



Warren Jensen made a 3-pt. "header frame" that turned his Deere 6600 combine into a combination snow plow/bale mover.



He sometimes equips the combine with a big bale fork to move bales.

Combine Snow Plow Doubles As A Bale Mover

What do you do with a combine that can't harvest grain anymore? Warren Jensen turned his into a combination snow plow and big bale mover.

"I had seen stories about guys doing things with combines, and I had this snow plow sitting here without a tractor to push it," recalls Jensen, Wakonda, S. Dak., who had an idled Deere 6600 combine. "I figured if I could put a 3-pt hitch on I could use the snowplow on the combine."

The hardest part was working out the details in his head. Instead of welding 3-pt. hitch arms directly to the combine, he made a 3-pt. "header frame" that fits existing brackets on the combine. He started with a used corn head with a heavy-duty frame. He stripped everything off except the center frame, which he reinforced to support 3-pt. lift arms.

After spending about \$500, he had his snow plow ready to go. Light snows this past winter gave him only a limited chance to try out the rig, but he was able to show questioning neighbors that it did work.

With the 3-pt hitch in place, it was a snap

for Jensen to attach his big bale fork to the combine in order to move bales this past summer.

Jensen thinks combines are ideally suited to moving snow. "There's traction right up front where you need it, though you have to add a little weight to the back for when you lift the blade," says Jensen. "It has a good heater and good visibility. Our road drifts in pretty good during the winter, but I can push more snow with this than I could with a tractor and loader."

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The 3-pt. header frame fits existing brackets on combine.

Vol. 26, No. 6, 2002

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FARM SHOW (ISSN #01634518) is published bimonthly (6 times a year) for \$19.95 per year (\$30.95 in Canada and foreign countries) by Farm Show Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 1029, 20088 Kenwood Trail, Lakeville, Minn. 55044. Periodicals postage paid at Lakeville, Minn., and Shakopee, Minn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 952 469-5572; fax 952 469-5575). E-Mail: Circulation@FARMSHOW.com. Website: www.FARMSHOW.com. Single copy price is \$5.00 (\$7.00 in Canada). Publication No. 469490 GST No. 131272023 Publication Agreement #40032660

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Nov.-Dec., 2002

New Weapon In The War Against Gophers

Don Sutherland tried everything short of explosives to reduce the number of gophers on his ranch and 10-acre homestead. Nothing worked. Not poisons, electrocution, traps, or even shooting. As fast as he took out one gopher, another moved in.

"Soap foam would fill the tunnels and put gophers to sleep, but it didn't kill them," he explains. "After about 15 minutes, they would be as good as new."

So Sutherland started trying different additives in the foam - everything from chlorine to cayenne. He finally found one that worked: dry mustard powder.

"Once we found the right percentages, gophers were unconscious in one minute and dead in three," says Sutherland.

The treatment is non-toxic to the applicator and the carcass of the pest is safe for predators to eat. Treatment is fast and easy, taking only seconds per burrow. A plastic cone is first inserted into each gopher hole. Then foam is injected through the cone under high pressure. The specially designed cone directs foam down throughout the tunnels, filling every space and lasting for two to four hours. Gopher holes are then filled in with dirt.

After clearing his 10-acre farmstead and a buffer strip on the surrounding ranch land, Sutherland decided he might have a valuable idea. He received permission to test his system on a park in the nearby town of Cochrane. Results were excellent, but officials told Sutherland he needed environmental approval for his process, which could take several years.

He went ahead and was granted unusual "reduced risk" fast track status by both Canadian and U.S. regulators.

A specially designed plastic cone is inserted into the gopher hole, then foam is injected through the cone under high pressure. The cone directs foam down into the tunnels, filling every space and killing all gophers or ground squirrels.



"The chairman of the U.S. EPA review board said it was the first time fast track had been granted without a complete data package and with complete board endorsement," he says.

Sutherland licensed the process to a manufacturer who carried out and funded the hundreds of thousands of dollars in tests needed in both countries. Results were positive not only on gophers, but also on ground squirrels and Norway rats, which burrow around foundations of buildings. The process is on track to be approved in early

2003. A company called Exit Holdings has been set up to handle distribution.

"In the U.S., it will be marketed as VARGON and in Canada as EXIT," explains Sutherland. "It costs less than any other control agent now in use and is 97 to 100 percent effective."

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