Built-From-Scratch Tractor Loader

The best thing about building equipment or attachments yourself is that you can build them exactly the way you want. John Wall did just that when he built his own front-end loader.

"I bought a set of plans from P.F. Engineering, but they didn't quite fit my needs," says Wall. "Their website also had pictures of loaders people had built that I looked at for ideas. Then I drove around and looked at different brands, picking the features I liked best from each of them."

He wanted quick removal and reinstallation of the loader, hydraulic float, and the ability to mount and use a belly mower with the loader in place. One of the biggest challenges proved to be mounting the loader around the horizontal muffler on his Case International compact tractor.

What Wall came up with was a heavy-duty loader built with 1/4-in. structural tubing. Like many commercial loaders, his has a subframe permanently attached to the tractor. It lets the loader be quickly mounted or removed as needed and offers added support to the loader. Wall's subframe runs the full length of the tractor, attaching at the back axle and the front as well as to both sides of the frame.

"My subframe spreads the load across the entire frame of the tractor, he says. "Being able to drop the loader quickly was important for working in the woods. Having a loader in the woods is a pain."

Loader quickly hooks up to a subframe that's permanently attached to tractor. The leg mounts for the loader are similar to Kubota mounts.

The leg mounts for the loader are similar to Kubota mounts. Wall notes that it took several tries to get legs corrected for the right balance. With his design, he attaches support legs to the loader arms, pulls two pins, unhooks the hydraulics and backs away.

Solving his mower need was relatively simple.

"I integrated the existing belly pan hardware into the subframe, so I can use the deck mower without taking the subframe off," he explains.

Before he built his front-end loader, John Wall looked at different brands, picking the features he liked best from each of them.

The muffler was a bigger problem. He recalls taking nearly a month to design the loader around the muffler.

The entire project took about 3 1/2 months to fabricate with a total cost of about $1,300.

"I used Corel Draw on my computer to draw up the plans," he says. "I took computer files to a local machine shop, and they dumped them into their computer and cut out the parts."

Wall bought cylinders from a local surplus center, but turned to the internet and eBay for a set of loader valves.

"I only paid $70 for a set that normally sells for $250," reports Wall. "They work great, and I've been using the loader for about six months."

Wall reports he has posted the loader plans and pictures on the P.F. Engineering site.

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For plans and photos: P.F. Engineering (www.loaderplans.com).

Tru Count air clutch installed on a typical chain-drive planter row unit. No planter modification is required.

Air-Powered Clutches Shut Off Planter Rows

You can quickly shut down any rows on your planter along end rows, point rows, waterways and terraces with this new Air Clutch row shut-off. It's a mechanical clutch that's pneumatically activated, and it works on all planters whether they're vacuum, air, or mechanical units, says Tru Count Inc., Ames, Iowa.

The air clutches are placed on each row, controlled pneumatically from your tractor cab through a manual or GPS controller. Activation is instant so there's no lag time whether you're stopping the planter or starting it.

Since each row has its own clutch, you can divide the planter into as many sections as you want in order to determine how big each "shut off" section will be. Each section of row units is controlled by one valve. For example, a 12-row planter can be divided into 12, 6, 4, 3, or 2 sections. The size of your sections depends strictly on the configuration of your air valves. For example, a 12-row planter with four air valves results in four 3-row sections. Or, by placing six Tru Count valves on the same planter it is now controlled in six 2-row sections.

The Air Clutch system is expandable by adding valves at any time to increase the size and number of sections controlled. For example, on a 12-row planter that originally has 3-row sections, you can add two more valves for six 2-row sections.

Air Clutch kit comes complete with clutches, air system, valve boxes, all wiring, and a control box.

The Air Clutch kit comes complete with clutches, air system, valve boxes, all wiring and plumbing, and a switch box. For GPS units, simply eliminate the switch box and plug in directly to your GPS.

Price for a complete kit starts at about $2,000 for a 12-row planter.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tru Count, Inc., 409 S. Bell Ave., Ames, Iowa 50010 (ph 800 323-5026 or 515 232-8285; jeff@trucount.com; www.trucount.com).

Tractor-mounted chainsaw mounts on a steel plate at rear of tractor. Once the chainsaw is running, Rechlin uses a cable to control the throttle from the tractor seat.

Tractor-Mounted Tree Feller

Cutting Christmas trees is almost effortless for Wolfgang Rechlin of Lebanon, Conn., thanks to the tractor-mounted chainsaw he rigged up.

"It works great on trees that are a maximum of 8 to 10 ft. tall," he says. "A chain saw mounts on a steel plate at the rear of the tractor. He didn't modify the chain saw at all. Once the chain saw is running, he uses a cable to control the throttle from the tractor seat. He fashioned a hand-operated lever to swivel the chainsaw and the plate against tree trunks.

"When the tree is cut, you want to be able to direct the way it falls, so there's a fixed arm that pushes it away from the tractor," he explains. "The system works best with a chainsaw with at least a 16 to 18-in. bar. Mine has an 18-in. bar."

Rechlin is building a hydraulic tree feller that will use a double acting hydraulic cylinder to swing the saw in either direction, and cut trunks from either the left or right side of the tree.

"I spent less than $100 on material costs on this hand-operated unit. I expect the hydraulic one will cost about $200 to make," he says. "I'm retired, but I grow a few Christmas trees, and I like to play around with machinery."

A hand-operated lever is used to swivel the chainsaw and the plate against tree trunks.

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