

Ice Cube “Bullets” Help Prevent Grain Bin Deaths

Don Perrion is saddened every time he hears about a grain bin death when workers go into a bin to dislodge bridged grain. He believes his Grain Worker Life Saver is a device that any farmer can put together. He came up with the idea in 1962 and used it successfully when he farmed in Ipswich, S. Dak.

The Life Saver uses compressed air and ice cube “bullets” to dislodge grain from outside the bin.

“I blast ice cubes from the outside or the top,” Perrion says. He has a trailer with a 12 hp gas engine and 30 cu. ft./min. air compressor with 100 ft. of hose that connects to a 5-gal. tank with a 2-in. valve. It’s the type of tank used to seat beads on tubeless tires that releases a 140-lb. blast of air. That’s enough air to propel an ice cube 600 ft. or knock a couple feet of caked grain off a bin wall.

“Start 2 or 3 ft. down from the top and work your way down. You don’t want the whole works to bury the sweep,” Perrion explains.

The barrel that connects to the tank valve is a 2-in. dia., 4-ft. long steel exhaust pipe. Perrion makes ice cubes in 3-oz. paper cups, tears the paper off and drops one or two at a time into the pipe.

“It’s an insignificant amount of water that doesn’t contaminate the grain. It just gets absorbed,” Perrion notes.

For taller bins, 8-ft. pipe extensions can be added with cam lock couplings. If the walk-in door isn’t accessible, Perrion uses his Life Saver from the top of the bin. He slips in an ice cube and holds it in place with a paper straw slipped through a 1/4-in. hole drilled through the pipe.

Perrion, who’s in the grain cleaning business, has put together Life Savers for a few farmers, but isn’t interested in doing it commercially. He provides instructions on how to make them to anyone interested, and he gives demonstrations locally. With farmers owning most of the parts, the cost can be \$200 or less to buy the tank and valve.



Life Saver uses a blast of compressed air and a 4-ft. long steel exhaust pipe to propel ice cube “bullets”, which dislodge grain from outside the bin.

“My idea is to save lives,” he says. “It would please the heck out of me if everyone had one of these in their shop.”

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Schreurs 3-bale handler has wings on both sides so bales can be lifted off ground before spearing the middle bale.

Bale Handler Picks Up Three Bales At Once

Joel Schreurs got the idea for his 3-bale bale handler while watching a neighbor use a double spear. As he speared a second bale, Schreurs noticed that the first bale rubbed on the ground, which tore its netting off. Schreurs’ patented bale mover has wings on both sides so the bales can be lifted off the ground before spearing the middle bale. Or, all three bales can be speared and lifted at the same time.

The spear setup works on Cat. II or III 3-pt. hitches on 120 hp or higher tractors.

“Of course, if the tractor is big enough you can take two more bales on the front also,” Schreurs says.

Two long spears go through each bale for stability, and the 1,100-lb. attachment is made of 5 by 7-in., 3/8-in. tubing and is powder-coated and painted to match any model tractor. The wings fold up when traveling on the road or through gates.

Schreurs sells the spear attachment for \$4,100.

See it in action on YouTube at “A Bar J Bale Spears”.

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Two long spears go through each bale for stability. Wings fold up when traveling on the road or through gates.

Add-On Dual Carries Chopper In Muddy Fields

“Chopping corn silage in the fall of 2010 was miserable,” says Alan Burda, a dairy farmer in far northwest Minnesota near Thief River Falls. “The fields were so darn muddy I was knocking more corn down than I was running through the chopper.”

Burda solved his problem by dualing the left wheel on his Gehl 800 2-row corn silage chopper. He says the 15-in. spacer and the second tire that he added made a huge difference in how the machine tracked through the muddy corn ground.

“With single wheels the tire on the left side was sinking about 4 to 6 in. in the mud between the rows and the machine was sliding sideways behind the tractor. The cutter head was dragging on the ground and I was knocking corn over rather than cutting it off,” Burda says. “After I put the extra wheel on, it wasn’t sinking hardly at all, it tracked straight, and the head was staying 4 to 6 in. off the ground. I was able to get all the corn chopped after I put on the second wheel.”

To make his dual system Burda extended the axle on the left chopper wheel a few inches. That moved the tire away from the chopper frame and also made it track beyond the center of his 30-in. corn rows. Then he made a 15-in. steel spacer band that fit into the chopper wheel rim. He mounted a 24-in. wheel from a Versatile swather on the spacer with four large clamps. The clamps and 3/4-in. thread bolts hold the wheel and spacer

tight to the rim of the left chopper wheel.

“The dual wheel is a few inches smaller than the original wheel, so when I drove in the field the tire of the dual actually ran on top of a cut corn row. That gave the machine a lot of extra flotation,” Burda says. “I didn’t dual up the right wheel because there wasn’t enough room between that tire and the standing corn.”

After adding the dual wheel, Burda was able to pull his chopper and a 7-ton dump box with just his MFWD tractor. Before that, he had used a second tractor in front of the MFWD without much success. “This setup worked really well and I may just keep the extra wheel on in normal conditions to help the machine track straight when the fields are a little greasy,” Burda says.

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Alan Burda dualed the left wheel on his Gehl 800 2-row silage chopper, adding a 15-in. spacer. “It helps the machine track through muddy corn ground,” he says.

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