When Stuart Wilson and Jeremy Tempel went looking for a new self-propelled bale wagon, they quickly learned they’d have to shell out about $150,000. Instead, they bought a used mid 1970’s New Holland self-propelled wagon and completely rebuilt it.

The two men operate a custom baling business in which they sell small square bales, mostly to the horse market. “Much of the original wagon was worn out so bad there was almost nothing left. There were a lot of parts that we couldn’t buy from New Holland so we had to make them ourselves. Now it looks much like a modern bale wagon,” says Wilson, of Glenpool, Oklahoma. “We spent a total of about $10,000, including the $2,400 purchase price.”

They went online to find the self-propelled New Holland 1048 bale wagon, which was equipped with a cab and bale pickup on front and powered by a 361 cu. in. Ford V-8 engine. The seller wanted to part the wagon out, but Wilson offered to buy the entire machine. He then drove to Moses Lake, Wash., and hauled the wagon home on a trailer behind his pickup. The two men worked on the wagon all winter and finished rebuilding it last June.

The bale pickup was almost completely worn out. “We spent three weeks grinding and rebuilding the pickup’s frame and another week rebuilding the mouth where the bale pickup attaches to the wagon,” says Wilson. The arms that raise and lower the pickup were broken so they rebuilt them. “The arms have to be exactly located and their pivot angle has to be perfect, so it took quite a while to get all the geometry just right,” says Wilson.

They also welded up all the cracks in the back of the wagon once it’s full. A push-off foot is used to push the bales back off the times. They stack the bales outside a barn and later use a home-built, loader-mounted bale clamp to move them into the barn. It grabs 12 bales at a time and can stack them up to 14 ft. high. “We need a small tractor to get into the barn, but all the commercial bale clamps were too heavy for our Massey Ferguson 243 50 hp tractor,” says Wilson.

The wagon’s hydraulic system was still in good shape. However, every moving part and every bearing on it was worn out, says Wilson. “We had to make our own bearings and bushings for all the pivot points on the table and pickup. There were a lot of parts that we couldn’t buy from New Holland.”

The wagon’s flatbed is designed to tilt down to the ground and has four big tines on back. A push-off foot is used to push the bales back off the times. They stack the bales outside a barn and later use a home-built, loader-mounted bale clamp to move them into the barn. It grabs 12 bales at a time and can stack them up to 14 ft. high. “We need a small tractor to get into the barn, but all the commercial bale clamps were too heavy for our Massey Ferguson 243 50 hp tractor,” says Wilson.

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