Gackle, N. Dak. farmer Roger Gutschmidt recently decided to eliminate one of the most annoying jobs in farming by designing a new tool called the “Hay Anchor.”

Gutschmidt says his stress level is down considerably, thanks to the device which takes the misery out of clearing a round baler that’s become plugged with hay.

“We’ve all done this at one time or another when using our round balers,” he explains. “I was baling hay late one night when the hay became damp and a bunch of the wet hay suddenly plugged the pickup. I tried to dislodge it by feeding more hay into the baler, since this sometimes works, but it didn’t help, and instead made things worse. Pretty soon I had a pickup that wouldn’t turn. All you can do when this happens is pull the hay out, stem by stem, which usually takes an hour or more, and can involve a lot of swearing and frustration.”

Gutschmidt’s Hay Anchor makes the job a lot easier. The tool consists of 5/8-in. cold-rolled rod, bent to an “anchor” shape. One long end of the rod has coarse threads sharpened to a point, so it easily pushes into the blockage of hay in the pickup.

“When you have it where you want it, you simply screw the eye bolt onto the end and hook a come-along between the eye bolt and the tractor draw bar,” he says. “The slug comes right out of the baler effortlessly. No more skinned fingers and broken fingernails from endless pulling of hay. I can pull the most stubborn clumps of hay out of my baler in less than 5 minutes.”

Gutschmidt also made an optional extension for the device, which can be needed when the slug is overly large.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gutschmidt Manufacturing LLC, Roger Gutschmidt, 6651 Hwy. 56, Gackle, N. Dak. 58442 (ph 701 698-2310; shopdoc@drtel.net).

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