



I believe in the country home where the father, mother, and children work and strive together, grow up together, and share in each other's joys, hopes, and faith. —From the 4-H Creed

## MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES

By L.E. Buchholz

**M**owing machines. Throughout our farm's history, we used I.H.C. mowers. All of them had five-foot sickle bars. The latter two had modern ballbearing pitman heads, modern wade boards, and bucket seats (one was on rubber and one was on steel). Each was pulled by two horses. They did a good job of mowing hay.

**Sickle sharpening.** Having two newly sharpened knives per day was a must. To get the sickles in shape, a grindstone was used. They had four legs to stand on with two foot-peddles and an overwheel water spout. It took a little skill and practice to get the hang of being seated, peddling, and guiding the knives. But a good smooth finish could be put on each plate.

—————★ ★ ★—————  
**Dump rake.** We used the 10-foot two-horse I.H.C. rake. They made a good wind row. They could not have been improved on if used only on hard ground, and if only dry hay was raked. They were also used to bunch hay with, and to re-rake after the sweep racks. Much ground could be covered with them in a day's work. We never used or saw any horsedrawn side delivery rake in use.

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**Hay stacker.** This machine had to be well set and anchored. It also needed a side wheel homemade patent to transport it. But good work could be done with such a hay stacker. Stacks 20 feet high could be made. They were round or square, and always had solid centers. Two horses would pull a load up, and back to starting position.

The horses had to be good pullers, dependable, and back perfectly. If a man could not back a team, or if horses did not back, it would have been impossible to have farmed in those days.

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**Hay loader.** With a hay loader, many tons of hay could be loaded per day. But it required four horses tandem hitched, a driver, and two stackers per load, and this was not in its favor. They were made to be



**A fine hay stack scene photographed on Buchholz farm in 1939 shows contented flock of Karakul ewes.**

used mainly with the overhead hay mount barn fork, and we never had such a set up.

Also, a hay loader could not be left in the field in an upright position because the wind could tumble it over. Nevertheless, hay loaders were still a great invention and served a good purpose.

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**Sweep racks.** Pulled by two horses, many wind rows or hay bunches could be pushed in or together in a day by sweep racks. No better device could be used on dry prairie hay. They had a seat for the driver, two



**This is one of my favorite photos. Taken in 1938, it is entitled "Breakthrough." Hay in the 30s became as scarce as rain, or even money. But in 1938 we at last had some hay and even corn forage. Note the fire guard.**

main frame wheels, and one rear wheel. They had to be backed out of each fill.

With two sweep racks such as those and an overhead stacker, real headway could be made. For such a unit, six horses and four men were needed.

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**Hay hauling.** When a field was dump-rake bunched, we would drive in with three hay racks, pulled by three teams, and begin to load by hand. An extra hand was needed to help set and trample each load to the fill. They were then hauled to a stack site where the hay was pulled off by a team and then stacked by hand.

**Cables and slings.** A two- or three-strand sling was in each rack. They had swivel front rings and tie rings at each end. A single rope or two were run over the stack and anchored on the other stack end. A cable was then pulled over the stack and hooked into the swivel ring. It took a good team and an unbreakable harness to pull such a load out of the wagon and onto the stack. Then the load had to be hand-stacked, and kept going until a stack was done. □