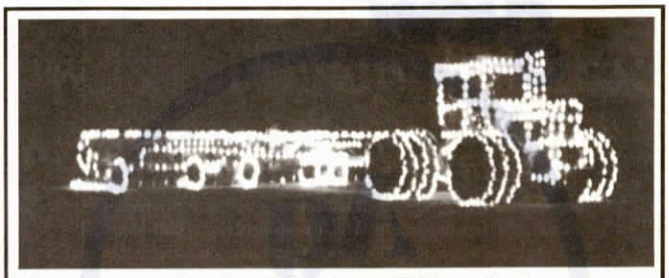

Christmas Light Display "Wows" Passersby

For several years Tim Viets, Brazilton, Kan., and his sister Terry, have been treating their neighbors to a colorful display of lighted farm machinery that appear to be in motion. He uses green lights to outline the frames of tractors, combines, grain drills, etc., and white flashing lights to outline the tires so they appear to be moving.

"People look forward to it every year," says Viets, who farms with his brothers Mike and Mark. "Some call from up to 90 miles away to ask if the lights are up yet."

One display featured a tug-of-war between a Deere "B" tractor and a Deere 8850 4-WD tractor. A lighted chain extended between the tractors, and the lights on the tires were synchronized to look like the tractors were pulling against each other. Another showed a Deere 7520 4-WD tractor pulling a 36-ft. Great Plains drill (see photo). Flashing white lights were strung around the disc openers to make it look like they were moving. Another year Viets showed a Deere 7720 combine with a "rotating" header.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Terry Viets, Rt. 2, Girard, Kan. 66743 (ph 316 395-2411).

Landuyt demonstrates his hand-built baler at farm shows and thresher's reunions.

MAKES 5-IN. AND 1-FT. LONG BALES

"Mini" Baler Works Like 1930's Hay Press

An Iowa mechanic who was raised on a farm is making hay the way it was made in the 1930's - but on a miniature scale - using a "hand-feed", home-built replica baler.

Art Landuyt, Williamsburg, Iowa, demonstrates the hand-built baler at farm shows and thresher's reunions. A 1/4 scale model produces 1 1/2-lb. bales of straw measuring 12 in. long, 4 in. wide, and 6 in. high, or 5-in. long bales that are 1 3/4 in. wide and 2 in. high. He sells the bales for $2 apiece.

"People buy the bales as decorations for Halloween or Christmas nativity scenes," says Landuyt. "Some toy collectors use them to display their tractors or implements."

Landuyt built the baler four years ago without using any particular hay press as a model. The baler was fashioned from sheet metal and angle iron. The only tools used were a cutting torch, band saw, and welder. The baler is mounted on a trailer and powered by a 1 1/2 hp antique Deere gas engine.

"It takes only one man to operate this miniature baler, but years ago it took a crew of three - one man to stand on the ground and pitch hay onto the platform, one man to block the bale, and one man to tie the wire. They quit making these balers in the early 1940's."

During demonstrations, Landuyt hand feeds straw into the baler chamber. The vertical plunger pushes the material down. Another horizontal plunger pushes straw through the chute.

A lever sets bale tension and Landuyt ties the bales by hand with wire. "We can make 8 to 10 bales per hour," notes Landuyt, who notes that he has no plans to build the baler commercially.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Art Landuyt, Art's Auto Repair, East Walnut, Williamsburg, Iowa 52361 (ph 319 668-2832).

Halvorson uses his 50-hp "Hot Saw" to zip through logs at lumberjack contests.

65-LB. SAW IS SOUPED-UP VERSION OF A CONVENTIONAL CHAIN SAW

50-Hp "Hot Saw" Cuts Logs In Record Time

When it comes to cutting through logs, Rick Halvorson, Alma Center, Wis., is a cut above the rest.

Halvorson uses a souped-up, stripped-down version of a conventional chain saw - he calls it his "Hot Saw" - to compete at lumberjack contests. Last year he set a world's record at the Lumberjack World Championship near Hayward, Wis., zipping through a 20-in. dia. white pine log three times in only 8.03 seconds. Of the 13 contests Halvorson entered last year, he won 12 and took second place in the other one.

Halvorson's 50 hp saw has a 26-in. long bar and weighs a hefty 65 lbs. However, he has a built-in advantage for handling the big saw - his weight. "I weigh 330 lbs. so when I pick up my Hot Saw, it minds me pretty well," says Rick.

The engine on Rick's saw came off a racing 3-wheeler ATV. It was rebuilt to increase the rpm's from 8,000 to 11,500. The fuel intake port was rebuilt so that fuel flows directly into the crankcase instead of having to go through the cylinder first. A tapered expansion chamber on the engine increases horsepower by 30 to 40%. Exhaust from the expansion chamber is pushed back into the cylinder just as the pistons come up, increasing compression. A steel frame connects the engine to the saw, which is equipped with a two-part handle. The back handle is fastened to the frame, and the top handle is fastened to the engine.

Bars and sprockets must be special made to fit the chain, which has a 1/2 in. pitch (the pitch is the length of each link) compared to the normal 3/8-in. pitch, and the teeth are much higher than on a conventional chain so they can carry away more wood chips. There are only a couple companies in the U.S. that make the sprockets. Halvorson builds his own chain bars by welding together pieces of conventional bars.

It takes about 15 hours to sharpen the chain, and he has to resharpen it after every contest. "Each tooth has to be sharpened exactly right because in competition, one or two hundredths of a second can make a big difference. At Hayward, all of the finalists were within one second of each other."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick Halvorson, N 1125 S. Alma Center Road, Alma Center, Wis. 54611 (ph 715 964-8451).

This 1993 midsize Ford Ranger 2-WD pickup is powered by a 20 hp electric DC motor driven by 20 6-volt deep cycle batteries. It's available from Electran Corp., 111 Avon St., Janesville, Wis. 53545 (ph 608 752-7178). The company offers conversions on regular cab and long bed Ranger models. All have manual transmissions. It's the first production model electric-powered pickup and it's got a 5-year or 100,000 mile warranty on the battery pack. An on-board recharging system (120 or 240 volts) is available. Pickup can travel 100 miles between charges. Special features include a battery charge gauge, discharge rate gauge, and heavy duty suspension system. Sells for $24,400. Battery charger sells for $1,800.