

**Editor's Notebook**



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Editor & Publisher

**Did Deere & Co. "Bury" The Bi-Rotor Combine?**

Recent news that the prototype of the original Bi-Rotor combine was auctioned off after the death of inventor Mark Underwood raised a question I haven't thought about in a long time: Did Deere purchase the 17 Bi-Rotor Combine patents in 1995 just so it could bury the promising machine?

As a reminder, Underwood's combine had a threshing system with dual-rotating drums, one inside the other. The outer drum moved slower than the inner unit and reports said the system was more efficient and did less damage to crops. Underwood first put the system inside an IH 1480 combine and then he teamed up with Ralph Langergren to build a Bi-Rotor prototype from the ground up.



The original Bi-Rotor prototype sold at auction for \$22,000.



Two rotating drums, one inside the other, threshed grain inside the Bi-Rotor combine.

Field tests were promising when FARM SHOW first reported on the machine in Vol. 10, No. 3, in 1986. It was a beautifully-designed machine that eliminated nearly all chains, augers, shafts, pulleys and other high-wear components.

Bringing a new combine to market proved to be more than the Kansas farmers could handle and they reportedly had competing offers from Caterpillar and Deere in 1995. When Cat missed a deadline, the two men sold their patents to Deere which many of us suspected had no intention of putting it on the market since they had their own rotary combines in development. Cat went on to buy the North American rights to Claas combines.

The prototype Bi-Rotor was bought at the recent auction for \$22,000 by David Hockemeyer, president of Peridot, Inc., a Hoagland, Ind., product development company that makes planter parts for Deere and Kinze, among other things. The company plans to set its engineers loose, taking the Bi-Rotor apart and determining whether the innovative harvesting system can be improved with modern technologies such as computer-aided design. Since the patents have expired, they should be free to finally bring the Bi-Rotor design to market. Stay tuned.

**"Best of FARM SHOW" Issue**

For the past 38 years we have published a special "Best of FARM SHOW" issue at the end of each year featuring the best "made it myself" ideas from the past year and many of the most popular commercial-built products previously featured in FARM SHOW. I wanted to let you know that we're not going to produce that free "extra" issue this year. We've decided to focus all of our efforts on producing new material for our regular issues. One reason for this decision is that we often received complaints from readers about "repeat" stories in the "Best Of" issue. Another reason is simply that the increasing cost of printing and postage for more than 200,000 copies of that year-end issue has made it difficult to justify. For now, we'd rather put our resources into the regular issues of FARM SHOW.

**"Free Money" Research Grants**

Fred Forsburg has received several financial grants to help cover the cost of on-farm projects he planned to do anyway. State, federal and sometimes private foundations offer a wide variety of financial grants. Forsburg suggests starting with Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE), a program funded through the USDA ([www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)).

"I've received 3 grants through SARE and 1 through another organization that's private," says Forsburg. "I'm now in the process of applying for a fourth SARE grant to continue my research on fly control (see story in Vol. 42, No. 5)."

Forsburg got his first grant while he was researching the potential for using vinegar as an herbicide. He had already done considerable research on the internet and talked to USDA and Cornell University researchers. Along the way, a friend advised him to check out SARE for grants.

"I submitted a grant application to the Northeast SARE regional office at the University of Vermont," says Forsburg.

SARE breaks the country into 4 regions. Details of grant deadlines and how to apply are found there.

Forsburg got the grant for his vinegar experiments, did the research, wrote it up for SARE, and spoke about it at numerous conferences. His was the first actual research conducted on vinegar as an herbicide. That was 15 years ago, and he is still being contacted about the results. "In late September I had a call from a person in Australia and recently had emails from people in eastern Russia," says Forsburg.

Two other grants have not turned out so well. In both cases, outside factors affected the research results.

"Sometimes research works, and sometimes it doesn't," says Forsburg.

For those interested in submitting a grant application, Forsburg explains that ideas must be clearly presented with a good plan for verifying results or demonstrating a new practice. He suggests looking at other grant applications online for tips on what is necessary for success.

Editor's Note: We checked recent SARE grants in Minnesota and found that they have varied from \$1,500 up to \$22,000. Hundreds of grants are awarded every year.

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**Liberty Quotes**

"Liberty is one of the choicest gifts that heaven hath bestowed upon man, and exceeds in value all the treasures which the earth contains within its bosom, or the sea covers. Liberty, as well as honor, man ought to preserve at the hazard of his life, for without it life is insupportable."

