

Self-Propelled Grain Cart Made From Airport Pumper

Shane Schafers and his dad, Herman, have never been afraid of a challenge, so building a one-of-a-kind grain cart for their farm was an easy decision.

Thanks to a bit of imagination and strong mechanical skills, the St. Albert, Alberta area father-son duo modified and re-purposed an airport foam pumper they came across at an auction sale, turning it into a self-propelled unit that can maneuver quickly in the field.

They spent a winter working on the conversion, investing around \$90,000 worth of labor and materials.

"The pumper had a 430-hp Detroit engine with a 6-speed automatic transmission with full-time 4-WD," Shane explains. "We stripped the complete body off of it, built a 900-bu. hopper-bottom grain box with augers, and replaced the original cab with one from a 2380 Case combine, which we sandblasted and painted green. We raised it up high enough so we'd be able to look into the grain trailers when unloading into them."

The box is 10 ft. wide by 20 ft. long by 10 ft. deep and its hydraulic auger system



Shane Schafers and his dad bought an airport foam pumper and turned it into this one-of-a-kind, self-propelled grain cart. They built a 900-bu. grain box and replaced the original cab with one from a Case 2380 combine.

consists of an 8-in. dia drag auger, which feeds into a salvaged 9720 White combine's unloading auger assembly (which they shortened to 15 ft. of swing). In hindsight, Schafers says he wishes the 14-in. dia. top auger was bigger.

"The motor sits at the back, underneath where the grain tank hopper slopes up, so you don't hear any engine noise at all in the cab," he says. "We mounted a 100-gal. fuel tank and a 50-gal hydraulic tank in the front, and they're covered by a Freightliner grill that

someone gave us. The bumper is from the original foam machine. We put 33-in. wide floater tires on it so we can play in the mud – this fall was extremely wet, and it would go through places where the combine normally couldn't."

The Schafers built the rig so that it could also be transformed into a self-propelled sprayer. They simply replace the grain box with an old, pull-type, 120-ft. boom sprayer they had modified to mount in its place during spraying season.

"It does 50 mph on the highway, which comes in handy when moving between fields," he says. "We did spend the first 4 or 5 years fine tuning the hydraulics, and overall, we probably didn't save any money. Still, it has a lot of great features and we have the satisfaction of having made it ourselves. It's certainly unique-looking, too."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Shane Schafers, St. Albert, Alberta Canada (schafers@hotmail.com).

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Harold M. Johnson
Founder

Editor/Publisher

Mark Newhall (mark@farmshow.com)

Senior Editor

Bill Gergen (bill@farmshow.com)

Contributing Editors

Jim Ruen (edgcom@acegroup.ca)

Dee George (dee_george@yahoo.com)

Lorn Manthey (redoakridge@mac.com)

Office Manager

Anne Lash (anne@farmshow.com)

Circulation (circulation@farmshow.com)

Shelly Mende, Mary Lunde, Kim

Trapp

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He Makes Life-Size Horses From Old Tires

Old truck and tractor tires, plastic bale twine, and a few pieces of construction lumber and bolts are made into the most realistic black horses you'll ever see by retired Iowa farmer Virgil Davis. "I've seen tire swings that are supposed to look like horses but really don't. I thought I could do better," says the affable and fun-loving Davis.

Here's how he built a swing horse about the size of a Shetland pony. "The frame for the horse is made from a 4-ft. long wooden 4 by 6 that supports the body and a 2 by 4 that extends up at an angle to support the neck. The main body of the horse is made from pieces of 12.5 L16 wagon tires that I cut apart using a pattern. Pieces of sidewall are cut to form the neck, the face, and the front legs. Flat pieces are folded in half and bolted together to form the legs. The hooves are shaped from a portion of a tire sidewall and tread. All the materials are attached to the main frame with construction screws. Chains connect to eye bolts on the back of the horse and the top of the head, then up to the swing frame, to provide a sturdy riding horse that glides up to 6 ft. back and forth."

Davis adds other accessories that make each horse even more realistic. Eyes are made using large black carriage bolts extending through belt pieces on the side of the face. Ears are made from thin gauge tire walls turned and clipped to a point at the top. Stirrups are made from tire belting and a bridle and reins from plastic roping. The mane and tail are made of black plastic baler twine cut to a common length and secured to the neck and back. Hinges on the legs and feet give the appearance of a galloping horse as it sways back and forth on the swing set.

Davis has also made a large black draft horse that resembles a real life Percheron. It's 7 ft. tall and 11 ft. long from the tip of its nose to the hock. The back and sides were fabricated from 21.5 L16 truck tires while



Retired farmer Virgil Davis used old tires to make this large black draft horse that resembles a real life Percheron. It measures 7 ft. tall and 11 ft. long.



White baler twine adorns horse's feet to resemble flowing long hair (left). Photo at right shows Davis aboard his Shetland swing horse.

the main body is one big wagon tire with a wood frame inside, built strong enough to hold 5 adults. He built his own tools to bend the tire inside out. White baler twine adorns the feet to resemble flowing long hair. Davis donated the huge tire animal to the Draft Horse Association, where it was auctioned

off bringing more than \$1,000 in a charity event. He's also made a smaller race horse that pulls a surrey.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Virgil Davis, 2686 250th St., Humboldt, Iowa 50548 (ph 515 378-3344).