# Smoother Ride, Fuller Load With Beefed-Up Suspension

As pickup frames have gotten lighter, load capacity has dropped. A new add-on suspension booster from TLC Suspensions increases capacity and also promises a smoother ride under full load.

"Our kit lets you add the benefit of coil and air springs to the original leaf springs," explains Jeff Mullican, TLC chief executive officer. "One kit fits all Ford, Chevy and Dodge 1/2-ton trucks. It adjusts easily to different frame widths and heights."

TLC uses two 9-in. Goodyear Super-Cushion Air Springs, each capable of lifting 2,000 lbs., positioned on top of 5-in. coil springs. There's a lifetime warranty on springs and all metal parts with dealer installation. The 200-psi Reitschle Thomas air compressor comes with a two-year warranty.

The entire package weighs about 130 lbs. It is expected to retail for close to $2,000. Initial sales will be limited to California as the company gears up production.

"We are just now setting up dealers and so far everyone loves it," acknowledges Mullican. "You really have to ride a truck equipped with one to appreciate it."

Mullican acknowledges that the system isn't cheap but he says the top-quality they were going for doesn't come cheap. Installation is designed to have no impact on truck warranty and the kit can be transferred to a new truck at trade-in.

The bottom support is an I-beam that connects to existing U-bolts on the leaf springs. The upper member bolts to the frame through existing holes. The add-on springs ride freely between the two. This eliminates the stress under load that can tear apart rigidly mounted air springs.

**TLC kit adds the benefit of coil and air springs to the original leaf springs, says the company. It fits all Ford, Chevy and Dodge 1/2-ton trucks.**

Pressure can be adjusted on-the-go with an in-cab switch that inflates or deflates pressure.

In the works are kits for 3/4-ton and 1-ton trucks, as well as an adapter kit that will allow the air compressor to be used with an accessory airline. While initial offerings are for domestic trucks, the company is also working on a kit for imports.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, TLC Suspensions, LLC, 11693 San Vicente Blvd. #150, Los Angeles, Calif. 90049 (ph 866 788-5273; email: tlcs3@tlcsuspensions.com).

# Handheld Seed Harvester

"You can harvest seed ten times faster with my handheld seed harvester than doing it by hand," says Jim Alwill, Prairie Earth Nursery, Bradford, Ill.

Alwill collects a lot of prairie seed in areas that a combine can't get to, such as steep hillsides, along railroads, and roadside ditches. Some of the seeds he collects include Indian Grass, big bluestem, little bluestem, switch grass, dropseed, liatris, New England aster, goldenrods, and golden aster.

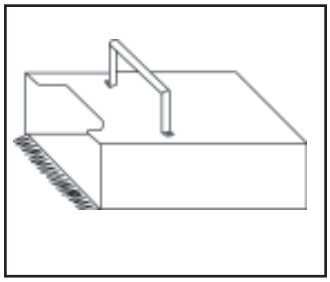
He says his harvester works great for small seed producers such as prairie seed producers, university seed production facilities, grass seed farms, etc., as well as teachers and native plant nurseries.

The harvester is made from lightweight plywood and measures 18 in. long, 18 in. wide, and 4 in. deep. It has a plastic handle on top. The box is equipped with a nonbreakable plastic comb with 2-in. long teeth at one end, with a recessed opening above it to allow the seed stalks to clear the box.

To harvest seed, you hold the box with one hand and use your other hand to hold the stalks in place while pulling the box across the plant material. The force of friction strips the seed off the stalk. If the seed isn't ripe, in most cases it will stay on the stalk.

"I keep a canvas tote tied to my belt which I use to dump the seed into," says Alwill. "Usually I carry a separate box for each seed species that I'm gathering. This helps to keep the seed pure.

"Some people put a harness on the box and hang it from their neck to distribute some of the weight. Or, you can just put the butt end of the box up against your belt as you walk through the grass. I can pick 5 lbs. of Indian grass in less than 30 minutes."



