

PACKAGING ALFALFA IN THE "BIG BALE"

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Opening Remarks

Hesston Corporation was conceived with a search for a better way. Throughout the years the company has devoted its energies to turning ideas into time and money-saving productivity. Finding needs, then filling those needs has been instrumental in Hesston's growth and success.

Innovation has been a key word in Hesston's brief 33-year history.

It all began in 1947 when a young custom operator in the small community of Hesston, Kansas decided he needed a better way to unload combines. There was only one way to unload grain from most combines at the time. That was to stop the combine and let the grain run from the overhead tank into the waiting truck.

Custom operator Lyle Yost came up with the idea of using an auger to elevate the grain into a truck driving alongside his combine, thus saving time and speeding up the harvest.

At this point it was the beginning of Hesston and many more innovative products over the years.

With the introduction of the self-propelled Windrower in 1955 Hesston's activity in the industry has been hay tool oriented. For this reason over the years people have thought of Hesston in terms of hay equipment although in the past few years we have been reaching out in other areas.

Continuing to be innovative in hay tool equipment has been a real challenge. However, having developed an excellent method of cutting, conditioning, and windrowing we felt the need to complete the harvest with a better method of packaging for certain areas of the country. Naturally any new method had to provide time and labor-saving features along with adding quality to the product if possible in order to market successfully.

In 1968 Hesston announced the Stakhand, a loose hay hauling system welcomed by cow-calf operations across the country with those exact features, time saving, labor saving and improved quality.

However well the loose hay system met the need for the cow-calf operator it did not meet the need for long distance hauling.

In order to meet this need and develop a product to compete with the current method Hesston faced a real challenge. Any new method would have to provide features to the producer, hauler and consumer far outweighing the current method. We feel we have made considerable progress in the all new Big Bale system over the past three years, and here to explain how the package is made, transported and fed, is Rex Allen in a 12-minute film.

Film

Shows the Big Baler (model #4800) performing the job of picking up cured hay from the windrow, forming a pre-bale package of approximately 1' in depth 4' wide and 4'3" long. This pre-formed loose package is moved into the 4'x4' 3" bale chamber where it is compressed from the 1' depth to 3" to 6" depending on the material along with exerted plunger pressure which is variable.

Upon reaching an approximate length (also variable) of 8' and a weight of around 1 ton in properly cured alfalfa the bale is tied off with 6 strings using a unique tying system with heavy duty plastic twine.

The 1-ton package can then be dropped to the ground or transferred to an accumulator of 3-bale capacity, and dropped at the end of the field.

The model 4820 Accumulator is a most desirable attachment to the baler saving an additional trip across the field picking up bales.

Handling of the big bale from field to transport to consumption is shown. This is a very important factor in the overall system.

Feeding the bale with a mechanized model 4870 Processor winds up the Big Bale story on film.

Closing Remarks

Although the film carries a promotional flavor it is not our intent to promote the sale of the product here today. We did, however, want to do the best job possible in explaining the big bale concept since it represents a complete change in production, handling and feeding equipment. We find, as I'm sure our competitors also find, that prospects just don't normally walk in and place an order and especially so when it comes to making a significant change. This kind of purchase requires time to explore all the facets of the operation in depth, and rightfully so.

The Big Bale system has now been in the field three years starting in 1978 with 25 units, increased to 125 in 1979 and 250 in 1980.

The small number of 25 the first year out gave us the opportunity to follow and monitor the system very closely.

Those first 25 balers were returned to the factory following the season for complete analysis and updating.

Growth in 1979 and 1980 has been more in keeping with service ability than customer demand. Customer service has always been uppermost with Hess-ton and we wanted to keep it in hand.

We do intend another increase in 1981 which indicates the concept acceptance in the marketplace to date.

Big Bale system sales are scattered throughout the U.S. and Canada showing a wide interest. More concentrated sales have come in areas serving large consumer potential for good quality hay such as the Chino dairy area.

We are finding that consumer acceptance and request for the large package is setting the pace to a great extent. This acceptance is based mainly on three factors--labor saving, wire elimination where wire-secured bales are being used, and a more palatable product. The last is based on the size of the package with better curing and less exposure to the elements as the size of the package increases.

Change will always be with us. Whenever a major change is made it brings interest and questions. We sincerely hope our short program has increased your interest and answered some of your questions.