Smother 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 Carl Mulfic, 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 air compressor/-Thomson coil 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 Mulfic. “You really have to ride a truck equipped with one to appreciate it.”

Mulfic acknowledges that the system’s cost 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.

Handheld Seed Harvester

“For 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 collect include Indian Grass, blue bluestem, little bluestem, switch grass, grass seed, 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 harvesting. 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.”

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; phone: 1-800-834-9665; email: Jim_Alwill@yahoo.com.

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 into 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; phone: 306 355-2709; email: pksimrose@sasktel.net; website: http://simritec.sasktelhosting.net.

“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 Dwayne Lowe.

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

“I built it as an accessory airline. While initial offerings are limited to California as well as teachers and university seed production facilities, and it’s my son’s favorite thing to drive. 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.

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

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.