**To harvest seed, hold the box in one hand and use your other hand to hold the stalks against the box while stripping seeds off stalks.**

If you're growing a crop like vegetables or grass seed and find a particular plant that's different from all the rest, and you'd like to harvest the seed just from that one plant or small colony, the harvester works great for that, too, he says. "I've been using the first box I made for the last nine years. I've sold this harvester to several local native plant nurseries, The Nature Conservancy, and a local college. If you're picking large areas, this seed harvester will pay for itself within the first day of use."

Sells for $40 plus $15 S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Alwill, Prairie Earth Nursery, RR 1, Box 151, Bradford, Ill. 61421 (ph 309 645-1109 or 309 897-9911; email: Jim_Alwill@yahoo.com).

**This set of angled 12-in. dia. poly pipes is buried under bin, eliminating the need for hopper bottoms or unloading augers.**

# New Way To Unload Bins

Before you put up another grain bin, take a look at the Simrose Grain Bin Unloading System.

It eliminates hopper bottoms and under floor unloading augers by using gravity to unload grain via 12-in. dia. plastic pipes that run from the bin floor down to a third plastic 16-in. pipe with an unload auger.

The system is designed for new construction since the pipes are buried under the concrete floor.

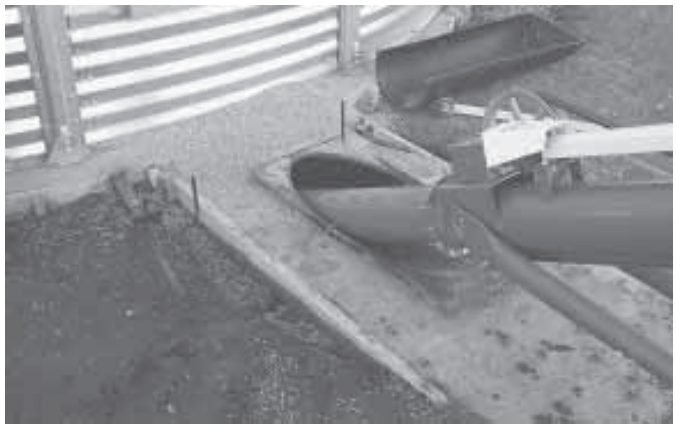
"To unload the bin, slide your auger into the outer opening. Then open the center slide and let the grain run down to the auger.

"When the grain stops running from the center, open the slide on the pipe closer to the door and let the grain run away from the door. Then you can insert a bin sweep through the door to drag the rest of the grain to the two openings," says Philip Simrose, inventor.

The system will handle 7,000 to 8,000 bushels an hour, he says.

Sells for about $800 (Can.).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Simritec Innovations, Inc., Box 102, Mortlach, Sask., Canada S0H 3E0 (ph 306 355-2709; email: pksimrose@sasktel.net; website: http://simritec.sasktelhosting.net).



**To unload a bin, you slide an auger into the outer opening and open one of the slides inside the bin to get the grain flowing.**

**Lowe's rig isn't pretty but it gets him between farms and is his son's favorite vehicle to drive.**

# "Poor Man's" Sports Utility Vehicle

Dwayne Lowe built his own mini SUV by mounting a 1982 Chevette car body on top of a 1980 Datsun pickup.

"It's not exactly a real sleek looking rig, but it's a fun little rig to drive around," says Lowe. "I use it for getting around between farms, and it's my son's favorite thing to drive. Chevrolet stopped building the Chevette in 1987, so a lot of young guys have never seen one and don't even know what it is."

The rig still has the pickup's original 2.0-liter, 4-cyl. gas engine and 4-speed automatic transmission. Lowe stripped the pickup down to the chassis, then built new body mounts for the Chevette body. The car body wheel wells are located about 1 ft. above the pickup's aftermarket 2.35 by 75 wheels. He mounted an expanded metal running board on each side of the car, and he put a drop-step truck bumper on back. He also added an air intake to the head. And he added Chevrolet pickup marker lights, mirrors and a home-made bumper on front.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dwayne Lowe, 88 400h St., Chanute, Kansas 66720 (ph 620 433-1559).