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Pro Pic Bale Mover in transit mode.

3-Bale Mover Speeds Field Clearing

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Hay producers with a skid steer and the Pro Pic Bale Mover can clear fields fast, grabbing three bales at a time. Gathering bales is easier on the skid steer and operator thanks to the unique caster wheel cart design from Bertha Mfg. The design also makes it easy to move between fields.

“The ride through the fields is smooth,” says Jeff Peter, Bertha Mfg. “It can handle three 2,500-lb. wet bales with no downward pressure on the skid steer. It’s just pushing the bale mover cart. In transit, a tongue on one end lets you pull it down the road like a header cart. When in transit, the spear points away from the center of the road.”

Peter developed the mover after helping a neighbor move straw bales. Frustrated at the long runs up and down the field for a single bale, the serial inventor (25 patents) began working on an alternative.

“By the end of the week, I had my first prototype,” says Peter. “One of our cooperators used it to pick up 136 bales in 2 1/2 hrs. He said it would have taken him 11 1/2 to 12 hrs. with a single spear. The Pro Pic saves on time and fuel.”

After testing the concept for 2 years, Peter will introduce the Pro Pic at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville this winter.

The 22-ft. wide and 6-ft. deep cart carries three sets of bale spears. Electric over hydraulic valves let each set be adjusted individually or in unison, depending on whether a bale is being picked up or multiple bales being dropped at a collection point.

When working with wrapped bales, the operator can quickly remove the bale spears and add brackets with pipe forks. The schedule 40 pipes have angled ends to slide



Pipes can move on the bracket to handle 4, 5 or 6-ft. bales.

around and under wrapped bales. Like the spears, the forks can be raised and lowered individually or collectively.

The Pro Pic bale mover has a 3 by 6-in. main toolbar with a skid steer quick attach. It also has a 4 by 4-in. lower bar. Upside-down T-shaped posts for the bale spears pivot on the lower bar. Three 16-in. hydraulic cylinders are mounted between extensions on the upper bar and the tops of the bale spear posts. As the cylinders extend and retract, bale spear tips have a lateral tilt of up to 9 in.

To install the wrapped bale pipe forks, the operator slips a bracket over the spear post and secures it with a single bolt. The bracket has four holders for the two pipes.

“Moving one or both of the pipes on the bracket can narrow their spread by up to 8 in.,” says Peter. “This allows them to pick up 4, 5 or 6-ft. diameter big round bales.”

For even more versatility, Peter designed a mount for a single bale spear attachment. It’s located on top of the toolbar at the opposite end of the tongue for transit.

“It offers operators the option to carry a single bale spear attachment for loading with the same skid steer used for grouping,” says Peter.

The Pro Pic Bale Mover has a suggested retail price of \$16,400.

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Made-It-Myself Picker Rakes In The Rocks

Three revolving-angle iron bars or bats rake rocks into Richard Imhoff’s rock-picking basket. The skid steer-mounted picker with its spinning reel is like no other.

“It gathers the rocks in without the dirt and other trash you get with most rock pickers,” says Imhoff. “The bats come within an inch and a half of the front of the slotted bucket. They grab anything larger than that. If a rock is too big, I raise the reel and dig it out with the bucket.”

Imhoff started with a commercial rock-picking bucket and grapple forks. A friend with a welding shop had picked up several discontinued beach cleaners designed to gather trash on sand beaches. Imhoff recognized they had elements that would improve clearing rocks from fields.

The beach cleaners had 5-ft. wide, 4-ft. diameter wheels with rubber fingers on them like a chicken plucker. As they rotated around, the fingers gathered the trash and scraped it into a container.

“I cut one apart and remounted everything using the bearings and shafts to match my 68-in. bucket,” says Imhoff. “I used the hubs from the wheels to make the 24-in. diameter reel with its angle iron bats. The hydraulic motor that drives it came off a Deere bean platform.”

Imhoff set the picker grapple forks aside and mounted the raking reel in its place. Hydraulic cylinders raise it out of the way if digging out a large rock. While it worked to gather in most rocks, if they were just slightly too large, the reel could jam.



Imhoff converted a beach cleaner into a rock picker.

“I cut bigger slots for the cylinder pins,” says Imhoff. “When the reel hits a bigger rock, it’s free-floating and can ride up and over it.”

Imhoff’s rock raking picker has worked so well he hardly uses a bigger pull-type picker. Part of that is the responsiveness of the skid steer and part is the way the reel rakes in the rocks.

“If someone made something like this for sale, it would put other rock pickers out of business,” says Imhoff.

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Furnace Fan Keeps Fires Burning

“I made a mobile blower from a furnace squirrel cage fan, a 2-hp. motor, and some scrap parts. Works great to burn stump piles and keep other fires burning that might otherwise go out,” says John Loder, Redmond, Wash.

He says it’s much quieter than a propeller-type fan and runs at a fast idle. “I can move it around anywhere it’s needed and keep shifting it around a pile. Really gets fires burning hot and cuts down on smoldering smoke,” says Loder.

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