

Self-Propelled Cart Goes Where Trucks Fear To Tread

If Bob Wright's combine can make it into the field, his self-propelled grain cart can too, and for good reason. The wheels, axle and engine all came off an old International combine. With the addition of 28L by 25 rice tires, it can go wherever it is needed.

"It worked great in the fields last fall, even when we couldn't get in with trucks," says Wright. "With those big lugs, it's no problem when it gets a little soft."

Wright may have started with combine parts, but the rest of the grain cart is pure innovation. He built the basic frame out of 4 by 6-in. steel tubing, then attached the front and rear axles and the engine from the combine.

"The combine had hydrostatic drive so we could put the engine and axles where we wanted and just run hoses between them," explains Wright.

The 400-bu. grain tank had previously seen service as a fertilizer spreader hopper. Wright replaced the 12-ft. long belt drive in the bottom of the flare-sided box with a 12-in. auger made by a local machine shop. It carries grain to another 12-in. upright auger at the

front of the tank. The horizontal auger is hydraulic powered so it can be slowed or shut down. The upright auger is driven by clutch off the gearbox and direct from the engine. It folds in the middle to lay out of the way between the box and the cab.

The rear wheels have no springs and are mounted directly to the frame. The front wheels (smaller flotation tires) have a set of truck springs for suspension. The springs provide an easier ride for the cab, which is mounted over the front axle.

The cab itself, as well as the hood, is also homemade. "I had an old cab off a combine, but it wasn't going to fit right, so I decided to start with new metal and make my own," explains Wright.

Making his own cab allowed him to design and lay out the platform and mount the seat, steering wheel and all the controls in the open. He then constructed the cab off to one side in the shop, raised it up and over the platform, set it back down and welded it in place.

"Not counting my own labor, I have about \$6,000 in it," says Wright. "We had a wet



Bob Wright built this self-propelled grain cart using the wheels, axle and engine off an old International combine. It's fitted with a 400-bu. tank.

fall, and the thing really came in handy."

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Custom applicator Bob Ward retrofitted a couple of floaters he had been using for herbicide application. Big A 4500 floater (above) carries a 6,000-gal. Balzer tank.



Terra-Gator pulls a 4,200-gal. tank built out of one of the floater's 3,200-gal. tanks. Note application toolbar on back. Unit can go down the road at 40 mph.

Floaters Turned Into Giant Spreaders

When you can't charge more for what you do, you have to find ways to do it for less. That's what Bob Ward, Geneseo, Ill., has done. A custom manure hauler for 14 years, he has been unable to raise his rates for the past 10 due to hog producers getting bigger or getting out.

"I needed a big enough tank to unload a semi in one fill, but there isn't enough money in the business to go out and buy a new \$400,000 manure application system," says Ward.

His solution was to retrofit a couple of his floaters that he had been using for herbicide application. He stripped away their 3,200-gal. tanks and added fifth wheel units from a junkyard, one of which he had to rebuild.

His first unit was a Big A4500 floater with a repowered Cummins diesel engine. The second unit was a Terra-Gator 1804 that can go down the road at 40 mph.

"They are a lot faster in the field than tractors, smoother coming in empty and faster going down the road," explains Ward, add-

ing that his customers appreciate the reduced compaction. "A floater leaves much less imprint on a field than a tractor does."

For his first manure tank, he attached a fifth-wheel bridge hitched to a 6,000-gal. Balzer tank that was equipped with an application toolbar. He says he made the mistake of following an engineer's recommendation instead of doing what farmers usually do, take the engineer's recommendation and double it.

"I learned my lesson on the first one," recalls Ward. "I used 4 by 8-in. 3/8-in. thick tubular steel on the first one, but it would get a sway in it under load. I had to keep reinforcing it. When I built the second one, I went with 1/2-in. thick, 4 by 12-in. tubular steel."

For his second tank, he took one of the 3,200-gal. tanks removed from the floater and had a welder cut the top off and lift it away. He then had a steel fabricator make flared sides for it to increase capacity to 4,200 gal. He built a chassis for it from 4 by 12-in. tub-

ing and the single axle was salvaged from a Big A fertilizer spreader found at a junkyard.

Ward welded a heavy duty Balzer lift assembly and tool bar with Yetter coulters to the chassis. He then made new brackets for the disc closers, moving them two feet further back than normal. This made room for him to mount anhydrous ammonia delivery shanks to place the liquid manure in the ground before disc closers put the residue back.

"You can't tell we have been in the field after we leave," says Ward. "When Balzer saw what we were doing, they told me I was nuts. After we started using it, they ran a picture of my machine in their ads."

Ward likes the floater units as much for their hydraulic power and ease of servicing as for their speed. The floaters have separate hydraulic pumps and reservoirs for the application systems, as opposed to tractors

where everything runs off the same pump.

One change he made on the Big A unit was to disconnect the front wheel drive. Originally each axle had its own hydraulic cylinder for turning with linkage to the middle of the machine that tied the axles together. As the rear system got worn, it allowed the rear axle to wander, not a good idea when speeding down a road. Ward pulled the rear cylinder and locked the rear axle with solid tie rods to hold it in place, leaving the front axle for steering the machine.

"They are so much easier to work on than tractors," he says. "If you have to pull a transmission, you don't have to pull it apart like on a tractor. They are built simpler and heavier to start with."

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Fender Auger Helps Pick Up Down Corn Stalks

Down or tangled stalks present no problem for this new hydraulically-operated auger kit that installs at each end of a corn header.

The Spiral Fender operates off the combine's hydraulic system and is designed to push stalks over into the header. The auger is 8 in. in diameter and 3 ft. long. To install it you cut out part of the fender, then bolt in a metal housing that contains the auger. The auger keeps down stalks from wrapping over the side of the fender. It'll work on rows from 18 to 30 in.

The unit is designed to fit Deere headers

but will soon also be available on Case IH and AGCO headers. It will also work with many of the down corn reels on the market, says inventor Jeremy Van't Hul, VH Mfg. Inc., Rock Valley, Iowa.

The kit includes left and right fender assembly with hydraulic motors and valves.

Sells for \$2,150 per pair.

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Hydraulically-operated auger kit installs at each end of corn header.