

## Rebuilt Bale Wagons Work Like New

Jim Wilhite is a former custom bale hauler and ag banker who understands both the mechanics and economics of bale handling. That's why he got into the business of rebuilding and selling as many as 50 New Holland bale wagons a year, shipping them throughout the U.S. and Canada and as far away as Australia. He also sells parts and manuals, does repairs and even arranges for financing.

"With custom stackers charging from 50¢ to \$1 a bale, you can easily afford a rebuilt, pull-type bale wagon if you do 10,000 bales a year or less," says Wilhite. "If a guy has 20 to 30 acres of hay, it may be the only option, as custom stackers often don't want to fool with smaller operations."

Wilhite points out that rebuilt bale wagons look real attractive compared to new ones. New self-propelled bale wagons can cost in excess of \$150,000. Even the one pull-type model still offered by New Holland costs \$50,000 or more. Used units can be had for significantly less, depending on the bale wagon and the buyer.

"There is a huge price range, depending on condition and age as well as the use or abuse of the machine," says Wilhite. "Some used machines have barely been used, while others are basically just a pile of parts."

Over the past 25 years, Wilhite has seen it all. While he and his two bale wagon specialists can redo a unit so it looks like new, he will also sell bale wagons as is, if that's how the buyer wants it.

"Some guys like to fix up their own," says Wilhite. "When we fix one up, the customer knows it will work and work well. We take pride in giving the customer the best machine we can."

Wilhite has 55 bale wagons on hand, as well as parts salvaged and new. "We know where to get parts, and if we can't get them, we will fabricate them ourselves," he says.

Once a bale wagon is fixed up, Wilhite says it will stay good for a long time. "They are just metal with hydraulic lines," he says. "There isn't a lot to go wrong."

In addition to buying and selling bale wag-



**Jim Wilhite rebuilds and sells as many as 50 New Holland bale wagons a year. He says customers can save a lot of money compared to buying new.**

ons, Wilhite also helps put sellers and buyers together as a service. "We do a lot of three way calls," he says. "If you have a bale wagon to sell or if you need one, we can help."

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## Lightweight Aluminum

About 10 years ago Greg Bennett took a camping trip with his teenage sons into Arizona's Superstition Mountains to dig for gold by the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine. They wanted a shovel that wouldn't break so they bolted an aluminum handle on a steel shovelhead.

"During that trip I realized aluminum makes a great handle," Bennett says. So, he invested in a press and dies to stamp out his own aluminum tools. He gave them to family and friends to test. Three years ago, he and his sons started selling shovels, hoes, and posthole diggers.

"Every tool is guaranteed for life," Bennett says. "They're virtually unbreakable. You'll be able to pass them down to your children and grandchildren."

Landscapers are some of his biggest customers. Though they aren't meant for use as a pry bar, Bennett says landscapers have told him they use the shovels to pry out stumps.

As they develop products, Bennett listens to ideas from his customers and his wife. Her suggestions led to a unique hoe design with two sharp edges and one side with a jagged edge to pull out weeds.

They recently started anodizing the tools to harden them up to 70 on the Rockwell scale to hold their edge. It also eliminates any electrical conductivity.

Prices are similar to quality fiberglass handle tools available at big box stores: Hoe



**"Every tool is guaranteed for life. They're virtually unbreakable," says Greg Bennett about the metal shovels, hoes and posthole diggers he makes.**

(1 1/2 lbs.) \$28; shovel (3 lbs.) \$48; and post-hole digger (8 lbs.) \$75, plus \$10 shipping anywhere in the contiguous U.S.

Folks who never break handles may not need his tools, Bennett notes, but he knows there are plenty of people who appreciate quality tools that won't break.

"I want to sell everybody just one," he laughs.

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**With its unusual sidearm design, Don Sawvell's mower can go from horizontal to plus or minus 45 degrees without even slowing down.**

## Sidearm Mower Ideal For Roadsides

Mowing area ditch banks is easy with Don Sawvell's sidearm Bush Hog. With its unusual sidearm design, counter balancing weights and belt drive, it can go from horizontal to plus or minus 45 degrees without even slowing down.

"We offset the mower and hung it on a frame within a frame," says Sawvell. "This lets us raise and lower it with the 3-pt. hitch attached to the outside frame. We also use a cylinder on the inside frame to separately raise and lower the mower 8 in. if we come to a gravel ridge or other obstacle."

The outer frame of 1/4-in. walled, 4 by 4-in. boxed steel tubing attaches to the 3-pt. hitch on the tractor. It runs back to a trailing wheel salvaged from an old windrower.

The mower deck and its pto-driven belt drive, as well as its counter weight arm, hang on the inner frame. The inner frame and the weight arm are fabricated from 3 by 3-in. steel tubing. The design allows the mower deck to ride to the right of the tractor's rear wheel.

A 24-in. stroke hydraulic cylinder mounted between the inner frame and the mower deck provides at least 135 degrees of tilt. "We can run it in the vertical position and lower it down over vegetation," says Sawvell. "It's great for shredding brush."

To allow that range of tilt, the deck is attached to the inner frame by a pipe hinge. The hinge also houses a power shaft with pulleys to drive the mower. This arrangement maintains a constant distance between the shaft pulley and the drive pulley for consistent power to the mower, regardless of what position it's in.



**A 24-in. stroke hydraulic cylinder mounted between an inner frame and the mower deck provides at least 135 degrees of tilt.**

"We ran the original pto power shaft back to a belt pulley that transfers power to a pulley on the enclosed drive shaft," explains Sawvell. "The shaft transfers power forward to a pulley that is then belted to the drive pulley on the deck."

Initially, Sawvell ran the mower on a 540-rpm pto shaft; however, he noted belt slippage at that speed. He then kicked it up to 1,000 rpm's, which eliminated slippage. A larger belt pulley on the mower deck is used to slow the speed down for the 540-rpm rated mower.

"We've used it for about 15 years, and it works great," says Sawvell. "The mower is starting to get worn, but the carriage will work with any rotary mower."

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## Fuel Barrel Trailer Hauls Wood

It's nice to have firewood handy for summer bonfires and camping, so the idea of "rolling storage" appealed to Gackle, N. Dak. farmer, Roger Gutschmidt.

"I made a little trailer out of an old 265-gal. barrel," he explains. "It was easy to make and I can put it wherever I want it. I usually have it parked inside a building so the wood stays dry until I use it. Then, it's quick and easy to just hook on to the ATV and take it where it's needed."

Gutschmidt used a steel-cutting circular saw to open up the barrel cavity by removing its top side. Then, he welded a section of 1 5/16-in. dia. pipe to each side of the barrel's underside and slipped a 1 1/4-in. dia. round shaft axle and wheel assembly into each. The axles are bolted in place.

"The trailer's 2 axle wheel assemblies are easily removed if I want to use them somewhere else," he points out. "To finish it



**"It was easy to make and I can put it wherever I want," says Roger Gutschmidt about the wood hauling trailer he built out of an old 265-gal. fuel barrel.**

off, I just made a hitch by welding a piece of 2-in. sq. tubing on the underside of the barrel so it sticks out about 3 ft."

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