



The up-front anchor blade can be driven into the ground as far as necessary when pulling with the big hydraulic winch, located just behind the anchor blade.

IN A CLASS BY ITSELF

"Built-From-Scratch" 40-Ton Winch Tractor

"It's in a class by itself. So far as we know, there's not another machine like it anywhere in the world," says Jack Johnson who, along with his son Alan, built a king-size 40-ton winch tractor with a wide, hydraulically-set "anchor blade" that digs into the ground to provide a solid towing base.

The Johnson family has operated a winching and "rescue" operation for more than 40 years for other farmers within a 70 mile radius of their farm near Banks in England. The area is primarily a vegetable-growing area and farmers grow on contracts that require them to deliver crop to factories on time regardless of weather conditions. The result is that combines, tractors and wagons frequently get bogged down, sometimes as deep as 10 ft. in some of the heavy clay soils of the area.

The Johnsons average 300 to 400 "rescues" per year. "In the worst conditions we can be called out 20 to 30 times in a day, although the average throughout winter months is once or twice per 24-hr. period," says Johnson, who charges anywhere from \$50 to \$150 per winch job.

Johnson worked out the design for the built-from-scratch winch tractor to meet the rugged needs of his farmer customers. The chassis frame consists of 3/8-in. sidewall 5-in. box steel beams. The front and rear drive axles, which both have limited slip differentials, came out of a "junked" U.S.-built

Pettibone mobile crane with a matching torque converter. The tractor can switch from conventional front-wheel steer on the road to all-wheel crab steering in the field. A Volvo combine cab provides operator comfort and a 97-hp. turbo charged Volvo engine, also from a combine, provides the power.

A hydraulic-powered 10-ton winch mounts just ahead of the operator cab (the engine mounts in back) for unrestricted visibility in use. The big winch anchor, supported by 10 by 7-in. legs, is lowered into the ground with two 3-ft. hydraulic cylinders. The anchor blade can be driven into the ground as far as necessary. If the tractor starts to slip backwards when pulling, the anchor bulldozes dirt which causes the blade to dig in deeper. Johnson says the solid base provided by the anchor gives the winch tractor better than a 40-ton tow capacity.

In addition to the tow tractor, the Johnsons also build their own wreckers and lift trucks. They still use their conventional winches for road towing and rescue work, saving the big self-propelled tractor winch for off-road work. Total cost of building the winch tractor was about \$3,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, J. Johnson, 45 Hoole Lane, Banks, Southport, England (ph 0704 27076).



The 40-ton winch tractor can tackle jobs no conventional machine could handle.



Willett converted a Deere 6600 into a 3-wheeled loader with great maneuverability and visibility.

"DO IT YOURSELF" PLANS AVAILABLE

"Grapple Loaders" Made From Rebuilt Combines

"We turn old combines into new loader tractors," says Harold Willett, a manufacturer in Jeanerette, Louisiana, who says he's taking advantage of the fact that many of the components on "worn out" combines still work like new.

"I recently bought a 15-year-old IH 915 combine for \$4,000 that had just 900 hrs. Even though many of the grain cleaning components were worn out, the engine, driveline, cab, hydraulics and many other components still had a lot of life left in them," says Willett, who has rebuilt 15 combines over the past two seasons, turning them into tractor loaders fitted with grapple forks, buckets and mowers.

Farmers in southern Louisiana raise small grains, beans and sugar cane. Because of the recent strong market for sugar, more farmers have started growing sugar cane which requires specialized equipment. Grapple loaders for loading cane onto trucks can cost \$65,000 or more if purchased new. Willett can cut the cost to less than half with his loaders built from combines. Although he builds his combine loader tractors primarily to handle sugar cane, Willett says the design could be modified as needed to fit any farm loader chore.

The 15 combines Willett has rebuilt have all been Deere (6600's) or IH (715's and 915's). He plans to convert an Allis Chalmers Gleaner this winter. "We strip them right down to the chassis and then put them back together using the good components. All grain cleaning and handling equipment is sold off to salvage yards. We use the



Willett has rebuilt 15 combines over the past two years.

engine, radiator, cab, lights, hydraulic drives, final drives, tires, fuel tanks and many other components. A commercially-built grapple loader mounts at the middle of the machine. The grapple fork can be replaced by a bucket, mower or other equipment as needed."

Willett replaces the existing two-wheeled steering axle with a single, "tricycle" wheel to increase maneuverability. He also adds a hydraulic pump to provide power to the big loader arm, which reaches out as far as 16 ft. from the combine and lifts up to a ton. The loader arms swing in a 205° arc.

Willett sells the completed grapple loaders for \$30,000. He also sells detailed blueprints so you can make the conversion yourself and he has plans to turn a combine into a high-boy sprayer in the near future.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harold A. Willett, H. Willett & Associates, P.O. Box 392, Jeanerette, La. 70544 (ph 318 276-3884).

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