’s forks but are built much heavier,” says Ken Brecht, Moorcroft, Wyo., about the heavy-duty, quick-tach “pallet forks” he made for his Deere 540 front-end loader. The loader is mounted on his Deere 5500 4-WD tractor.

Brecht, who got help from Jentry Eatherton, says he copied Deere’s basic design but beefed it up.

He used 10-in. channel iron and 3-in. sq., 1/4-in. thick steel tubing to build a rectangular frame that pins onto the loader arms. The frame’s sides are made from 1/4-in. thick steel plate. The forks, made from 2 by 4-in., 1/4-in. thick tubing, are equipped with brackets that slide onto a rod made from 1 1/4-in. dia. solid steel. The rod is secured by two cotter pins. The forks can be positioned anywhere along the rod and are held in place by friction. He also made a pair of quick tach latches

on back of the frame similar to the ones on the loader bucket.

“We built it from scrap steel that we already had. Our total cost was less than \$100,” says Brecht. “We use the forks to handle pallets loaded with picnic tables that we haul to a nearby state park. We handle about 120 picnic tables each year. We also trim the park’s trees and use the forks to haul branches away. We had tried adding brackets onto the loader bucket in order to accept a set of forks that laid against the front of the bucket. The problem was that we couldn’t see the forks when loading and had to guess when they were parallel to the ground. With these quick tach forks the driver has a better view of the forks and can easily see the level indicator that’s mounted on one of the loader arms.”

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Seed was blown to planter units by individual air-powered units - one per row.

From The Archives: Combine-Mounted Planter

By C.F. Marley

No farm writer in the country has written more stories about “made it myself” ideas born in farm workshops than C.F. Marley of Nokomis, Ill. He’s been making the rounds to innovative farm shops for nearly 50 years and he’s produced so much work for all the national farm magazines, that his story archives are now on file at the University of Illinois. (To see them, contact the University Archives at Urbana, Ill., at 217-333-0798.)

Recently, C.F. was going through stories ready to go into the archives when he spotted these photos of an Illinois farmer who mounted a planter on his combine. Here’s what he remembers about it.

“Owen Hilvety of Moweaqua, Ill., was an innovative farmer who was always coming up with a faster, better way to handle farm jobs. He died a few years ago but some of his ideas would still make good stories today,” says Marley.

“In the early 1970’s, he told me he had come up with a way to plant soybeans as he harvested small grains. He wanted to double crop beans. The combine-mounted planter let him avoid the need to make a separate trip through the field with a

planter,” says Marley.

“He mounted four White planter units on a toolbar that ran under the back of his International combine. The seed boxes mounted up by the grain tank. He used individual air-powered units - one per row - to pull seed out and blow it to the row units. A seed monitor mounted up by the cab. A hydraulic lever at the back of the combine raised and lowered the toolbar as needed.”



White planter units were mounted on a toolbar that ran under the back of the International combine.



Reconditioned forage harvesters such as this 1988 Deere 5830 sell for less than half the cost of new machines.

Reconditioned Forage Harvesters

A New York state company is doing a booming business in reconditioned self-propelled forage harvesters.

“They sell for a fraction of the price of new ones,” says Davey Joan’s. “We buy the machines and go through them inside and out to like-new condition. About 80 percent of the machines we sell are Deere, 15 percent Claas, and the rest New Holland. We’re selling them as fast as we can recondition them and are

currently building a new factory to meet customer demand. Farmers like the economics of our reconditioned machines. New self-propelled forage harvesters sell for up to \$300,000. Our reconditioned machines sell for \$50,000 to \$100,000. All models are sold with a 30-day parts and labor warranty.”

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