Rebuilt Truck Makes Great Self-Propelled Bale Grabber

"It works great and saves a lot of labor," says Dale Gosselin, Hillsboro, Ore., who converted a 1953 Chevrolet 1 1/2-ton truck into a bi-directional rig equipped with a "grabber" fork that can lift up to 10 conventional bales at a time.

Gosselin designed the "Goose Neck", as he calls it, to be compatible with his New Holland automatic bale wagon. The truck runs at speeds up to 55 mph. Bale-lift booms have a 20-ft. lift and are fitted with a 6 ft. 8 in. wide by 7 ft. 4 in. long grabber fork equipped with 32 curved teeth that can handle one layer of 10 conventional size bales at a time.

"It lets me load and unload semi trailers without any hand labor," says Gosselin.

Gosselin says he got the idea for the bale handler from Stan Steffen, Silverton, Ore., who designed a machine to handle 4-ft. sq. bales (featured in FARM SHOW Vol. 2, No. 3). The only similarity between the two machines is in their bidirectional capability, says Gosselin. "The bi-directional design provides great maneuverabilty, visibility, and traction."

Power for the "Goose Neck" is provided by a Chevrolet 350 cu. in. gas engine salvaged from an old pickup. Gosselin removed the body of the truck and shortened the frame to a 9-ft. wheelbase. He made a new cab for the rig and added a second steering wheel to face the rear, installing boom control valves next to it. He also installed an extra accelerator and brake for "reverse" driving, as well as a 20 gpm crankshaft-driven hydraulic pump to power the boom. He added about 500 lbs. of ballast under the front bumper

to balance the load.

Gosselin installed an automatic transmission and 2-speed rear end. "I use low range to load or unload and high range for road travel, up to 55 mph," says Gosselin. The original steering and brake system was left in place and hydrostatic steering was added, as well as a second master cylinder for the brakes.

The fork's curved teeth bite about 6 in. into each bale. Teeth are arranged in four rows and work in two sets that move toward each other. There are six hydraulic cylinders on the boom, including two for lifting the boom, two for lifting the arms, and two for working the teeth into the bale. A belt-driven orbit motor is used to rotate the fork. "The fork rotates up to 360° (limited only by hydraulic lines to the grapple cylinders) so I can approach a stack 'kitty corner' with the machine and still pick up bales at a 90° angle," says Gosselin.

Gosselin spent about $10,000 to build the rig.

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Rebuilt IH 1566 Tractor

"I believe if IH would have made these inexpensive changes to their tractors in the 1970's, they'd still be in business today on their own," says Richard Humboldt, Menno, S. Dak., who reworked a 1566 tractor, fitting it with a cab from an 88-series IH.

"When I bought the 1566 tractor, I was disappointed with the big, boxy factory cab that came with it and so were a lot of other people. I also owned a 1086 and really enjoyed the comfort and style of the cab, but I didn't like the choppy ride and the way the doors opened up from the back.

"I found a cab off a wrecked 88-series tractor. There was basically nothing left of it but the frame and the top hood. I made new doors that open from the front the way they should. The fuel tank was in the way of the new cab so I took it off and had a new fuel tank made and mounted it underneath the cab on the left hand side of

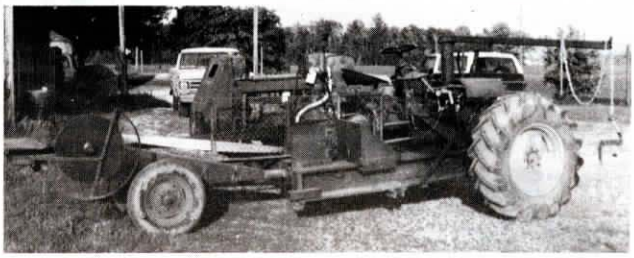
the tractor. You can now refill with fuel standing on the ground. I reinstalled the firewall in the cab which helps eliminate engine noise.

"The seat had to be moved approximately 6 in. ahead. This put it too close to the steering wheel so I moved the console 6 in. ahead, mounting it on the firewall instead of on the transmission. I also moved the shifting levers ahead and ran them under the floor, eliminating a lot of shifting noise that we had before.

