Troy Weyand converted an old 2 1/2-ton truck into this self-propelled bale handler.

Loader picks up 18 two-wire bales at a time, allowing him to load a semi in minutes.

Self-Propelled Bale Handler "Makes It Easy"

Troy Weyand, a commercial hay grower and automotive shop operator, says he needed a sturdy, reliable machine for loading trucks.

It took most of his spare time over a couple of winters, but he ended up with a self-propelled bale handler that he figures will give him years of service.

The Cortez, Colorado, man started his project with a 2 1/2-ton single axle Chevrolet straight truck. "I stripped it down to the frame and shortened it," he says.

He wanted to make his loader steer from the rear with the drive axle in the front, so he turned the rear end over to make the differential operate backward from the original.

He replaced the original truck engine and transmission with a Chevy 305 cu. in. engine and an automatic transmission and transfer case salvaged from a 3/4-ton 4-WD pickup. "The loader is only 2-WD, but I wanted to be able to use the transfer case from the pickup so I'd have a low and high range," he says.

Over the drive axle, he mounted a GB Hi-Lift loader that he bought used. Then he built heavy-duty forks for the loader.

He says the old truck tires were in reasonable shape, so he left them all in place. He left the duals on the drive axle.

Weyand added a floorboard, seat and steering wheel on a pedestal to make an open operator's station just behind the forks, in front of the rear-mounted engine. He designed a hydraulic steering system for the loader.

Under the seat, he added a heater salvaged from a Peterbilt truck. It puts out enough heat to keep him warm on cold winter days, although the operator's station is open.

He also bought a new hydraulic pump sized to handle both the steering and the fork. He built an adapter to mount on the front of the engine so the hydraulic pump is driven from the crankshaft. "I put a splitter in the line to divide the flow between steering and the fork," he notes.

He added a 3-spool control valve that allows him to raise and lower the forks, set the teeth, and tilt the head to assist in picking up or setting bales down

He knew he'd need his hands for operating the hydraulic controls and steering, so he devised a foot-controlled shifter. He put a lock-out on the shifter so he can't accidentally shift into park. "I still have to shift ranges with a hand lever, but I can go from forward to reverse using the foot pedal," he explains.

He used a beer keg for a gasoline tank and made a 10-gal. hydraulic reservoir out of 1/8-in. plate steel. It fits into a space on the right side of his seat. He put the battery box to the left of the seat so it would be handy.

He added individual brake pedals for the front drive wheels, like those on a tractor. "I figured it would be handier for turning, but most of the time, the brake pedals are locked together," he says.

The loader picks up 18 two-wire bales at a time, allowing him to load a semi in a matter of just a few minutes. The only problem was the old 305 cu. in. engine had too little power. "I knew it was worn out when I put it in, but it was convenient at the time," he says. "And it just didn't have the torque at lower speeds that the loader required."

He's replacing the engine with a 350 Chevy, which he figures will have both the power and torque needed.

Weyand says the biggest problem in converting the old truck frame into a loader was the lack of available parts. "I ended up making most of the parts I needed to piece this together," he says.

He figures he has between $7,000 and $8,000 invested in the loader, including the price of the replacement 350 engine. "The biggest single expense was that loader frame," he says.

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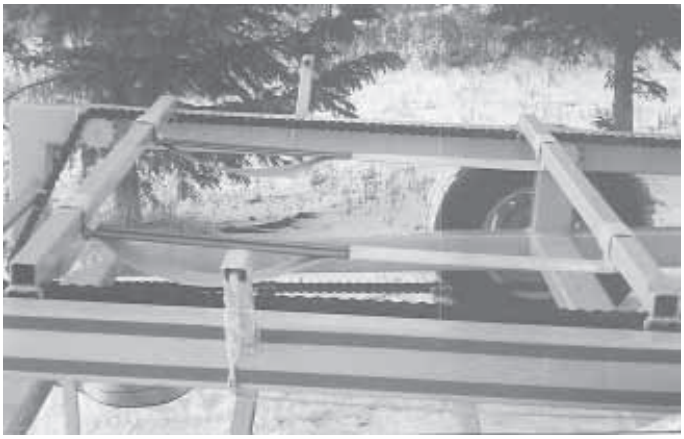
David Quick's Bale Buncher consists of a two-wheel trailer and a push plate hitch that bolts to baler axle.



As a bale is pushed onto the trailer, it falls between two cross bars and onto two 4-in. wide straps that cradle the bale.

Buncher "Racks Up" Big Round Bales

Hay fields with big round bales look like a pool table after a good break. David Quick of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan found a way to save both time and labor by building a Bale Buncher that lets him "rack them up" as he bales.

"Our fields are rough out here so we don't want to drive over them any more than we have to," explains Quick. "With the Bale Buncher trailer, we can dump the bales at the side of the field or establish a trail through the field and dump them alongside it."

The Bale Buncher works on any hard core baler. It consists of a two-wheel trailer and a push plate hitch that bolts to the baler axle. The trailer hooks to a ball joint beneath the push plate.

One end of the push plate is hinged to the hitch extension while the other rests on the frame. A second plate that Quick refers to as a skid plate is hinged to the trailer with the front lip resting on the push plate.

Quick rigged a sequence valve in the hydraulic line to the bale gate of the baler. When a bale is ejected, it rolls over the push plate, onto the skid plate. When the gate reaches full height, the valve activates a hydraulic cylinder beneath the push plate and the bale is "pushed" onto the Buncher trailer. Once the push plate falls back out of the way to rest on the baler frame again, the gate is released and closes.

The 3-bale trailer is made from 3 by 5-in. box tubing with the axle mounted between the space for the second and third bales. A motor driven chain fitted with crossbars pulls bales to the back. As a bale is pushed onto the trailer, it falls between two cross bars and onto two 4-in. wide straps that cradle the bale. While set for full size bales, shortening the chain intervals between bars allows smaller bales to be handled equally well.

A system of three electric sensors mounted at one-bale intervals connects to a panel in the cab. When the first bale trips the first sensor, the first indicator on the panel lights up. Quick activates the hydraulic motor and moves the bale back into the second space on the three-bale trailer. This trips the second eye and panel light, letting him know it is now in place just ahead of the trailer axle.

Once the second bale is made, the process is repeated. This moves the first bale past the axle to the third spot, balancing the load.

Bales can be dumped at any time while the third bale is being made. Bales fall 12 to 14 in. to the ground.

Quick is selling the Bale Buncher for $9,500 (Canadian), including wiring and hydraulics. He has used it on IH, New Holland and Deere balers.

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