

Homemade Combine Flotation Tracks

How about building a set of flotation tracks for your combine as a shop project this winter? Agricultural engineers with the Alberta Department of Agriculture in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, have drafted a complete set of do-it-yourself plans for single or twin bogie systems.

They estimate that building a set of flotation tracks takes about 100 man hours and costs about \$1,000 for materials. The plans include specs for building the track itself with channel iron. Used track from industrial-type tracked vehicles has been successfully used, with the popular size measuring 33 in. wide. It consists of growser bars spaced 3 in. on center, bolted to two 12 in. wide by 3/8 in. thick belts.

Alberta engineers recommend that two bogie wheels be installed (one in front and one behind the drive wheel) if there's enough room for twin bogies. Although not as effective as two bogies, a single bogie system must be used where there isn't sufficient clearance between the header and drive wheel for a second bogie.

In the two-bogie system, the bogie wheels run about 3 to 4 in. above the ground. This allows the track to be laid over the mud before the weight is applied. Displaced mud is then forced out the sides of the track rather than in front of it.

In the single bogie system, the weight is applied as soon as the track is laid. This causes the mud to be displaced in front of the track rather than to the sides. In soft spots, this mud will roll up in front of the tracks until the combine is stuck. However, with the bogie wheel behind the drive wheel, it's generally possible to back out of

this situation. This system, however, does add considerable flotation to the machine, the engineers point out.

Bogie wheels should be at least 12 in. in dia. On the single bogie system, a front spindle, rim and tire from a car can be used. The spindle can be aligned and welded directly to the plate on the end of the spindle carrier.

If you'd like a copy of the complete set of plans drafted by Alberta Engineers for do-it-yourself construction of "Combine Tracks for Flotation Purposes," send \$3 to: Combine Tracks, c/o FARM SHOW, 8500 210th St., Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

A Kansas wheat farmer says a set of used flotation track he bought three years ago was a "life saver" this past season. "Bought them on a neighbor's auction sale, three years ago and, at the time, they looked like a pile of junk iron. They didn't cost hardly anything and, at the time, I took a lot of ribbing for buying a pile of junk," Ed Gunter, of Morganville, told FARM SHOW.

That "piece of junk" saved the day this past season when rains made it impossible to keep combines rolling. "When the rains started coming, I dug out the tracks to see if I could get them on. Found out later they're made by Arps (New Holstein, Wis.) Took me 1 1/2 days of steady work to install them on a 1959 Gleaner. Hardest job was to get the idlers on and adjusted. I also dualled the rear wheels to get more flotation. Now that I've used them and know what they'll do, I wouldn't be without them. Takes me about 45 min. to put them on, and about 20 min. to take them off."

"Made it Myself"

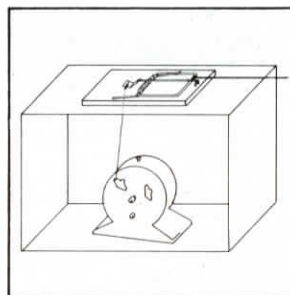
Some of the best new products we hear about are "made it myself" innovations born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new invention or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so, where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors?

Harold M. Johnson, Editor

Automatic Engine Cut-Off

An ingenious use of an alarm clock and a mouse or rat trap provides a low cost, reliable automatic engine cut-off. The home-made device, featured in a recent issue of the Queensland Agricultural Journal, published in Australia, could also be rigged up for switching electric lights or motors on or off.

The alarm clock is secured to the bottom of a box-like frame, and a mouse trap (or rat trap for making a heavier-duty switch) on top, with the trap's bait holder located directly above the clock's alarm winding knob. A hole is drilled through the trap so a length of fishing line can be strung from the bait holder to a small hole drilled into the alarm knob. When the alarm goes off, it winds up to tighten the fish line and spring the trap.



A length of plain wire or strong cord is connected from the engine's cut-off switch to the swinging guillotine arm of the trap. When the trap snaps, it pulls the switch to shut off the engine. You simply set the alarm clock to ring at whatever time you want the engine or motor to shut down.