

Made-It-Myself Front Bale Spear

Dan Krueger, Shawano, Wis., needed a front-mounted bale handler that could handle the weight of heavy silage bales.

Krueger, who does custom bale wrapping using a Vermeer bale wrapper behind a Deere 2555 tractor, decided to build it himself.

"Most of the time farmers bring their bales to the edge of the field where we wrap them. However, sometimes we have to haul them there ourselves. The wrapper can carry two bales and I can carry another one on front. It'll lift bales up to 5 ft. high and has a capacity of more than one ton."

The loader is built from square tubing and is equipped with a pair of commercial bale spears. It pivots just above and in front of the tractor's axle. A big 4 by 8-in. hydraulic cylinder is used to raise or lower the loader while a pair of 2 by 16-in. cylinders are used to tilt the spears.

A pair of roller chains doubles the lift height. The chains attach to the bottom of the

cylinder and extend up through two sprockets mounted on a hinged metal arm and then back down to the lift bar. As the cylinder is extended it shoves the hinged arm up, causing the chains to double the arm's lifting action. A 3-ft. high metal backstop keeps the bale from rolling back onto the tractor.

"It's a simple idea but it works well," says Krueger. "I didn't want a big loader on front of the tractor, but just something small that wouldn't obstruct my vision as I travel from field to field. It's quite a bit lighter in weight than a commercial front-end loader so it doesn't cause the tractor to jump up and down as it travels over bumpy fields. It lifts high enough to load bales onto a wagon or a flat rack. Some of my neighbors like it so much they want me to build more of them."

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Built from square tubing with a pair of commercial bale spears on it, loader can lift 1-ton bales up to 5 ft. high. "It's quite a bit lighter in weight than a commercial front-end loader," Dan Krueger points out.

"Big Box" Grill Guard For Deere 4230 Tractor

"I should've done this 30 years ago," says Daniel Wilde, Burlington, Texas, about the "big box" grill guard he made for his 1972 Deere 4230 tractor. It keeps trash from building up on the grill when he chops corn stalks or grain sorghum stalks each fall.

"It solved a common problem with this tractor," says Wilde. "It looks a little odd but it works so well I didn't have to clean my grill even once last fall. It's easy to install and remove, and I didn't make any modifications to the tractor or grill at all."

Both sides of the tractor have an 18 by 24-in. grill opening. When chopping dry stalks, the tractor's front axle would stir up trash and leaves which then got sucked up into the grill. "I had to frequently get off the tractor to remove the trash. Sometimes I could only make one pass through the field before the grill was choked up again," he says.

To solve the problem, he used 1-in. angle iron and thin sheet metal to build a pair of 24 by 28-in. boxes that are open on the back side and on top. He mounted one box on each side of the tractor, with part of the box extending

an inch or two into the engine compartment. Then he removed both grills and mounted them horizontally inside each box at the top. The original dowel pins at each end of the grill fit into holes drilled into the box's angle iron frame.

A pair of 1/8-in. thick metal bands extend across the tractor's hood and connect the two boxes together. There's a hole at both ends of each band, and a metal pin that sticks up out of a metal bracket on the box goes through it. Cotter keys are used to secure the pins. Wilde can remove both boxes by simply pulling two cotter keys from each band.

"To install the boxes, I prop a stick up under a box on one side of the tractor, then I do the same thing on the other side. Then I slip the metal bands across the tractor hood and secure the pins. The boxes are made from thin sheet metal so they don't weigh much. One person can easily lift them into place. It takes only about 15 minutes to install or remove both boxes," says Wilde. "The key to this design is that air gets sucked in from the top of the tractor, away from the disturbance of



Boxes on grill keep trash from building up on his Deere 4230 when Daniel Wilde chops corn or grain sorghum stalks.

the tractor's front axle and wheels and away from the vacuum created by the fan. Any rain that falls into the boxes soon drains away, as the bottom of each box is only loosely screwed on.

"Deere's 30 series tractors all came equipped with this type of grill design. It

didn't change until 1994, when the company came out with its 8000 series tractors and mounted the grill on front with a small extension on each side," he notes.

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Special Saddle Lets The Disabled Ride Horses

In her 27 years of work as a riding instructor, Karen Szymas was always saddened that severely disabled people were unable to experience the benefits of horseback riding. But that's all changed thanks to her new Independence Saddle that came onto the market last year.

Szymas' patent pending "Independence Saddle" allows people with virtually any level of disability to ride.

The Independence Saddle consists of a modified high-quality Australian stock saddle fitted with a combination of special attachments for various disabilities.

"In the past, only the moderately disabled have been able to experience the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding. The ones who could possibly benefit the most – often students in wheelchairs – were missing out," says Karen's father, James Szymas, who proudly wrote to tell FARM SHOW about his daughter's accomplishment.

The saddle attachments (called prompts) independently support individuals with disabilities astride a horse.

"Since each person's situation can be different, the rider is first evaluated to determine which prompts are needed," says Szymas,

who works as a riding instructor for individuals with impairments.

"Head and back supports provide head and trunk control. Adjustable forearm supports stabilize the arm and shoulder girdle, allowing the rider to lean slightly forward into a functional sitting position. Hip supports stabilize the pelvic girdle," she says. "In addition to providing physical, occupational, and psychological therapeutic opportunities, this system provides each rider an immeasurable sense of success and self-fulfillment, maximizing their quality of life."

Szymas and partner, Ken Lampe, with their company, "Independent Strides," offer four different grades of high-quality saddles as the foundation. Prices vary according to each person's needs, but currently range from \$5,695 to \$8,995.

Also, an extremely durable sidesaddle, for those who experience hypertension in their legs, will soon be available.

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The Independence Saddle consists of a modified high-quality Australian stock saddle fitted with a combination of special attachments for various disabilities. Each rider is first evaluated to determine which attachments are needed. Sells for between \$5,695 and \$8,995.

