

“Snow Boards” Mount On Front Loader Bucket

“They let me plow more than twice as much snow on every pass as I could without them,” says Douglas Peash, Cheboygan, Mich., about the “snow boards” he mounts on his front-end loader.

Peash uses the snow boards on his Kubota 54 hp tractor equipped with a Woods 1027 front-end loader. “The loader bucket is 71 in. wide but the boards extend that width to 91 in. when in the retracted position, and to 116 in. when in the extended (plowing) position,” he says.

The snow boards consist of a pair of 35-in. long by 20-in. high steel plates equipped with heavy duty hinges that bolt onto both sides of the loader bucket. A pair of bungee cords are used to keep the snow boards in the retracted position when not in use.

As soon as snow builds up on the bucket, the boards start moving outward. When they reach a 45 degree angle they’re stopped by a pair of triangular, flanged gussets that contact the bucket’s side walls. When Peash raises the bucket and dumps the load, the spring-loaded bungee cords pull the snow

boards back into the retracted position.

“They work great. I load the bucket until the tractor can’t push it any more and can push almost two and a half times more snow than I can with the bucket by itself,” says Peash. “As the boards open up they’re ahead of the bucket so they tend to shove the snow toward the center. I can really get a good load. I think the same idea could be adapted to a variety of loader sizes. Small hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders could be used instead of bungee cords for improved control.”

He uses the loader to plow his driveway and yard, where he stores round hay bales for sale. “My customers have to drive their trucks over the yard, which then becomes uneven. By itself, the bucket’s blade can easily dig into the grass and make a big mess, especially when snow falls on unfrozen ground. The boards help keep the bucket from scalping the grass because they have rounded leading edges on the bottom. Another advantage is that I can reach under buildings with low roof eaves without worrying that my tractor cab might contact the roof overhang.”



Snow boards, shown here in retracted position, almost double bucket width when in extended (plowing) position. Bungee cords hold boards in when not in use.

He used 3/16-in. thick steel to build the boards. The hinges are 1/4-in. thick steel. Each board is attached with two 3/4-in. bolts that go through existing holes in the bucket, which Peash enlarged. “It takes only about 15 minutes to put the snow boards on or off,” says Peash.

“I’m a retired engineer and made drawings

which I took to a local welding company. They charged me \$175 apiece to cut out the snow boards and weld them together,” he notes.

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Rich Dykstra harvests about 5 1/2 acres of hay each year using this home-built buckrake.

Mini Buckrake Harvests Compost Hay

There’s no such thing as too much compost for most market gardeners, and Rich Dykstra is no exception. To get enough compost for his 1 1/2-acre garden, he harvests approximately 5 1/2 acres of hay each year with the aid of a home-built buckrake.

“I don’t need it baled, and I don’t want it cured; in fact, the fresher and wetter, the better,” he says. “I knew a buckrake would let me gather the hay, but I couldn’t find one in our area.”

Dykstra worked with a neighbor to build a buckrake-like attachment for his loader-equipped, 35 hp Kubota. The forks are made from 1-in. sq. steel tubing. Uprights are made from 1 by 2-in. steel tubes. Forks and uprights are welded to a 6 by 6-in. tube. Steel tabs on it and the upright are placed to correspond with holes drilled in Dykstra’s Kubota loader. Removing the unit is a matter of pulling four 4-in. pins.

“The entire width of the buckrake is 7 ft., and the forks are 3 ft. long,” explains Dykstra.

He drives down the field after mowing to gather a load and drops it on his trailer to take to the compost area. Dykstra again uses the buckrake to place the hay in windrows, adding horse manure from local stables. The 100-ft. windrows start out 6 ft. wide at the base and 3 to 4 ft. high. He lets them sit for about a month before mixing them up. Dykstra removes the buckrake and uses his tractor and loader to turn the piles over.

“It has been an invaluable tool for handling loose hay,” he says.

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Buckrake attaches to the front-end loader on Dykstra’s Kubota tractor.

Manure Sweeper Keeps Pastures Clean

The AirLite Pasture Cleaner is three times faster than two men and a wheelbarrow and it dumps its load with the push of a button.

“It’s small and can be pulled with a 4-wheeler, ride-on mower or Gator,” says Pat Duffy of AirLite. “The remote control allows you to control brush height and throttle right from your seat.”

The pasture cleaner uses a 5-row brush unit and a set of spring tines to break up larger clumps of manure. As a bonus, it also can be set to de-thatch dead grass, or pick up pine needles, leaves and small rocks. The steel bin holds 28 cu. ft. and dumps easily by undoing two catches and pressing a button.

Price for the basic model is \$4,950. The deluxe version with remote control is \$5,750.

“Our main customers are individuals with a few horses,” Duffy says. But it works well for manure from other animals as well. Iowa purchased the pasture cleaners to clean goose droppings in state parks. Zoos and wildlife facilities purchase them to clean up behind an assortment of domestic and wild animals. (Duffy notes the machine isn’t suitable for cattle manure, which is too flat and sticks to the ground.)

More recently Duffy added a larger cleaner, the PCPRO series that cleans up to 8 acres/hour. It requires at least a 45 hp tractor with a 3-pt. hitch, pto and hydraulics to operate. The PCPRO has a 160 cu. ft. bin with a tip height of more than 70 in. A fully floating 10-row brush ensures good ground contact. The machines come in 48 and 72-in. wide sweeps and cost \$16,500 and \$18,000 (may vary according to current steel prices).



AirLite Pasture Cleaner is small enough that it can be pulled with a 4-wheeler, riding mower or Gator.



Unit dumps its load with the push of a button.

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