

Iowa Farmer Does Booming Business Moving Grain Bins

A retired Iowa farmer got started in a second full-time career by building his own grain bin-moving equipment and using it to move bins and farm buildings throughout the Midwest.

Mark Bruellman, of Rolfe, started his unusual business after he quit farming in 1985, moving 68 structures that year (see FARM SHOW's Vol. 11, No. 3). Since then his business has grown every year. He has now moved a total of 2,135 structures, covering a total of 18,538 highway miles. Of this total, 938 bins have been 18-ft. dia. or less and 995 have involved bins between 21 and 42 ft. in diameter, with the remaining 202 being buildings. During the summer months he employs a 6-man crew to help him. He has moved bins and buildings in Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana.

"As far as I know I have the most comprehensive full-time bin-moving service in the country," says Bruellman. "I still use the bin mover I started out with, which was built by Roger Montag, Rodman, Iowa. However, I also have four other bin-moving rigs, including one machine pulled by a semi tractor that can move 9-ring bins up to 42 ft. in diameter. It weighs 18,000 lbs. and was built by Bill Wagenaar of Sheldon, Iowa. The other three bin-moving rigs are used to move bins 18 to 36 ft. in diameter standing upright at full height, or with the bins split one to three times to get under telephone wires. I try to maintain a crew of five to eight people and travel around the Midwest, staying in a camper at the customer's farm. We work full-time from about June 1 to November 15,

every day of the week except Sunday. A disadvantage of covering such a big area is that we cover about 600 miles per week driving between jobs. However, the bins were there first so we have to go where the bins are."

All of the bin movers are home-built. Two machines are used on bins up to 21 ft. in diameter to tip the bin down horizontally. The bin mover loads the bin with straps that run around its circumference. It then lowers the bin hydraulically to a horizontal position on a hauling trailer. Nothing has to be done to the inside of the bin.

A 55-ft. long trailer allows Bruellman to haul two bins up to 21 ft. in diameter at the same time in their upright position.

"It takes an average of four hours to move a 30-ft. dia. bin, from the time we arrive at the bin site, split it, shrink it down, move it three miles, and get it up and anchored again," says Bruellman.

Used most frequently is a handy hydraulic mover that can handle up to about 8 tons. It takes two men about 1 1/2 hours to get a 24 by 40-ft. building on the road. The two larger movers (up to 25 tons) require cribbing and jacks and don't get used very often.

"A 30 by 60-ft. building is as big as I like to go. I'll also move everything from bulk bins to round grain dryers and holding bins. We're equipped to move floors, stirring devices, fans and augers."

Bruellman breaks down his clients into three groups. "One group includes farmers who retire and sell their land to a buyer who doesn't want the bins. The second group includes farmers who sell small acreages to



Mark Bruellman has a full-time business moving bins and farm buildings throughout the Midwest. He uses several different bin-moving rigs.

hobby farmers who will buy only on the condition that the bins are removed. The third group includes farmers who sell to a buyer who already has one or more farms and wants the bins moved to it.

"It's ironic that 18 to 24-ft. dia. bin moving has picked up the last few years because more farmers need storage for Roundup-Ready beans grown for seed companies," he notes.

"He says the average price to move a 30-ft. dia. bin is about \$2,200.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bruellman Bin Moving, Inc., 29731 - 410th St., Rolfe, Iowa 50581 (ph 800 370-2467 or 712 848-3247).



Bins can be lowered to a horizontal position on a trailer.

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Husak also built a hydraulic-operated, two-wheeled bin crane.

"It's a simple, nice-looking machine," says Peter Husak, Arden, Manitoba, about his home-built grain bin mover.

The hydraulic-operated bin mover is designed to be pulled by a tractor and rides on two axles. The bin mover loads the bin with straps that run around its circumference. It then lowers the bin to a horizontal position onto the front part of the trailer. The process is reversed to set the bin back up again.

"We've used it for many years to move 14 and 15-ft. dia. bins," says Husak.

He also built his own hydraulic-operated, two-wheeled bin crane. The crane is raised up or down by a cable and has a boom at one end that's used to lift the bin off the ground. Maximum working height is 32 ft.

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