

Recent Bale Bus upgrades have made the work easier and faster.



Bale Bus Loader Clears Fields Fast

When FARM SHOW recently caught up with Dallas Henry, he and his wife were hauling 30,000 cornstalk bales off a large, irrigated field in S. Dak. using his bale-hauling bus that we featured back in Vol. 38, No. 3. He has since repowered the rig, which can carry up to 5 big round bales at a time.

"I was a machinery salesman for 18 years and hauled bales in the evenings," says Henry. "Last April, I quit my job and started driving my bale bus while auctioneering on the side."

On a big job like the cornstalk bales, his wife drives the bus and Henry drives a tractor, loading semis. "She can buzz half a mile down the field, grab two bales and be back in 2 1/2 min.," he says.

The upgrades he made are making the work easier and faster. "I cut the old bus apart and welded the front end of a year 2000 bus with an International DC466E to the loader end of the old one," says Henry. "It's shorter for a shorter turning radius and handier for loading in smaller areas. It runs rougher across the field, but the Allison automatic and the suspension of the new bus can't be beat."

The newer engine also starts better. Like the 1969 original, the new "front" end quickly became the back end of the baler. Forward

gears were reversed, and the operator seat and controls turned around to face the working end of the bus.

"I kept the loader end of the old bus, just the same," says Henry. "The 1969 or 1970 Artsway loader is built better than anything today."

Henry replaced the old military-style tires with newer ones retreaded with tractor treads. He notes that it made a big difference with traction and raised the rear slightly.

"With the new tires, the frames matched up, so I could overlap them by a couple of feet and weld them tight," says Henry.

He replaced the OEM radiator with one used in concrete mixer trucks. It has a 6-in. hole in the center, ample room for the driveshaft to the hydraulic pump for the loader.

"On the old bus, the radiator had been raised above the shaft," says Henry. "It had electric fans, but dirt and vibration kept them from running well."

Henry and his wife appreciate the changes he made to the steering. "I made this one hydrostatic with a cylinder on the tie rod. It is more dependable and was easier to hook up. It has no linkage to mess with."

Henry ran the return oil to a booster to

power the brakes. He also added a 1,000-watt, 110-volt inverter. It makes it easy for him to run an air compressor for blowing out the radiator and powering the air ride seats.

He also moved the hydraulic valves outside the cab to eliminate the heat source. He replaced them with joystick controls.

"Mounting an LED light bar on the front of the bale bus with several on the side has been a huge improvement," says Henry. "We move a lot of bales at night, especially in the summer."

When he sets down the first bale for a nighttime bale collection point, he mounts a battery-powered, amber strobe light to it. That way, it is easy to locate from any point in the field.

Henry also replaced the OEM door with a door from an old camper. It provides a tighter fit than bus doors do.

Hauling corn stalk bales this past fall resulted in a few more changes. He went from three spears per bale to only two with the cornstalks.

"I found the center spear couldn't penetrate the corn stalk bale," says Henry.

Henry still has one more change to make. When his mechanic son reversed the gears and the cab, Henry told him to replace the new bus seat and seat belt with the old.

"For some reason, he cut the seat belts off," says Henry. "When going across a field at 25 mph and hitting ruts and holes, you need a good set of belts. I'm planning to install a 4-point belt out of a race car."

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Henry eliminated the center bale spear and just uses two after finding that the center spear couldn't penetrate corn stalk bales.

Henry-Built Trailer Just Won't Quit

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

As a writer for FARM SHOW, I hear great stories from readers and inventors I write about. When I called Dallas Henry about doing an update on his bale loading school bus (see story above) he told me a good one about a long-lost friend.

Henry loads bales out of S. Dak. fields when he isn't auctioneering. He pulls in with his modified school bus and loads semi-trailers or collects them at field edges for later loading. Last summer he was hired by a rancher in the western part of the state. However, he pulled into the wrong farm.

"As I drove in, I saw a semi-trailer in the yard," Henry told me.

This wasn't just any trailer. It was a 5th wheel, side dump, grain trailer that Henry himself had built back in 1983 (Vol. 21, No. 4).

"I built it when I was 21 because I couldn't afford to buy one," recalled Henry. "I spent



Dallas Henry found his custom-built grain trailer still in use 20 years after he built it.

about \$4,000 building it and sold it 20 years later for the same amount."

Henry had long since lost track of the trailer, and here it was again 38 years later.

"It was still in good shape and still being used," says Henry.

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Roger Holcomb used an old Versatile swather to make a forklift for moving things around his property.



Forklift Made From Old Swather

Rhonda Hartje says her dad Roger Holcomb is a genius when it comes to building things. "Over his entire life, he's built things that are sometimes way better than anything he could buy." Those ideas include a horse-drawn buggy, a holding chute for livestock and a bucket-mounted post gripper that have all been featured in past issues of FARM SHOW. Holcomb's latest project was rebuilding an old self-propelled swather into a handy forklift.

Holcomb says he made the mechanical lift because he wanted to take the hand labor out of moving slab wood to his outdoor fire stove. "I bought an old Versatile 12-ft. wide swather from a neighbor and removed the reel and header. I built a sturdy frame out of tube steel that attached to the lift cylinders, then

mounted two forks to the frame."

The swather engine was junk, so he replaced it with an electric-start 12 hp. gas engine that he mated to the hydraulic drive system. Holcomb says, "When I activate the header lift the cylinders raise the frame and forks. That way I'm able to lift some of the slab wood off the ground and carry it closer to the burner. The operator platform sits up high so I can see what I'm loading and easily maneuver where I'm going. It's a handy machine that I can also use to move pallets, brush and other things that are too heavy to move by hand."

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Handrail/Mirror Combo On Zero-Turn

Zero-turn mowers are one of the slickest inventions ever but knowing what's behind you in woodlots or along roadways is difficult. Minn. farmer Al Hernke solved that problem using spare parts from his shop.

"I formed an old piece of chrome tubing from a semi-tractor into a large rectangular bracket and mounted an old truck mirror on it," Hernke says. "Five bolts and two U brackets hold the base legs in place on the metal footrest of my mower."

The mirror is adjustable up and down with a bolt clamp and side to side on its regular swivel. Now he can see what's behind him at all times, an important safety feature since he mows along busy roadways.

Hernke says the bracket also works great as a handrail for him to safely get on and off his mower. "I mow a lot of ditches and sometimes stop on the road bank to trim around posts or to deal with gophers, so the handrail is put to good use."

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An old handrail from a semi-tractor formed into a new shape makes a great rearview mirror bracket and handrail on Al Hernke's zero-turn mower.