"Plastic surgery" to the front engine cowling of loader-size tractors results in better visibility by moving the radiator, battery, and air cleaner away from front of engine.

Deutz tractors are the easiest to modify because they have air-cooled engines, eliminating the need to lower the radiator.

GREAT FOR LOADER TRACTORS

Tractor "Nose Job" Improves Operator's Sight Lines

The problem of poor up-front visibility when using front-end loaders can be easily solved, according to the editor of a Norwegian farm journal.

Rudolf Vie, editor of Norsk Landbruk, says "plastic surgery" to the front engine cowling of loader-size tractors is catching on fast with both Swedish and Norwegian farmers. "It's really quite easy to do. If you look under the hood, you will usually find only a radiator, battery and air cleaner in front of the engine," says Vie.

According to Vie, Deutz tractors are generally the easiest to modify because they are equipped with air-cooled engines. As a result, there are none of the problems associated with lowering the radiator to allow the hood to be dropped in front.

Vie questions why no tractor manufacturer, such as Ford or Massey Ferguson, has adopted the idea. "It makes me wonder if any of their designers have ever operated a tractor with a front-end loader."

The cost in Norway and Sweden of having a "nose job" done on a Deutz tractor is about $1,500. And although it's more time-consuming and complicated, similar surgery for other tractor makes has also become quite popular. For example, the importer of Fiat tractors into Norway now custom-modifies its tractors. On these models the radiator is angled toward the rear and cooled by an electric fan. A smaller battery is installed in a new location (sometimes in a well ahead of and below the engine). Cost ranges from about $2,000 to $3,000, depending on the model and whether it's new or used. Other tractors that have been successfully modified include the Massey-Ferguson, Deere, Ford, Same, Fendt and Shibaura.

How did the idea for dropping the front-end of a tractor first come about? Rudolf Vie says he was initially responsible for introducing the basic concept into Scandinavia. In 1984 he published an article proposing that the idea was both feasible and practical. He included a photo of a Deutz that he had modified using a scissors and glue to alter the photograph, not the actual tractor. To his surprise, the week following publication a Norwegian farmer phoned him to say he had just completed the job of lowering the hood on his Deutz for only the cost of a can of Deutz-green paint.

Soon after another Norwegian farmer, Erik Sagen of Skarnes modified a Deutz that he bought specifically for that purpose. Sagen wanted a tractor suited to loader work for handling his potato and vegetable crops. He needed good visibility to avoid damaging produce, which he moves on pallets, and wanted to be able to see the pallet forks at ground level from the tractor seat, something not possible with an unmodified tractor.

In 1989 the first dealer-built "noseless" tractors appeared in both Sweden and Norway. Vie says they already appear to be a commercial success.

Reprinted courtesy POWER FARMING magazine, Surrey, England.

"WE CAN'T KEEP UP WITH DEMAND," SAYS MANUFACTURER

"Double Jointed" Mower Catches On In Australia

After destroying just about every mower he ever bought on his rocky ground, Australian farmer Alistair Gleeson of Lismore, Victoria, started working on his own design. He came up with a double-jointed disc mounted blade design that he now unconditionally guarantees against breakage.

The new offset mower is also unique in that it's a cross between a 3-pt. mounted and trailing mower. "Demand is tremendous. We can't keep up with it. Farmers have been looking for a mower like this," Gleeson told FARM SHOW, noting that he's won inventor awards at equipment shows all over Australia and has geared up to produce the mower himself.

The 9-ft. mower features three belt-driven mower discs. There are four double-jointed blades - they pivot where they attach to the disc and at the mid-point of the blade - mounted on each disc with 16 mm high tensile steel bolts. The blades are set on a 10 degree tilt forward with a 20 degree tilt outward so that if a blade hits a rock it swings up and over its mounting disc rather than simply bouncing back as with other jointed blades mounted parallel to the ground. It also causes the blade to cut 2 1/2 in. below the disc.

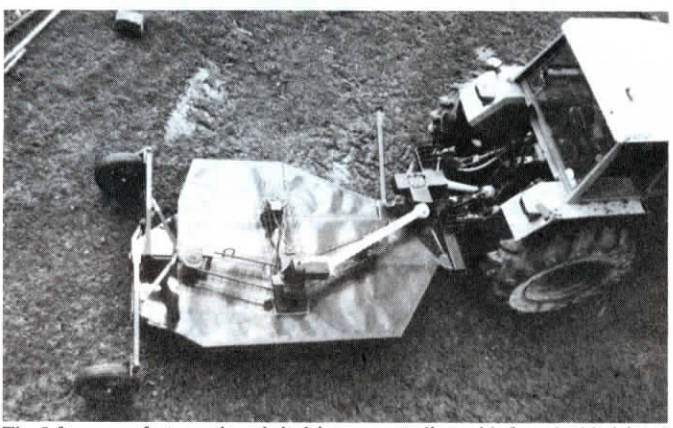
The three mower discs are belt-driven - to prevent damage to gearboxes or pto - from a center-mounted gearbox on top of the mower. A single adjustment tightens all three belts. The three cutting discs form one windrow.

The mower mounts on the bottom two arms of the 3-pt. and is supported at the rear by a pair of caster wheels. For transport the mower trails behind the tractor. In operation, it moves out to its offset position to the side of the tractor via a set of pulleys and steel cable. The cable controls, which run from the 3-pt. to the transport wheels, also give the mower the "level lift" capability of a trailing mower and yet it still has the maneuverability and transportability of a 3-pt. mounted mower. There are no remote cylinders or other hydraulics on the mower. The mower folds for transport or moves into field position without using hydraulics and without the operator leaving the tractor.

Gleeson unconditionally guarantees his double-action blades. "If an operator ever bends or breaks a blade, no matter how it happens, it will be replaced. That's how confident we are in this design, which is now being recognized as a major new breakthrough in mowing technology."

Sells for about $7,500 (U.S.). Not yet available in North America.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Alistair Gleeson, Ettrick, R.M.B. 2280, Camperdown, 3260 Victoria, Australia (ph 055-970-212).



The 9-ft. mower features three belt-driven mower discs with four double-jointed blades mounted on each disc. Blades pivot where they attach to disc and blade.