



Jim Ruen likes the loader and 3-pt. mounted cultivator mounted on his Honda Foreman 4-wheeler. Replacement parts are now available from Wild Hare Mfg.



Some of the Wild Hare accessories available include this rear 3-pt. hitch and 57-in. disk harrow, as well as a battery box.

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

ATV Loader, Implements Back In Production

In 2004, I bought a Groundhog loader for my 500 cc Honda Foreman 4-wheeler. It came with a bucket, blade and posthole auger. I use it at my wooded homesite and on my farm.

The Groundhog was originally manufactured by Smucker Mfg. and later marketed by Concord Equipment.

A few years ago Concord Equipment stopped selling the loader so I was worried about getting replacement parts. When I recently heard that Wild Hare Mfg. had reintroduced it as the Wild Hare Implement System, I called the company and found out the redesigned loader now has more power and attachments with a more dependable power source.

"We boosted the hydraulic system by 30 percent," says Bob Aldrich, Wild Hare Mfg. "We also switched the power source to a category 24 deep cycle battery. The original system used the ATV battery, and the power drain was too much."

The hydraulic pump, with its new deep cycle battery box, has been moved from the front rack to the rear. Loader mounts have stayed the same. While the front rack carries some pressure, most of the lift weight is transferred to the foot rest/floor board leg mounts.

The heavy-duty, 44-in. wide bucket is the heart of the system and remains unchanged. I've used mine extensively for dirt, gravel, logs and snow. The 5-ft. lift height and 300-lb. lift and download pressure capacity are the same. What has changed is reaction time with the larger hydraulic pump. The increased power means an operator can lift his ATV off the ground when using both front loader and rear hydraulic attachments.

Wild Hare also extended the snowblade length from 48 to 57 in. I have used my old blade extensively over the past 10 years for everything from back blading the driveway to terracing a hillside garden. The 4-way

action lets me lift, lower and tilt the blade hydraulically. Swinging the blade left or right is manual, but easy.

Keeping our 450-ft. driveway clear of snow is fun and fast. However, because the wheel track matches the blade width, the snow banks can pile up. That wider blade would be nice.

Other accessories carried on or added by Wild Hare include pallet forks for the loader, rear 3-pt. hitch, 48-in. cultivator, and 57-in. disc harrow.

"We will be adding a new and larger post hole auger this spring, as well as a box scraper," says Aldrich.

Wild Hare recommends a minimum ATV size of 400 cc. It's designed to fit most major brands. Safety recommendations include keeping speeds at 5 mph or less. While the front suspension doesn't carry the entire load, suspension locks are provided and are highly recommended.

I once had to replace my front shocks after improperly installing the locks. Currently I'm trying a set of multi-stage Progressive shocks. They were half the price of Honda OEM shocks and are significantly heavier duty. If needed, I'll reinstall (correctly this time) the suspension locks.

The front-end loader alone is priced at \$3,695, a reasonable price for getting double duty from an ATV. Accessories are priced separately, but can also be purchased with the loader in a variety of packages. An all-in-one package is priced at \$5,739 versus buying the accessories and loader package separately for \$6,376. Freight on all purchases is extra.

There's a video of the Wild Hare loader in action at www.farmshow.com.

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Hay Tool Add-Ons Developed On The Farm

Kyle Suelztz says his mechanical engineering training comes in handy in his family's hay fields. "We started growing alfalfa as a cash crop 8 years ago, and there were some headaches that came with it," says Suelztz. "We're now selling the products that solved those problems."

One product is his haybine header reverser kit that was featured in Vol. 38, No. 3. His two new products are The Silencer for rake wheel teeth and the Rock Block for rotary mower conditioners. Both were the result of problems in the field.

"We bought a new rake and didn't want to destroy it in corn stalks," says Suelztz. "We came up with The Silencer as a way to reinforce the rake teeth and dampen the vibrations as the teeth come off ground contact."

The Silencer consists of 1-piece plastic bands that slip over the teeth and bolt together on the ends.

"If the teeth are in good shape, installing The Silencer takes about 5 min. per wheel," says Suelztz.

Suelztz says the bands reduce damage in rough conditions. They also enhance the aggressiveness of the rake teeth in hay fields.

"We've had customers who were

breaking 100 teeth a year report they are down to virtually none," says Suelztz. "We've found the teeth don't skip over as much hay in the field, and they are much quieter as they flex over the ground."

Concern over rocks thrown forward from a rotary mower/conditioner that strike the operator's tractor led to development of the Rock Block. The Rock Block is a 1/4-in. thick, multi-layer, rubber fabric that mounts a few inches ahead of the OEM curtain.

"The Rock Block sections fold forward from the implement to allow easy access to the machine," explains Suelztz. "They are also longer than the OEM curtains and heavier duty than most."

Suelztz says the Rock Block takes about an hour to install. They are priced from \$400 to \$800 each, depending on size of the mower/conditioner.

The Silencer is priced at \$36 to \$46 per wheel, depending on the make and model of the rake.

Check out a video of Hygrade Engineering hay tools at FARMSHOW.COM.

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Silencer consists of 1-piece plastic bands that slip over rake wheel teeth and bolt together on the ends. Bands reduce damage to teeth in rough conditions.



Rock Block curtain mounts ahead of rotary mower/conditioners to keep rocks from being thrown forward toward tractor. Sections fold forward for easy access to machine.

