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Photo courtesy: Carl Stafford
Double baler picks up hay from large merged windrows, separates the inflow into 2 separate chambers, and kicks bales out 2 separate chutes at the same time.

Two New Holland Balers Merged Into One Big Machine

"We cut up two New Holland 5070 balers and combined them into a single machine," says Virginia haymaker Rusty Inskeep. "With this new outfit we're able to bale more than 900 bales an hour in heavy first crop hay."

Inskeep's double baler works efficiently because it picks up hay from large merged windrows, separates the inflow into two separate chambers, and kicks bales out two separate chutes in the back at the same time. One tractor pulls the oversize machine that Inskeep calls the "Mt. Pony Special".

"I dreamed about building this double-barrel baler for two years, and then my nephew Paul and I spent the better part of two winters putting it together," says Inskeep. "We'd been using a couple balers, and that always meant an extra tractor and an extra operator. I thought if we had a higher capacity outfit we could make our hay with less help and get it done just as fast, if not faster."

Turns out the Mt. Pony Special is more

than capable of high output. The Inskeeps averaged about 70,000 bales of hay and straw a year with it in 2012 and 2013. "One day we made just short of 5,000 bales in 6 hrs.," Rusty says. "It was amazing to see."

Inskeep's double barrel special has the pickup, baling and discharge mechanisms of both New Holland 5070 machines. The machine on the left (looking back from the tractor) only has modifications to the hitch and the pickup. The other machine was cut apart and re-assembled to create a mirror image of the one on the left. A 7-1/2 ft. wide pickup is in the center of the joined machines, able to consume double-wide windrows. As hay is picked up, separate gathering forks pull material into both baling chambers. Plungers in each chamber cut, compact and build 50 to 60-lb. bales that are discharged out the back on separate chutes. Each chute is equipped with a moisture tester and scale so bales can be sized equally from both chambers.

Uniform and equal weight bales are needed because the Inskeeps pick up all their hay with self-propelled bale wagons.

An elaborate, arching hitch made of 8 in. by 8 in. square tubing and reinforced framing behind the pickup holds the whole setup together. The conjoined machine is 13 ft. wide, weighs 11,000 lbs. and has a tongue weight of 2,640 lbs. It rides on two single 24-ply trailer tires. Rusty's nephew Paul brought his computer programming and design skills to the project by configuring the whole setup on 3D CAD. "I only had ideas in my head and sketches on paper," Rusty says. "Paul put it all onto the computer so we could make changes with the software rather than building it with metal and tearing it apart if it didn't work."

Configuring the drive for the two baling mechanisms was a major undertaking. A 1-3/8 in. dia. drive shaft runs from the 1,000 rpm tractor pto to a speed-reducing gearbox

that creates two 540 rpm drives. The plungers are timed so they alternate compressing hay. "Because of the timed plungers, running this machine doesn't take any more power than running one baler," Inskeep says. They use a 140 hp. tractor with dual wheels to pull the baler. Twine is dispensed from a super-sized 16-ball twine box mounted between the two balers at the back.

The Inskeeps use the Mt. Pony Special for baling about 450 to 500 acres of hay and straw every year. Two discbines cut the hay, and twin rakes pull about 26 ft. of hay together into one super-sized swath for the baler. "It's saved us a lot of time and helped speed up our operation," says Rusty. "I think it probably does the work of 3 balers, and that's just what we needed."

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Labor-Saving Machines For Raised Bed Growers

"We build 2 machines that take the backbreaking work out of laying and removing plastic on raised bed gardens," says John Miller of E-Z Trail Manufacturing in Ohio. "Both of these machines can be used behind a horse-drawn forecart or mounted on a Cat. I 3-pt. hitch," Miller says. "They just make vegetable farming so much easier."

The Hogback Mulch Layer machine first builds a raised bed that's 2 to 6 in. high. In the same pass it dispenses fertilizer, lays down drip irrigation lines, and then rolls out a continuous strip of mulch plastic. Two discs on the rear of the machine cover the edges of the plastic with dirt to hold it in place.

