

## Windrow Merger Reversed For Front-Mount Operation

Tired of turning around to check his trailing hay windrow merger, Virgil Pook and his son Travis reversed the mounting brackets and drive system so they can “push” it through the field.

“We bought a Versatile 276 bi-directional tractor with the idea of front-mounting the pull-type hay merger,” says Pook. “However, we wanted to modify it in such a way that would let us return it to trail mode for resale or trade.”

An old stack mover made the job easy. The 3-pt. hitch simply needed to be reinforced and have excess length cut off the pick-up tines. Gussets were welded on each side of the stack mover to bolt to the backside of the merger frame. Angle iron was welded to the tines and holes drilled to match up to holes in the merger’s mainframe.

The final stack mover modification was to weld 4 by 4-in. steel tubing to the tines so the merger would be level.

Merger preparation consisted of removing the front hitch, the wheels and remounting the rear dolly wheel.

“In its original position, the dolly wheel would dig into the ground on turns,” explains

Pook. “We decided to remount it to the merger frame and add a second one to the other side.”

Mounting the merger to the stack mover was a matter of bolting it to the new framework on the stack mover. Original hoses for the hydraulic drive were sufficiently long. However, even remounted, the dolly wheels caused trouble.

The dolly tires were slightly too large for the available space. On turns they would rub the old axle, which was welded to the frame. Pook replaced the dolly tires with doughnut tires used as spare tires in cars. The smaller size eliminated the problem.

“We took the spare tire wheels to a machine shop,” says Pook. “They cut out the car wheel centers and welded in solid centers with holes drilled to match the dolly hubs.”

The only other change was to add a screen over the front panel. Pook notes that hay was getting kicked over the panel and onto the tractor. A piece of screening bolted in place took care of the problem without affecting visibility.

“The front mount is easy to operate and easy to train new operators to run,” says



Virgil Pook and son Travis reversed the mounting brackets and drive system on their pull-type windrow merger so they could push it rather than pull it.

Pook. “It was a low cost conversion. The additional dolly wheel cost \$500, and the stack mover was about \$125. When we are ready to sell, we can unbolt it and return the merger to its original pull-type style.”

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**They modified the windrow merger by removing the front hitch and wheels and remounting the rear dolly wheel.**



## Time-Saving “Ratchet Strap Winder”

Richard Brandenburg hauls a lot of round bales, strapping down 7 or 8 bales at a time on a semi tractor-trailer. It used to take him a long time to wind up all the straps by hand after the bales were unloaded. Then his 18-year-old grandson Anthony came to the rescue, building a hand-operated “ratchet strap winder” that’s designed to quickly roll up the straps. It can be moved to anywhere on the trailer.

“It works fast and is really handy. I can roll up a 40-ft. long strap in only about 10 seconds,” says Brandenburg.

The strap ratchet winder consists of a 12-in. long metal brace with a slot at one end that

clamps down over the rug rail on the side of the trailer bed. A 10-in. dia. metal plate is welded to the other end of the brace. A 2-in. sq. strap holder welded into the center of the plate holds the strap as it’s wound up. The operator simply places the hook end of the strap over the strap holder and starts cranking.

“Once I’m done using the strap winder I just throw it in a box under the trailer,” notes Brandenburg.

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Hand-operated “ratchet strap winder” is designed to quickly roll up round bale straps. It can be moved anywhere on trailer.

## “Tach-N-Go” Grabs Loader Tools Fast And Won’t Let Go

An innovative new quick-tach design from Jerry Dunn, manufacturer of the Loader Buddy (Vol. 34, No. 3), may revolutionize front-end loader hookups. His new “Tach-n-Go” design includes a built-in receiver hitch and optional built-in hay bale stabilizers.

“My first model was built for Kubota BX loaders,” says Dunn. “This system weighs just 52 lbs.”

Dunn points out that on small loaders like the BX, every pound is important. His design also offers a more secure and trouble-free pick up. Instead of requiring two large pins and a safety pin, the Tach-n-Go has only a safety pin. Pins are left in the attachment.

The Tach-n-Go has a hook for the upper bucket mount and a set of receivers for the lower bucket mounts. Nested between each pair of receivers is the innovative Tach-n-Go two-component locking mechanism. A bolt and a compression spring connect the two rotational components.

Securing the attachment is fast and easy. After the operator has picked up the attachment with the loader, he removes the safety pin, which keeps the mechanism in the ready position. The operator then rotates the handle of the upper mechanism less than 90 degrees to an over center “locked” position and replaces the safety pin. This eliminates the possibility of the handle being accidentally knocked open.

Dunn says the Tach-n-Go components are designed for long life. Stainless steel is used where corrosion might be a problem. Industry

standard powder coat and zinc finishes are used throughout.

Dunn has a design for Sc2400’s and Sc2450 Cub Cadets in the prototype stage. He is also working on a universal Tach-n-Go for any small tractor loader with capacity of up to 900 lbs., such as the Kubota LA 402 loader. Like the BX design, weight is kept to a minimum to maximize loader lift capacity.

The Tach-n-Go itself pins directly to the loader just as a standard bucket or attachment would. Once in place, it accepts standard buckets and other attachments as well as any attachment with a 2-in. receiver mount, such as a winch or a variety of hitches.

Dunn has designed a 16-in. ripper tooth for the receiver hitch. With its range of movement and down pressure, the tooth is ideal for loosening soil, digging roots or popping rocks out of the ground. He also has a set of fixed forks for use with pallets.

Dunn says integrating bale stabilizer mounts into the Tach-n-Go helps to increase lift capacity. Used in combination with a receiver hitch-mounted bale spear, the stabilizers, Tach-n-Go and spear weigh only 110 lbs., leaving nearly 600 lbs. of capacity on a BX loader.

Dunn is developing a number of other new attachments to work with the Tach-n-Go in addition to his original Loader Buddy. He is pricing the BX version of the Tach-n-Go at \$649 plus shipping. The ripper tooth is priced at \$179, and the forks are \$459 plus shipping.



Loader-mounted “Tach-n-Go” can be equipped with a 16-in. ripper tooth, which mounts on a built-in receiver hitch.



Receiver hitch (top) can be used with trailers. Two-component locking mechanism consists of a bolt and compression spring.



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