

# INNOVATIVE LOADING AND STACKING SYSTEMS FOR CUSTOM HAY SALES

*Tom Keene*  
Creech, Inc.  
Lexington, KY

As the face of agriculture continues to change, so does the hay industry. What was standard operating procedure twenty years ago is now no longer economically feasible in the cash hay industry. This is especially true in the loading and stacking end of the business.

The business has changed because new technology along with the dramatic decrease in the availability of "hand labor" has helped to drive the need for new loading and stacking systems for the hay industry. These two phenomenon will continue to drive us toward total mechanization in the hay industry in fact many hay producers are already there. Soon the days will be gone of "humping" bales onto a wagon and then into a hayloft or hay maw.

Let us take a look back and see if we can follow a progression that has led us to where we are today. First, lets look at packaging and see some of the changes that have taken place there. Below are listed some of the current packaging systems that are available in today's hay market.

## Bale Size and Type

1. Small Square
2. Round
3. Midsize Square
4. Big Square
5. Loaves
6. Stacks
7. Baleage
8. Pressed hay
9. Ground

As you can see, not only have we become more mechanized but our salable packaged has changed as well. Bigger and denser packages make for greater ease in transportation as well as having to handle fewer packages.

**Now let's investigate some of the newer handling equipment.**

1. Bale throwers
2. Stacker Wagons
3. Stinger
4. Bale Racks
5. Squeeze
6. Bale accumulators
7. Pushing devices
8. Others????????

All of these different apparatus go into making hay loading and stacking more economical and efficient. They also can be attached to numerous types farm tractors and loaders as seen in the slides.

As you can see, technology and personal innovation continue to change the hay business. These changes benefit both the grower (seller) and the consumer for basically the same reasons; fewer packages to handle, ease of handling, ease in transportation and less labor required in handling and stacking, etc.

In closing, a look into the future might be in order. Just as one could not have imagined 60 years that one man individually could move and handle possibly 1000 tons of hay a day, truly ones own imagination and ingenuity will determine what our stacking and handling systems will be like 60 years from now.