E-Z Trail also builds a mulch pickup reel that lifts and rolls plastic from raised beds when the growing season is done. That machine is built on a smaller frame and has a ground driven pickup reel that rolls up about 500 ft. of plastic at a time. Miller says it has discs that cut debris alongside the mulch and lifts the edges of the plastic so it's cleaner as it wraps on the roll.

The raised bed mulch laying machine is 6 ft. wide and 7 ft. long. It has a sturdy metal frame to support several tools. In the front, two 20-in. coulters and two 16-in. coulters create a berm as the machine moves through the field. Fertilizer is applied in front of the discs so it's incorporated into the soil as the berm is built. A large roller then smooths and firms the soil, and then one or two drip irrigation lines are placed before the plastic mulch is laid in place. The roller holds a 4-ft. wide by 4,000-ft. long roll of plastic. Two 16-in. discs at the back roll a small amount of soil on the edges of the plastic to hold it



E-Z Trail makes this Hogback raised bed mulch layer, shown here pulled with a forecart behind a team of horses.

in place.

Miller says bed height can be changed by making simple adjustments to the front discs so they throw more dirt onto the berm. The rear discs are also adjustable. The mulch layer is priced at \$2,589 and the plastic picker is \$1,455. A spool to apply two or three double drip tubes is included. The pull-type model has a gooseneck hitch so the operator can make a 180 degree turn at the end of a field and work back in the row right next to the one just completed.

The machine is available in pull-type and 3-pt. models that build a 3-ft. raised bed and use 4-ft. wide plastic to cover it. The pull-type model can be ordered with steel wheels or pneumatic tires. Miller recommends using a 35 to 45 hp. tractor that's capable of lifting and carrying the 800-lb. mulch layer. Machines can also be special ordered at additional cost to handle 3 or 5-ft. plastic.

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Mountain Curs Bred To Have Many Talents

Despite the negative connotation of the word "cur", Mountain Cur dogs are not mongrels, says dog breeder Dave Glazebrook. They're bred for specific traits and some of them are pretty impressive — such as the ability to take on full-grown bears and wild boars.

There are several cur breeds, but living in White Plains, Ky., Glazebrook is partial to the Kemmer Stock Mt. Curs, selectively bred in Kentucky by Robert Kemmer since the early 1970's.

"Kemmer did a great job getting the early bloodlines," Glazebrook says. "He wanted to get the dogs back to the standard breed — a 40 to 60-lb. dog that was used for everything. Too many curs were becoming just squirrel dogs."

Glazebrook sells about half his Kemmer stock pups to buyers out West interested in big game hunting. Local buyers purchase them for small game hunting, for protection, or as pets. The breed holds up well for hunters who hunt for 12 to 16 hrs. a day from a mule or horse. Unlike a hound that roams, curs stick close and hunt with you, Glazebrook says. The dogs also make good companions for trail rides.

"You need to live where they can get exercise — a place to run," he emphasizes. "They need daily stimulation or they will start chewing everything."

Kemmer Stock Mt. Curs often have bobbed tails and come in a variety of colors from blonde to black. They have a short smooth coat with a soft undercoat. While some owners keep them inside, they can be kept outside even in northern climates with protection such as an insulated doghouse.

With a deep broad chest and muscular neck, legs and feet, they are built for hunting — or protecting a family. Typically they don't bark



Mountain Cur dogs are bred for specific traits, such as the ability to take on full-grown bears and wild boars.

a lot unless they have a reason to — such as an unknown man approaching. The breed usually takes to children and women right away.

Kemmer's breeding standards include specific traits and abilities: "Make all-around farm and ranch hands. Take possession and keep order. Guard the chicken house and catch intruders. Guard the children. Keep livestock in the field. Can heel a cow like a stock dog. Can get rough with a mean cow. Will catch every groundhog on a farm even if it takes all summer. Will crawl on their stomachs to stalk a groundhog trying to get between groundhog and den. Can track a snake like a squirrel."

Glazebrook's dogs are registered with the Kemmer Stock Breeders Association and the United Kennel Club. He sells most of his pups for \$150 to \$300. Females that are blue brindle (highly sought after) sell for \$400. The pups can be shipped via dog transport services for \$200 to \$400.

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