*Cervantes*

"When you choose the lesser of two evils, always remember that it is still an evil." *Max Lerner*

"I prefer dangerous freedom over peaceful slavery." *Thomas Jefferson*

"I detest what you write, but I would give my life to make it possible for you to continue to write." *Voltaire*

"One of the best ways to get yourself a reputation as a dangerous citizen these days is to go about repeating the very phrases which our founding fathers used in the great struggle for independence." *Charles Austin Beard*

"Among those who dislike oppression are many who like to oppress." *Napoleon Bonaparte*

"Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself." *Justice Potter Stewart*

"Those who are convinced they have a monopoly on the truth always feel that they are saving the world when they slaughter the heretics." *Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.*

"Usually, terrible things that are done with the excuse that progress requires them are not really progress at all, but just terrible things." *Russell Baker*

"Most of the major ills of the world have been caused by well-meaning people who ignored the principle of individual freedom, except as applied to themselves, and who were obsessed with fanatical zeal to improve the lot of mankind." *Henry Grady Weaver*

**Crowd Butchering: A New Way To Sell Meat**

One big problem with selling beef direct to consumers is that many people who want fresh meat do not want to order a whole side of beef. That's where "Crowd Butchering" comes in. The idea is to use technology so consumers can order cuts of meat from a steer before it's butchered. Once all the cuts from an animal are purchased, the animal is slaughtered and the meat shipped.

The idea apparently originated in Germany and has spread across Europe and to a few operations in North America. U.S.-based Crowd Cow has been signing up livestock producers across the country for the past year or so ([www.crowdcow.com](http://www.crowdcow.com)). The online service hooks producers up with consumers, dividing steers up into manageable orders, usually 10 to 12 lbs., which are then shipped frozen and vacuum-sealed to customers. Animals aren't butchered until they're completely sold and consumers can monitor progress at the website. They can also get detailed information about the farm where the animal was raised.

**Great Christmas Gift Idea!**

Many readers who gave FARM SHOW for Christmas last year wrote to tell us they've never given a gift which generated so much response from appreciative recipients. You can give bargain rate gift subscriptions to friends, relatives, and business associates. Each recipient will receive a year of FARM SHOW plus a copy of our new book "Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income - Vol. IV". What's more, all gift recipients - as well as all active subscribers - receive free access to all 42 years of FARM SHOW at our website. Check out the order form enclosed with this issue or call us at 800 834-9665.



If your friends and relatives are already subscribers, you might want to consider giving them a set of our popular "Encyclopedia of Made It Myself Ideas". These three 482-page books are collections of the best "made it myself" ideas from the past 15 years of FARM SHOW. These are the most popular books we've ever published and I've never had anyone tell me they didn't think they were worth

the money. For a limited time, you can buy all 3 volumes for just \$39.95 plus \$4.95 S&H (\$49.95 Can. plus \$9.95 S&H). See enclosed order form or go to [www.farmshow.com](http://www.farmshow.com). You can also call us at 800 834-9665. Thanks!

**Points To Ponder**

- "I have never been hurt by anything I didn't say." *Calvin Coolidge*
- "I would not be fooled by the old myth that reporting is about objectivity. Deciding what is news is the most subjective of acts and it is probably the most important thing that we do." *Carl Bernstein*
- "Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition." *Timothy Leary*
- "Boiling makes an egg hard and a potato soft. The result depends on what material they're made of." *Anonymous*
- "Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose." *Lyndon Johnson*
- "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." *Winston Churchill*
- "We are a product of the choices we make, not the circumstances that we face." *Roger Crawford*
- "Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." *John Wooden*

**Ole and Lena went to a lawyer** to see about getting a divorce. "How old are you folks?" asked the lawyer. "Vell, I'm 97 and Lena is 95," said Ole. "How come you're getting a divorce now?" asked the lawyer. Ole said, "Vell, ve wanted to vait till all da kids vere dead."

**To everyone's surprise, Ole became** one of the most successful life insurance salesmen in the country. His boss decided to accompany Ole on a sales call to find out the secret of his success.

Everything went along in a standard fashion until Ole got up to leave. "I certainly don't want to frighten yew into a decision," said Ole. "Plez sleep on dis and if yew wake up in da morning, let me know what you tink."

**Ole finally found a job after many months of searching.** "Vhat dew yew pay?" he asked the boss. "We pay very well," replied the boss. "We'll pay you all you are worth."

Ole picked up his hat in disgust and prepared to leave. "I don't vork fer starvation wages," he grumbled.