"Remote Control" 3-Pt. Hydraulic Boom And Bucket

"It works great for checking grain bin levels, painting barns, and other high-up chores because I can control the tractor and boom right from the bucket," says Harry Zacher, Maddock, N. Dak., who used a pair of lift arms off an old front-end loader to build a "remote control" 3-pt. hydraulic boom and bucket that he mounted on his 1965 International 504 utility tractor.

The 17 ft. 9 in. long boom, which can be raised 20 ft. high, supports a 37 by 19 in. bucket that's 40 in. high and open on one end where it's equipped with a safety panel. The bucket is raised and lowered by an 8-ft. long hydraulic cylinder, and moved sideways by a 2-ft. long cylinder. Both cylinders operate off tractor hydraulics. Zacher uses a pair of hydraulic levers outside the bucket, one to raise and lower it and the other to move it sideways.

"I got the idea after I fell off a 12-ft. ladder while trying to reach the roof on one of my grain bins," says Zacher. "I escaped serious injury, but I thought there had to be a safer way to reach high places. I modeled it after a cherry picker used by a local electric utility company. It's much safer than a ladder and the tool tray attached to the bucket is really handy. The bucket self-levels as it's raised. When I reach the top, a ratchet automatically locks it in place. The tractor has to be running in order to raise and lower the bucket or to move it sideways. However, I can start the tractor from the bucket with a remote switch. I can let the bucket down without the tractor running thanks to a restriction valve designed to allow the bucket to come down slowly in case the hydraulics fail."

Zacher used both lift arms off an old front-end loader. He cut both ends off one arm and used it for the lower end of the boom. He cut off the bent front end of the other arm and used it to support the bucket at the upper end of the boom. The bucket, built from sheet metal welded to an angle iron framework, is mounted to the boom with two pins. To reduce the amount of hydraulic hose needed, Zacher ran connecting rods from the hydraulic levers outside the bucket to hydraulic controls at the bottom of the boom. The boom is fitted with stabilizer legs that must be raised with the 3-pt. hitch before the tractor can be moved.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harry Zacher, RR 2, Box 81, Maddock, N. Dak. 58348 (ph 701 438-2454).

"Grabber" For Skid Steer Loaders

"My skidsteer grapple fork lets me stack round bales 4 high on end. It works great because skidsteer loaders are so maneuverable," says Jonas Stoltzfus, Loysville, Penn.

Stoltzfus bolted the grapple fork to a commercial manure fork designed for his Bobcat 641. It consists of a pair of 4-ft. long vertical steel pipes bolted to the sides of the manure fork. A horizontal pipe connects the tops of the vertical pipes and supports a pair of 3-ft. long arms which pivot up and down hydraulically. The ends of the arms are equipped with 1-ft. long spears.

Stoltzfus built his first skidsteer round bale grabber 6 years ago and has since built 3 more for neighbors. "Moving round bales with a skid steer loader is more efficient than moving them with a front-end loader. I can turn on a dime which allows me to stack bales anywhere inside buildings because I can maneuver right around posts and machinery with no problem. Bales stacked on end cure better because air flows up through the center of the bale. They also keep their shape better. Bales can't fall off my grapple fork as easily as they can on a front-end loader spear because there are two holding points. It's also safer than a front-end loader because the grapple fork framework blocks the bale if it would ever roll backward. The rollover cage also offers protection from bales.

"My grapple fork is also a materials handling dream. I can use a 4-ft. long chain in front of the arms to haul 8 by 10-ft. sheets of steel. By mounting another steel frame on the fork I can use it as a light crane to lift materials such as 150-lb. rafters 18 ft. high."

Stoltzfus custom builds units for $450 F.O.B. (not including hydraulic cylinder) and also sells plans for do-it-yourselfers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jonas Stoltzfus, RD 1, Box 196, Loysville, Penn. 17047 (ph 717 536-3618).

Add-On "Drive Tires" Boost Combine Performance

Replacing the small rear steering wheels on a Deere combine with oversize drive wheels improves operation of the combine and boosts performance.

Gene Ditmer, W. Milton, Ohio, bought drive tires and rims from an old 4500 combine and mounted them on the rear axle of his Deere 6620 combine. "I paid just $40 each. The combine now has more flotation and the rear end sits higher so it cleans better because it keeps grain from going over the sieves too fast. The rims fit the 6620 axle hub pattern perfectly."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gene Ditmer, 10710 W. Garland Rd., W. Milton, Ohio 45383 (ph 513 884-5600).

ATV Gopher Killer

"I use the exhaust from an ATV engine to kill gophers in their tunnels. I've got a system that includes a couple tools to make the job easy," says Layman Morrison, Camp Verde, Ariz.

"I use a 2-ft. long T-handled probe to find the tunnel and dig a hole into it with a digger pipe that's got serrated, sharpened teeth and a side opening to remove the dirt. Then I slip an adaptor over the exhaust pipe on the ATV and push the gas pipe down into the tunnel.

"The average mound takes about 3 min. time to gas. Old ones with long tunnels take longer but I usually try to get the gopher as soon as a new mound shows up. The carbon monoxide kills all the gophers in a run, young and all. I use my ATV because it's easy to get from one mound to another."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Layman A. Morrison, HC 50, Box 390, Camp Verde, Ariz. 86322 (ph 602 567-9706).