

# Cannon Shoots Bowling Balls At Tractor Show

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Organizers of a popular Oklahoma antique tractor event know how to start and end it with a bang - by shooting bowling balls out of a cannon. The cannon was built by Jim Esbenshade, founder and host of the Golden Harvest Days.

He built the cannon out of an oxygen cylinder. One end is cut open to load balls and the other has a compartment to load gunpowder, which is lit with a fuse. Mounted on an axle with old steel wheels from a stationary steam tractor, the cannon is towed to a field on Esbenshade's Colbert, Okla., farm.

"How much black powder you use controls the distance of how far the bowling balls go. We can make it shoot 2 miles," Esbenshade says.

People donate old bowling balls that are painted orange so they are easier to find. They



Photo courtesy of UR Music & Video  
The amount of black powder used determines how far the bowling ball goes.

are reused until they start breaking apart.

Besides starting the day with cannon fire and ending with a volley of a dozen shots, the cannon serves as the "dinner bell" at noon.

"This thing smokes like cannons from the Civil War, and it's loud," Esbenshade says. It's become a popular part of the annual event held the third weekend in June.

First held in 1994 in honor of his son, Jamie, who died when he was 17, Golden Harvest Days is a working heritage event that includes parades and demonstrations such as plowing and harvesting green beans and corn

with antique farm equipment.

The 2021 show is set for June 19 and 20, and information can be found on Facebook.

With the help of friends, Esbenshade, who has a collection of 500 tractors and equipment, is working on a Massey World museum to be finished by 2022 to celebrate Massey's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Esbenshade, 2174 Hendrix Rd., Colbert, Okla. 74733 (ph 580 931-7047; farmbarbie1222@yahoo.com; Facebook: Golden Harvest Days in Memory of Jamie Esbenshade).



Jim Esbenshade built this cannon out of an oxygen cylinder, mounting it on an axle fitted with steel wheels. "We can make it shoot a bowling ball 2 miles," he says.

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Compacted 1-ton rubber bales work great for everything from windbreaks and snow fences to corrals.

## Big Tire Bales Have Many Uses

If cold winter winds are common in your area, you might want to check out using tire bales for windbreaks. A group of ranchers within 300 miles of Denver have been piling the one-ton bales 2 to 3-high in a row. Best of all, for most of 2020, the bales were free for the hauling.

"We've given away around 15,000 bales this year," says Greg Mort, Colorado Tire Recyclers. "Some farmers and ranchers would get a load of 24 on a flatbed, which is

enough for a 40-ft. wall. Then after they saw how well they worked, they come back for a second and third load. Some have taken 150 to 200 bales."

The bales are 4 by 5 by 2 1/2 ft. and contain about 100 car tires each. Each bale is held together by five, 9-gauge steel wires.

People come up with lots of different uses for them, according to Mort. "They are used for corrals, to separate feed supplies, and for snow fences," he says. "People have even

used them in lieu of a foundation for earth homes. Put them in the ground and they don't move."

In years past the company, which recycles tires from local tire shops throughout Colorado and surrounding states, has sold the tire bales. End users would get a rebate covering the cost of the bales. Earlier this year the rebate dropped to \$12.50 and then to nothing. The bales piled up.

"We were continuing to make new bales, so we had a big backlog," says Mort. "We knew farmers and ranchers were having a tough year, so we decided to give them away."

With the backlog gone and a new tire chipping process in place, free tire bales are likely a thing of the past. The company has begun marketing 2-in. tire chips as an alternative fuel for power plants. They also sell 6-in. chunks for landfill cover in the Denver area, as well as marketing semi-truck and trailer sidewalls for silage pit covers.

"We will continue making bales, but for sale and, with the chipping in place, a more reasonable amount of bales," says Mort. "If we are successful in negotiations with Burlington Northern and Santa Fe, we may begin distributing them a lot farther by rail. It's all a matter of logistics, how far can they be hauled."

Mort suggests readers outside his region who are interested in tire bales contact their states' pollution control offices. Ask for the names of tire recyclers in the state.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Colorado Tire Recyclers, 5101 Columbine St., Denver, Colo. 80216 (ph 303 853-0789).



Tote frames are strapped together with zip ties, with a rectangular opening at the center for pheasants to eat corn.

## Tote Frames Used To Make Pheasant Feeder

"We like to feed pheasants that live in our shelterbelt during the winter, but the deer have a habit of eating any grain we throw on the ground. So we came up with a simple

solution," says Slayton, Minn., farmer Jim Larson. He and his son Jason made a "deer proof" pheasant feeder out of metal tote frames.

"Our local agronomy center can't recycle the frames, so we picked up 10 of them before they went to the dump," Larson says. "We turned the frames upside down, arranged them four to a side and one in between on the ends, then strapped them together with zip ties. The rectangular opening at the center is a perfect place to throw corn."

Larson says pheasants can walk in through the ground level openings or fly in the top to reach the corn, but deer can't reach in or climb over the edges. "They walk around the feeder, give it a few head butts without any success, and finally just give up and walk away," Larson says. Raccoons and skunks can get through the openings, but they're usually hibernating when we start feeding so they're not a problem."

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