State-Of-The-Art Pickup Sprayer

Leon Sowers built his first pickup sprayer back in 1982 and used it for years to topdress wheat and to do other spraying jobs. Six years ago he decided to replace it with a "new" home-built model that's equipped with a 60-ft. boom.

"After running the first sprayer for so long, I felt that I knew exactly what I wanted in my next model and how to build it," says Sowers.

He started with a 1988 Ford F-250 4-WD pickup equipped with a 460 cu. in. engine, 4:10 gear ratio, and 5-speed transmission. A pto-driven hydraulic pump is used to operate the sprayer pump and also to raise and lower the boom and to fold it. The sprayer's 60-ft. long, "X-fold" boom, which Sowers bought new, is fitted with 5-way Tee Jet nozzles that are regulated by a Tee Jet 844 controller that mounts in the cab.

Extra springs were added to the pickup, as well as load boosters, in order to support a 500-gal. tank. A high output foam marker was originally installed but was recently replaced by a Mid Tech GPS light bar guidance system.

"I'm happy I built it and have had virtually no problems," says Sowers. "Without a doubt, it's the best investment I've ever made in any piece of equipment. I use it almost all year long to do everything from spraying pre-emergent herbicides on milo, and sunflowers to spraying Roundup Ready soybeans to top dressing winter wheat. The 5-speed transmission is ideally suited for spraying work in most field conditions. In smooth fields I can go at speeds up to 15 to 20 mph, and by using low volume nozzles in large fields I can cover up to 100 acres per hour.

Boom nozzles are regulated by a Tee Jet 844 controller that mounts in the cab.

"I saved thousands of dollars over the cost of a commercial sprayer," says Leon Sowers, who built his own pickup sprayer. It's equipped with a 60-ft. long "X-fold" boom.

"I spent about $12,000 to build it, which is far less than what a comparable commercial pickup sprayer would have cost."

Sowers says he's willing to consider building sprayers if there's interest.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Leon Sowers, 13103 S.E. 40th St., Murdock, Kansas 67111 (ph 620 297-3343).

Bob Schuler converted three used 30-ft. dia. rings into a temporary grain storage structure. It can hold up to 13,500 bu. of corn.

Bin Rings Used For Temporary Grain Storage

Bob Schuler of Zearing, Iowa is able to store 13,500 bushels of corn for only a $700 investment using three steel grain bin rings.

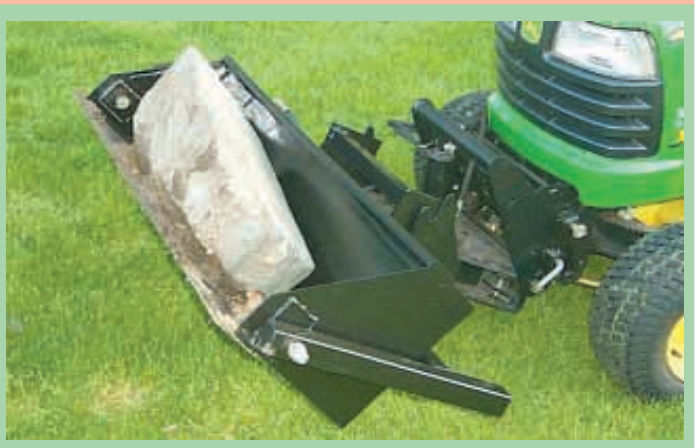
When another farmer decided to make his bin taller, he traded in the bottom rings for stronger ones, leaving three used 30-ft. dia. rings available for Schuler to purchase.

"I set one down outside on a slab of cement foundation left after an old building was dismantled, and put the other two on top of plastic inside machine sheds on my farm," Schuler says. "Each ring holds 4,500 bushels of corn and is a lot cheaper than buying more bins or hauling it to town to store at the elevator."

He cut a hole in the bottom of each ring to insert aeration tubes. A grain vac is used to clean out the bins.

Schuler says he sells corn stored in the outdoor ring within a month, so weather isn't a big concern. The shedded rings provide indefinite storage length.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bob Schuler, 15796 – 710 Ave., Zearing, Iowa 50278 (ph 641 487-7815).



Moving landscaping materials around is a much easier job for Bob Abbott ever since he built this bucket for his Deere X475 lawn tractor.

Home-Built Bucket Fits Deere Garden Tractor

When Bob Abbott moved into a new "suburban" house, he found he was spending a lot of time with a shovel and wheelbarrow, moving piles of landscaping materials from his driveway to areas around the yard. All of his neighbors had similar problems.

Figuring there had to be a better way, he went looking for a front-end loader or scoop to mount on his Deere X475 lawn tractor.

"While I am sure the ones I found are great products, they all seemed too narrow or didn't lift high enough, and they looked like they were built on the light side," he says. They were also too big to store in his garage.

Disappointed, he decided to put his welding skills to use and make a simple scoop that would fit the quick-attach mountings meant for a push blade or snow blower on front of his tractor.

He designed the scoop so it was big enough and heavy enough to carry just about anything he could get onto it, and still compact enough to store in the limited amount of space he had in his garage.

He located enough scrap steel to complete the project, starting with some 1/4-in. walled, 2-in. sq. tubing to make a frame. He got it free, but it was welded to some 2 by 5-in. rectangular tubing. "I had to cut it apart. The weld had left the square tubing with a 3/8-in. warp, so I had to heat it with my oxy-acetylene torch and bend it straight again before I could use it," he says.

Then he paid $5 for a 52 by 48-in. sheet of 1/8-in. plate steel to make the bottom and sides of the scoop.

He says the most difficult part of designing the scoop was locating the pivot point and dump mounts. He used a drawing program on his computer to place the pivot points and measure the travel.

The lift cylinder in the Deere X475 front quick hitch lifts the scoop. Abbott mounted a 2-in. hydraulic cylinder with an 8-in. stroke on one side of the scoop to dump it. "If it should be necessary, I can add another identical cylinder on the other side, but so far, it seems to work fine with one cylinder," he says. The scoop lifts to a height of about 16 in. and then dumps. And it works from a second spool valve, so he can use his mower deck with the scoop still in place.

Abbott figures he spent less than $250 to build the scoop, including some green and yellow paint to make it match his tractor. He says not only is it very useful, but he had a lot of fun making it. He's had requests for similar scoops from friends and neighbors and says he could put weld-it-yourself kits together for others if there's enough interest. He's not sure what the price would be, since he'd be using new materials for the kits.

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