Combine Rebuilt To Handle 50˚ Slopes

Gary Cochran farms on steep hills in the Palouse region of Washington. He wanted a combine he could use on hills with slopes up to 50 percent. However, combines equipped with hillside leveling systems that can handle such steep slopes haven't been available since the mid 1980's.

"For the past 20 years, no one has offered a hillside leveling system that can be used on slopes above 28 percent. If you want a 48 percent leveling system, you have to use a combine that's old and getting worn out," he says.

He solved the problem by going to J & M Fabrication, Cheney, Wash. They mounted the body of a 1998 Case IH 2166 Axial Flow combine on the wheels, axles, and frame of a 1980 Case IH 1470 Axial Flow combine which has a 48 percent leveling system. J & M completely overhauled the 1470 leveling frame, machining everything out and rebushing it to get it back to factory tolerances. Large color photos of the conversion were on display at an exhibit sponsored by J & M at the recent Spokane Ag Expo in Spokane, Wash.

"It was a one-of-a-kind project that drew a lot of interest," says Justin Miller of J & M Fabrication. "The conversion provided Gary with an almost-new combine that's equipped with a full blown 48 percent leveling system. We charged $30,000 to make the conversion. Including the cost of the two used combines, Gary's total cost was about $135,000 But now he has a fully modern combine equipped with a like-new leveling system that he can use on his steepest slopes. Last summer he used it to harvest about 2,000 acres of dryland wheat and barley, with no problems."

Cochran bought the 1470 model at a salvage yard for about $5,000. The combine had been in a roll-over accident but the frame and wheels were still good. He bought the 2166, which had 500 hours on it, for $95,000.

J & M unbolted the 1470's body from the frame and then used a pair of home-built overhead hoists to lift it off.A pair of winches on the front hoist were attached to each side of the combine. A single winch on the rear overhead hoist was attached to the motor mounts.

"The body of the 2166 is the same width as the frame of the 1470 and fit perfectly onto it," says Miller. "We did have to drill new holes and cut out a couple of pieces on the 2166 to make everything fit. The hardest part of the job was adapting the 2166's electrical system to the 1470's leveling system."

When the project was finally complete, they gave the combine a new 2176 model number to reflect the update.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, J&M Fabrication, 9901 Dewey Rd., Cheney, Wash. 99004 (ph 509 235-2675 or 509 220-1063; fax 509 235-4774; website: www.JandMFabrication.com).

J & M Fabrication mounted the body of a 1998 Case IH 2166 Axial Flow combine on the wheels, axles, and frame of a 1980 Case IH 1470. Here the body of the 1470 is being lifted off its frame.

Leveling system gives rebuilt combine the ability to handle slopes up to 48 percent.

60-Day Corn Perfect For Fall, Winter Grazing

A variety of corn that grows only 4 to 5 1/2 ft. tall and has a 60-day relative maturity is designed specifically for grazing during the fall and winter, according to the company selling the open-pollinated variety.

CanaMaize has thin, palatable stalks that are easily digested. The thin, short stalks can be swathed into windrows for grazing or baling. The short height allows more plants to be grown in the same area, allowing you to use an air seeder or drill to seed the crop.

"It provides excellent fall grazing and allows small grain growers to extend their grazing season without investing in new equipment," says Shane Terry, CanaMaize Seed, Inc., Minto, Manitoba. "The seed costs are significantly lower than for conventional hybrid corn. There's no need for a row crop planter or a combine. It also requires fewer crop inputs and results in savings on chemicals and fertilizer."

The company has been selling the corn variety in Canada for the past seven years. Now, they're trying to establish a foothold in the U.S.

"The variety was originally designed to be harvested for grain but is too low so we discovered it's better suited to grazing. In Canada, about 80 percent of our customers graze the corn, 10 percent of them cut it for silage, and 10 percent harvest it for grain."

The short, thin stalks allow 99 percent plant utilization, says Terry. "Hybrid plants have a much thicker stalk that's nothing but pure fiber. As a result, the animal uses up more energy digesting the stalk than they gain from eating it.

Terry says the short, thin stalks are very pliable so the crop swaths - and bales - very easily. He generally recommends swathing the crop as a first option, as opposed to grazing it standing. "The first reason is less waste. In standing corn cattle trample much of the crop. Swathing concentrates the feed and makes more of the plant material available.

"Second, swathing forces cattle to eat more than just the ears. When livestock have unrestricted access to standing corn they'll eat the cobs first and may suffer grain overload. Then they're left with only the stalks leading to inadequate nutrition when it's most needed most, late in winter. However, when the corn is swathed and the animals pick up the ear to eat first, they drag the entire plant into their mouth as opposed to ripping off the ear and moving on to the next plant. It results in a more balanced diet.

"Third, it's easier to use an electric fence across a field that's been swathed than it is across a field with standing corn. As a result, you can parcel off a three or four-day feed supply and control how much the animals eat. Also, swath grazing can make the forage more accessible after a heavy snowfall."

CanaMaize is a corn variety developed just for fall and winter grazing. It grows only 4 to 5 1/2 ft. tall and has thin, palatable stalks that are easily digested.

CanaMaize bales easily, says Terry. "Moisture levels in hard core round bales should be below 22 percent, and up to 27 percent with soft core balers. Bales with moisture levels over 27 percent can be wrapped and treated as bale silage."

CanaMaize sells for about $48 per bag (U.S.), including brokerage fees and phytosanitary documentation required for international shipping.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, CanaMaize Seed, Inc., Box 144, Minto, Manitoba, Canada R0K 1M0 (ph 877 262-4046; fax 204 776-5562; email: info@canamaize.com; website: www.canamaize.com).

Corn "Sand Box" Attracts Big Crowd At Fair

Wisconsin farmers have found a new way to teach urban kids about the foods they eat. For the past three years at the Wisconsin State Fair, young children and their parents have gotten hands-on experience with corn, wheat and soybeans thanks to these large playboxes filled with grain instead of sand.

The playboxes filled with grain give kids an idea of what grains are in their rawest form," explains Bob Oleson, executive director, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association. The WCGA pays Union Grove farmer Jeff Ehrhart to bring in bulk bags of wheat, corn and soybeans. Fair employees fill the boxes, and the rest is up to the kids.

"It doesn't cost a lot of dollars, but we get a lot of positive feedback," says Oleson. "The playboxes are full from morning to night, and the State Fair is always eager to do it again."

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Kids at the Wisconsin State Fair get hands-on experience with corn, wheat and soybeans in these large playboxes filled with grain.