"Originally, the seat mounted on top of the hydraulic valve body. I boxed in the valve body with 3/16-in. metal and mounted the seat on top of that, eliminating a lot more noise. I also made a window down near the floor at the back of the cab measuring 4 by 24 in., so I can look directly at the drawbar. The cab still has factory air and heat and is still designed so that if the tractor needs work, the cab doesn't have to be taken off.

"Now this tractor is a real joy to drive with a smooth ride and much better visibility and comfort. I guess it's my version of a Magnum at a lot less cost. I mounted a dozer blade on front of the tractor. When I don't need the blade, I put a rock box in its place."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richard Humboldt, Rt. 1, Box 61, Menno, S.Dak. 57045 (ph 605 387-2367).



Combine Makes Great Log Splitter

"I haven't found a chunk of wood yet that it won't split," says Ralph Grote, Decatur, Ind., who converted an old self-propelled Oliver 55 combine into a powerful "go anywhere" splitter.

The self-propelled firewood maker is fitted with a hydraulic powered splitter, belt-driven buzz-type saw, and a hydraulic boom for lifting heavy pieces of wood into position for splitting.

"We do some custom wood splitting for neighbors and this lets us get the job done fast," says Grote. "It takes four men to keep the machine busy. The splitter has a cycle time of only 12 seconds. When the wood is too heavy to lift, I use the boom to lift it onto the splitter table."

Grote used the combine's frame, axles, engine, and transmission, discarding all grain-threshing components and sheet metal. He lowered the seat, steering wheel, pedals, and controls so that he could maneuver in the woods. The hydraulic pump is chain-driven using the combine pto shaft that originally powered the grain threshing separator.

The splitter is fitted with a pair of 4 by 24-in. cylinders. It's positioned close to the ground so wood never has to be lifted much by the operator. The splitting wedge is 17 in. high and is mounted on a 1 1/8-in. thick steel H beam that weighs 110 lbs./ft.

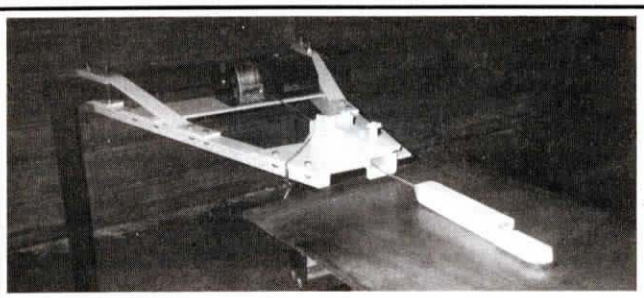
"I originally built the wood splitter for 3-pt. mounting on my brother's Case 850

tractor," says Grote. "However, it was too heavy for the 3-pt. and was hard on the tractor's hydraulic system. One cylinder does most of the splitting. If knotty wood is too hard to split with just one cylinder, I open a valve to activate the other cylinder. Total splitting force is 60,000 lbs. An automatic return, which consists of an electric switch that operates off engine vacuum and causes a hydraulic valve to return the push plate to the open position for splitting, gives the splitter a quick cycle time.

"I lay a piece of wood down, hit the valve, then go to pick up another piece of wood. By the time I get back the first piece is already split and the splitter is retracted.

"The belt-driven buzz saw is mounted on the rear of the machine. I remove the drive belt when using the splitter."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ralph Grote, 7888 N. 500 E., Decatur, Ind. 46733 (ph 219 724-9258).



Power Hitch For Hooking Up NH3 Tanks

You'll like this new Power Hitch that mounts on the back of field cultivators or other tillage equipment to make hooking up to NH3 tanks easy.

The drawbar attaches to 50 ft. of steel cable that feeds off a 12-volt powered winch. You back up near the tank and pull out enough cable to pin the drawbar to the wagon tongue. Then you use the winch to reel in the cable until the hitch locks in place on the back of the cultivator. The winch is rated at up to 20,000 lbs. so it'll handle virtually any farm wagon.

Sells for $950. A pickup-mounted model may soon be available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sorenson Manufacturing, HC2, Box 98, White Earth, N. Dak. 58794-9605 (ph 701 755-3473).