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## Skid Steer-Mounted “Wire Winder”

Randy Sloan, Craig, Colo., invented his skid loader-mounted wire winder out of necessity.

“I’m a fence contractor as well as a cattle rancher. I recently got a contract to remove 72 miles of woven wire. Normally we would cut the wire loose from the posts and roll the wire up by hand. After about 50 ft., you end up with a big, bulky roll of non re-useable wire, and then you start over again. Then there’s the problem of hauling all those bulky rolls of wire to a scrap dealer or a landfill.”

Sloan had to come up with a better way so he invented a wire roller that attaches to a hydraulic post hole auger on a skid loader. “You just take the auger bit off and install the wire roller, then tilt the auger horizontal with the ground,” says Sloan. “The wire roller has a pipe in the center with a slot from one end to the other. There are two half pipes on either side of the center pipe with rails and wedges on the inside. You slide these wedges

in to expand the core of the pipe when you start rolling the wire. When the wire roll is full you pull the wedges out, which allows the wire to slide off freely.

“The roller pulls the wire in and puts it into a nice, tight roll, much like a new roll of wire looks. We put 300 to 400 ft. of this wire onto a roll at a time. We’ve pulled up to a quarter of a mile of wire at a time without moving the skid loader to another location. This has not only saved me a lot of labor, but I was able to sell all the wire to other ranchers to re-use instead of having to pay for disposing it in a landfill.”

Sloan manufactures the wire winders in his shop during the winter. They sell for \$2,400 plus S&H.

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To operate, you remove the auger bit and install the wire roller, then tilt the auger horizontal with the ground.



## “Bale Max” Helps Make Good Bales Fast

Thanks to this first-of-its-kind baler-mounted electronic “tool”, you can now make small square bales of consistent size at top speed.

The “Bale Max” stroke monitor lets you know how fast to drive, depending on how heavy or light the hay is at the time. The unit runs off the tractor battery and includes a monitor in the tractor cab and 2 electronic magnetic switches – 1 on the baler knottor and 1 on the plunger – that count the number of strokes made per bale. The monitor also keeps a running tally of the total number of bales made.

Installation requires drilling 2 holes and takes about a half hour.

“Sometimes it’s hard for the tractor driver to know how fast to drive to get optimum consistency and productivity. The Bale Max counts the number of strokes, or flakes, in each bale so you can adjust tractor speed accordingly,” says Richard Hallett, Carstairs, Alta., who along with his dad Dale came up with the idea. “You want to keep the number of flakes in each bale fairly consistent. By watching the monitor you can tell whether to slow down or speed up.

“We came up with the idea because we’re in the business of producing high quality hay for horses and have found that hired operators



**Baler-mounted stroke monitor lets you know how fast to drive, depending on how heavy or light the windrow.**

often don’t have the experience to know when to speed up or slow down. We’ve found that optimum production for most balers requires making 12 to 16 strokes per bale. By watching the monitor you can speed up or slow down the tractor to stay within that optimum range.”

The Bale Max sells for \$400 plus S&H.

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Jerry Kloos, Farmers Cooperative Association in Minneota, Minn., oversees moving a grain bin from an old foundation to a new concrete pad near Canby, Minn. The bin was moved by Kockelman Construction, Inc. of Canby. Replacing broken foundations and moving bins offers a good way to maximize investments. The process, however, takes experience and time to complete correctly.

## Grain Bin Relocation In Demand

Jerry Kloos routinely turns away grain bin moving requests. Kloos, branch manager for a Minnesota grain co-op and a grain equipment dealer, has only moved a limited number of bins in his 40 years in the business. But he says interest has picked up and could provide a good sideline business.

“After a recent article in a regional paper about a big bin we moved, I’m getting calls from around the state,” says Kloos. “Lifting an entire bin is a good way to upgrade with a new foundation or to add a full floor.”

Kloos notes that while drying floors or full floors are common today, many old slab floor bins still exist. “Anytime you get grain off the concrete, you gain benefits,” he says.

Kloos and his crew worked with Kockelman Construction, Inc. of Canby, Minn. on most of the 8 bins he has moved. They have rearranged bins from a straight line to a half circle around a grain dryer and moved bins from crumbling foundations to a new ones.

The key, according to Kloos, is to keep the bin “in-the-round” as it moves. Kloos uses a wheel from a motor grader as a centering device. After attaching a number of chains to the wheel, it’s snugged up under the roof by a cable leading to a crane hoist.

“The chains are attached to brackets on the wall with come-alongs,” explains Kloos. “With the wheel snug to the roof, we tighten up the come-alongs to put tension on the chains. Then as the crane lifts the wheel, it’s lifting the roofs and the sides at the same time.”

The bin can be set aside while the new foundation is prepared. Before resetting on



Photos courtesy Andrea Johnson, Minnesota Farm Guide

**Prior to lifting the bin, the grader wheel with attached chains is snugged to the top of the bin. Once the chains are tightened, the bin can be lifted.**

new foundations, bin edges are sanded and the bin is carefully measured on all sides to ensure it has stayed “round”. A full floor can also be attached before the bin is reset.

Kloos credits the right equipment, experienced equipment operators and good weather conditions for a smooth move. Minimal wind is vital, as is simply being careful, he adds.

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To keep his riding mower from throwing rocks, Lymon Rule bolted a 6 by 12-in. section of perforated metal over deck’s discharge opening.

## Do-It-Yourself Mulching Mower

Lymon Rule wanted to eliminate the risk of his mower throwing rocks, sticks, metal objects and other lawn trash at windows and bystanders. So, he bolted a section of 6 by 12-in. perforated metal over the discharge opening on his tractor mower deck.

Lyman says that if the grass is dry, the blocked discharge doesn’t cause the mower to plug or windrow.

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