Old School Bus Makes "Great" Self-Propelled Sprayer

"Works great", says Montana farmer, Chuck Pluhar, of Cohagen, who converted an old school bus into a self-propelled field sprayer.

When his own school board traded in an old bus for a new one, Pluhar bought the old one from the bus company for $1,200. "The engine had only 30,000 miles on it. I knew what kind of condition it was in and felt it was a good buy at $1,200," Pluhar told FARM SHOW.

The bus had a short 150-in. wheel base and was designed to haul 24 passengers — small as school buses go. He took out the middle sections where the windows were, and moved the rear wall of the bus forward to just behind the operator's seat, creating a cab. A 750 gal. tank was mounted behind the cab, and the spray booms behind the tank. The roof over the cab is the original bus top.

"If you tried to convert a long bus into a field sprayer, you'd probably have to shorten the wheelbase," suggests Pluhar. "Otherwise, you couldn't turn very sharp in the field."

He sprayed about 400 acres of small grain last spring with his home-made "bus" sprayer. "It worked great, although I did have to make some minor modifications. I built the hydraulic sprayer unit myself from components I bought, and the hydraulic oil was getting too hot. I revamped it so water in the tank now cools the oil."

Cost of converting the bus and building the sprayer was about $5,000. Everything is controlled from the driver's seat, and the booms spray a 60-ft. swath. The booms swing up to a travel height of 13½ ft.

Pluhar put flotation tires on the front of the bus and triples, rather than duals, on the back (six tires total on the back). He notes that a key advantage of his sprayer is that it carries about five times as much water as most commercial self-propelled field sprayers.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chuck Pluhar, Box 345, Cohagen, Mont. 59322 (ph 406 557-2809).

He Re-Fuels At 100 Gal./Min.

"With tractors having fuel tanks holding from 100 to 300 gal., it used to take a lot of time to fuel up during the busy planting season," explains Coy Again, of Rocheport, Mo. "With the hydraulic pump on our 500 gal. home-built fuel tank trailer, we can pump 100 gal. a minute to re-fuel tractors."

Coy says he originally bought the Hypro pump for a spray system on a 4-wheel drive tractor with no pto. When that matchup no longer suited him, he decided to put the pump on a tandem axle trailer with a 500 gal. fuel tank.

The hydraulic hoses on the pump hook to the tractor being re-fueled. Speed of the pump is controlled by speed of the tractor and, with an automatic shut-off on his fuel nozzle, there's no problem with overfilling tanks. He usually keeps his re-fueling rate down to about 35 gal. a minute, however, because of the higher pressure involved at maximum pumping rates.

"The biggest advantage, in addition to being fast, is that it's a safe way to fuel," says Coy. "There's no chance of sparks like you might get hooking up jumper cables to power an electric motor. We're also able to pump water and other liquids, if needed in a pinch."

A Hypro Manufacturing spokesman told FARM SHOW that hydraulic-driven pumps, with 80 to 120 gal. per minute capacities for a variety of tractor sizes and hydraulics, are available. Prices start at $98.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hypro Division, Lear Siegler, Inc., 375 5th Ave. N.W., New Brighton, Minn. 55112 (ph 612 633-9300).

Big Bale Shape Indicator

"The way to make a big round bale solid from end to end is to rake a narrow windrow and drive a zig-zag pattern when baling. But there's a problem with this method: How do you know when to zig and when to zag? To solve this, I made a bale shape indicator that tells me when to zig and when to zag to make a perfect bale."

That's how LeRoy Rauch, Pecatonica, Ill., explains the reasoning behind his home-made big round bale shape indicator which he calls the Equalizer.

"The Equalizer is an evener that pushes against the outside of the belts to monitor how equal the ends are," explains Rauch. "A cable attached to the rear-mounted evener moves an indicator finger on the front. By looking at the finger, I can tell when the ends of the bale are equal, or if one end of the bale is bigger than the other.

"With my device mounted on a round baler, anyone who can drive a tractor can bale narrow windrows and make every bale perfectly shaped. A well-shaped round bale weighs much more and it sheds water many times better," points out Rauch.

The Equalizer mounts on the baler with just six bolts. Rauch says there is no extra wear to the belts since the Equalizer simply works like an evener pulley. He installed it on his Vermeer 605F baler but is confident it could be adapted to fit any belt-type big baler.

Rauch who made his Equalizer out of junk steel, figures it would cost "about $30 for the two 2-in. steel rollers, and $20 for four bearings that make up the evener." He figures he invested about $75 to $80 labor for a total cost of about $130.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, LeRoy Rauch, 4121 Goeke Road, Pecatonica, Ill. 61063 (ph 815 239-2528).

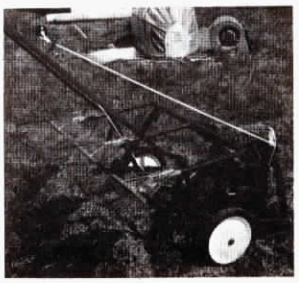
Power Rake Eases Lawn Care Chores

Tired of raking leaves every fall and pulling old grass thatch off the lawn every spring? Then hear this. There's an easier way.

Phillip Lambert, of Zimmerman, Minn., built a gasoline-powered raking machine to automate his raking chores. Now, all he has to do is push the machine across his large lawn and let it do the work.

A 2 h.p. Briggs and Stratton engine drives the power rake. It works with either 3 or 5 adjustable wire rakes for a maximum working width of 7½ ft. Lambert buys regular hand rakes, then removes the handles and bolts the rake head onto the raking bar.

Raking action is accomplished when the drive mechanism pulls the rakes forward 13 in., raises them up 1 ft., then repeats the cycle.



Lambert is looking for a manufacturer. He thinks the machine could be built for around $400 and would be ideal for owners of large lawns, golf courses, schools and other institutions.

For more details, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Phillip Lambert, Rt. 2, Zimmerman, Minn. 55398 (ph 612 389-3116).