



At 40 ft. wide, new Geringhoff Northstar header can harvest 24 20-in. rows at a time.



One advantage of the big header is that you can slow down, which results in less field loss, says the company.

World's Largest Corn Head Takes To The Field

By Jim Ruen,
Contributing Editor

If you thought corn headers couldn't get any bigger, think again. Aemsco, Inc. (formerly Degelman Industries) has introduced a 40-ft. wide header designed to harvest 24 20-in. rows with every pass. The Geringhoff Northstar header is the latest in a long-term strategy, says Joe Jandrisch, president, Aemsco.

"The 24/20 is designed to meet the needs of farms that keep getting larger and farmers who are demanding and expecting more from their machinery," says Jandrisch. "We did this in anticipation of where the market is heading."

In 2005 Aemsco brought out the first 16-row, 40-ft. wide header. The new 24/20 header, like the 16-row design, uses components from multiple smaller Geringhoff Northstar headers. The row units are mounted on a custom built frame. Jandrisch says adapting the components to fit the 40-ft. frame was the first challenge.

The second challenge was finding a combine big enough to handle the giant header. While frame strength to handle the 13,385 lb. unit was important, it wasn't that much heavier than an OEM header. Power and capacity were the real concerns. Not only did the combine engine have to have enough power for 24 Geringhoff row units, but it also had to handle 24 rows of crop material throughput.

"The only combine we felt comfortable with was the Class 9 Lexion," says Jandrisch.

"The Deere has enough capacity, but we were unsure if it had sufficient reinforcement of the feederhouse to accommodate the 24-row header."

Assembling the header was one thing. Getting it ready for the field was another, says Jandrisch. Even with the Lexion, Aemsco engineers were unsure if the feeder housing would have enough power to raise and lower the header. Not until it entered the field in Ohio did Jandrisch know for sure how it would do.

"The first 24/20 went to Mark Schaffer from Norwalk, Ohio," he explains. "While we had complete confidence in the engineering and design, we were all very anxious and nervous about how the header would ultimately perform. After almost a week of use, Mr. Schaffer reported that it had been performing almost flawlessly. He had 6 semi trailers running to keep up with the combine and header."

Jandrisch reports that a few adjustments were needed. Lift cylinders were reworked to increase feeder house lift capacity. The auger rpm had to be increased and more ag-

gressive "crop transfer fingers" had to be installed on the header to improve crop flow.

He adds that one of the exciting things about the new header is its ability to maintain maximum throughput at slower ground speeds. While an operator might have to drive faster to maintain volume with a smaller header, the 24/20 lets a combine slow ground speed.

"At 6 to 7 mph, cobs are bouncing all over," he says. "With the 24/20, you can slow down to 4 1/4 miles per hour. You'll still have as much crop or more coming through with less stress on the header, the combine, the crop and the operators. And support trucks won't have to slow down either."

To increase interest and affordability Geringhoff is offering a 20 percent discount on the \$178,000 2008 price. Net retail price with the introductory offer is \$142,400.

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"Fly Your Own Blimp"

A new "go-anywhere" blimp may have potential for agriculture as well as plain old adventure.

Ballooning Dan Nachbar and aeronautical mechanic Mike Kuehlmuess have spent six years and \$500,000 designing and building their new bullet shaped blimp. Their first full scale model, the 102-ft. long prototype "Alberto", recently made its successful first flight.

There are collapsible ribs inside the fabric membrane. When Nachbar wants to lift off the ground or gain altitude, he fires up a propane-fired burner to produce hot air.

Unlike a traditional hot air balloon, once in the air, Nachbar can direct his flight with a propeller on the tail of the blimp.

The pilot controls direction, elevation and speed with a simple joystick control panel from a pod suspended beneath the blimp. Nachbar says the blimp can hover steadily in place, travel against the wind, and go virtually anywhere he wants to go.

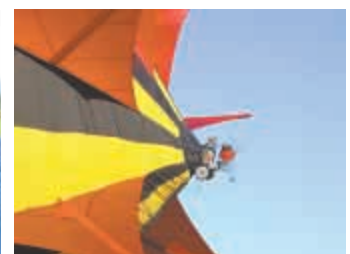
Such maneuverability without the downdrafts of a helicopter makes the aircraft ideal for aerial photography, eco-tourism, wetlands surveys and wildlife management. It would also be ideal for checking crops and livestock.

Nachbar hopes to have his design FAA certified within two years.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Skyacht Aircraft, Inc., 110 Pulpit Hill Road, Amherst, Mass. 01002 (ph 413 549-1321; info@personalblimp.com; www. personalblimp.com).



Bullet-shaped blimp measures 102 ft. long. Balloonist Dan Nachbar says the blimp can hover steadily in place, without the downdrafts of a helicopter.



Pilot controls direction, elevation and speed with a simple joystick, suspended in a pod beneath the blimp (left). Photo at right shows close-up look at the tail. Note that the engine has been rotated to the right (away from the camera) which pushes the tail to the left and turns the nose of the aircraft to the right.