



Self-propelled, mower conditioner is equipped with three 16-ft. cutting and conditioning heads.



Machine's Deere cab mounts on a manual turntable, allowing the operator to drive forward both in the field and on the road. Cab can be turned 180 degrees for transport.

500 Hp Custom-Built, 48-Ft. Mower Conditioner

"It has three, 16-ft. cutting and conditioning heads and a 500 hp engine," says Keith Vogel, Vogel Engineering about the company's custom built giant mower conditioner. They

started designing it after building a 37 1/2-ft. self-propelled, 400 hp mower for commercial hay grower Brent Maust.

Originally Maust worked with Vogel Engineering to design a tractor-mounted system. The mower conditioner units were rear-mounted, and Maust had to drive the tractor in reverse when using them. In addition, the tractor-mounted mowers were too wide to take down the road.

"We convinced him to try a self-propelled unit," says Vogel. "We built a frame and used a 9L Deere diesel for the power unit. We reused Maust's three Deere 994 rotary mower conditioner heads that were still nearly new."

A Deere cab mounts on a manual turntable, allowing Maust to drive forward in the field and on the road. After turning the cab 180°, the three mower heads are tucked into a 15-ft. width behind the cab for transport.

"It eliminated two tractors and two operators and lets him cut hay three times faster than before," says Vogel. "It's been compared to the big Claas and Krone units. However, no U.S. manufacturer makes anything like it, and we used all U.S.-made

parts. We are more economical and give you more bang for the buck than the others do."

With the new 48-ft. mower, what you get is a 13.5L Deere engine and a Deere cab. The cutter heads are Case IH 163 mower conditioner heads with steel flails. The cab turntable is hydraulic-powered for operator ease in reversing direction.

The unit's 40,000-lb. weight is about the same as the smaller Maust model. The additional horsepower was needed for the bigger and heavier cutting heads, with weight in other areas reduced where possible.

"We've been using Deere diesels in our vegetable harvesters for years," explains Vogel, who's well known for the company's self-propelled carrot, cucumber, celery and squash harvesters. "However, if a customer wants a Cummins or Cat engine, we've worked with them as well."

Vogel suggests a list price of around \$550,000 for his 48-ft. mower conditioner. To see the big unit in action, check out the video at www.farmshow.com.

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The 3 mower heads are tucked into a 15-ft. width behind cab during transport.

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March-April, 2013

"Ride And Eat" Bird Feeders

It's fun to watch birds eat from these spinning feeders that Ron Balkcom made from bike and wheelchair wheels. "I call them my 'ride-and-eat' bird feeders," he says.

The "merry-go-round" feeder uses a 30-in. dia. wheelchair wheel mounted horizontally on a wood post. Seven feeders made from plastic bowls hang from 6-in. threaded rods.

"As long as I keep the bolt oiled, the wheel will spin around with even the slightest wind. Once birds get used to it they just ride around and eat," says Balkcom.

The "ferris wheel" feeder is made with a vertically-mounted 26-in. bicycle wheel, which has 4 tupperware containers attached to it by 1/4-in. threaded rod. Balkcom drilled a hole through both sides at the top edge of each container. The wheel itself rotates on a bolt that attaches to an angle iron bracket that has an L-shaped bend at the top.

"The tupperware containers go around and around like ferris wheel seats. As long as I don't fill the containers more than half full the birds can't tip them over," says Balkcom. "The wheel will rotate in either direction depending on which side is carrying heavier birds."

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"Ferris wheel" feeder is made with a vertically-mounted 26-in. bicycle wheel, which has 4 tupperware containers attached to it.