

McHale – Producing World-Beating Balers for Over a Decade

Mchale showed their first fixed chamber baler in 2005. Over 10 years on, we will look at the way the F550 has developed as a baler and evolved into the F5500.

The first round baler McHale manufactured was the McHale F550, a heavy duty contractor or farmer baler with a 15-knife chopper unit. In the F550, McHale decided to produce a fully loaded machine which offered the customer more as standard. Machine standard features included:

- ➔ 2-metre high capacity pick-up with galvanised bands.
- ➔ Drop floor unblocking system.
- ➔ Heavy duty rotor with flights which were welded on both sides for strength.
- ➔ 17-roller bale chamber with 50mm bearing on the drive and non-drive side.
- ➔ Clever progressive greasing and oiling system.
- ➔ Simple net wrap system that was happy to use any brand of net wrap.
- ➔ 8-stud axle with large 500/50-17 tyres (the only round baler with an 8-stud axle).

➔ Split-drive gearbox which ensures that power is evenly distributed between the rollers in the bale chamber and the pick-up and chopper unit.

Additional models

In 2007, McHale launched two new additional baler models at the Agritechnica Machinery Show in Germany:

- ➔ The F540 non-chopper baler.
- ➔ The F560 fully automatic baler with a 23-knife chopper and fully automatic tailgate operation.

The F550 model proved to be the most popular selling

baler in Ireland between 2005 and 2011. It offered contractors and farmers a heavy-duty machine delivering high levels of reliability, low running costs and high resale values.

The McHale F550 earned this reputation as it was fitted with the following heavy-duty specification:

- ➔ Double row cam bearings.
- ➔ Heavy duty galvanised pick-up bands.
- ➔ 50mm double row chamber bearing on the main load points.
- ➔ 50mm bearing on the chamber non-drive side.

- ➔ 10 rib chamber rollers made from special high-grade steel.
- ➔ 50mm forged heavy duty shafts on all chamber rollers.
- ➔ Heavy duty rotor bearings.
- ➔ 20B (1-1/4") chains on the chamber drive side.
- ➔ 16B duplex heavy duty rotor chain.

To help you choose a secondhand McHale F550 or F5500 baler, we have outlined some of the key changes below over the last 10 years.

- ➔ The F550 model was launched in 2005 and continued in production until 2011.
- ➔ The new F5500 was

launched in 2011 and is by far the most popular baler on the Irish market today.

Initially we will look at the F550 model and then concentrate on the changeover to the F5500.

We take a closer look inside the panels at the changes on the F550 with James Heanue from McHale.

The McHale F550 balers built can be divided into two groups

1. Balers from 2005 to 2007.
2. Balers from 2008 to 2011.



PHOTO 1

McHale F550 2005-2007

- ➔ 17-roller bale chamber
- ➔ Four-tine bar pick up
- ➔ Spring knife unit (until mid-2006).

Changes to the McHale F550 2008-2011

- ➔ 18-roller bale chamber.
- ➔ Four-tine bar pick-up.
- ➔ Hydraulic knife control (from 2006 to 2011).
- ➔ From 2008, McHale F550 balers may be better suited to those seeking to bale a higher proportion of drier crops such as hay and straw.

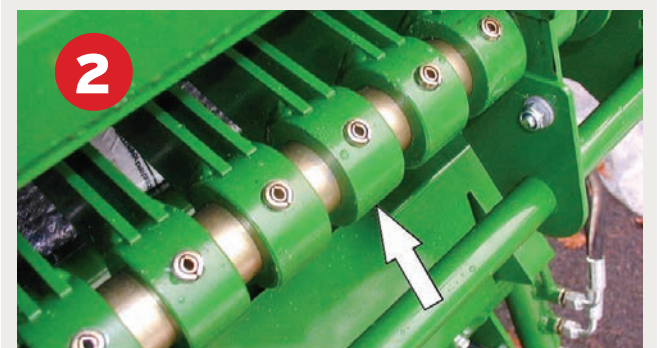
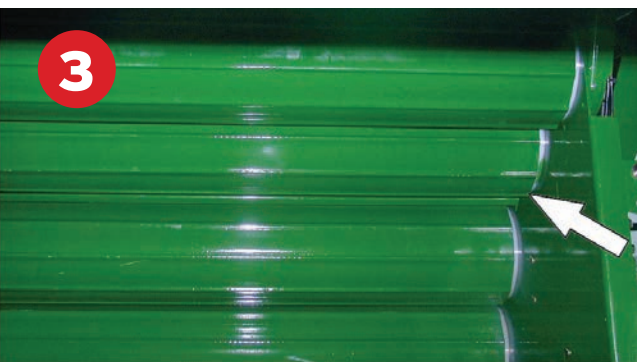


PHOTO 2

- ➔ From 2008, the knife bar in the knife unit increased from 30mm to 35mm and the roll pins changed from 10mm to 12mm. The angle of the roll pins also changed to make them easier to replace.
- ➔ Longer knives improve slicing but do not consume noticeably more power.



PHOTOS 3 & 4

- ➔ Move from 17 to 18 chamber rolls, the extra roller fitting in place of a blanking plate (new roller indicated by the white arrow).
- ➔ Rotor adjuster changed to make adjustment easier (see photo 5)



PHOTO 5 & 6

The oil system in picture 6 pre-2008 and picture 7 post-2008 is the same, but the chain oiling system was upgraded to a continuous system driven from the gearbox. This ensures that the chains get constant oil flow while the machine is on, ensuring that the chains get adequate oil in lighter crops.

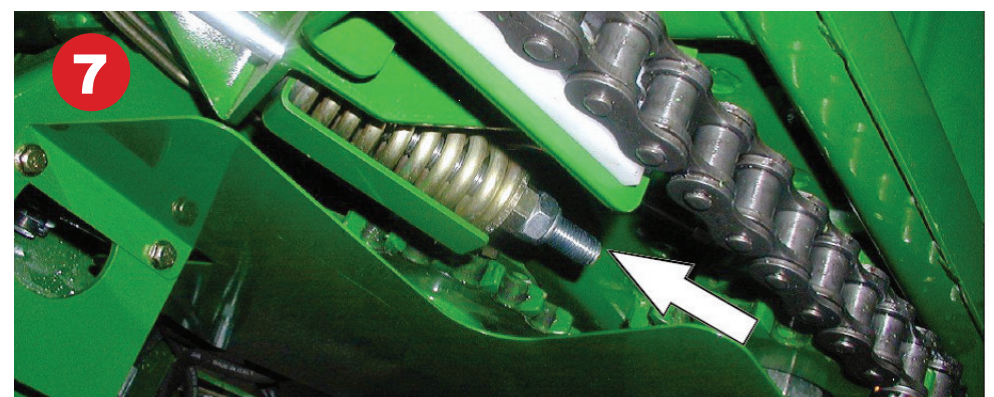


PHOTO 7

- ➔ The main drive chain changed to high shock load Diamond continuous chain.
- ➔ Better access to chain tensioners, which allowed for easier adjustment.
- ➔ On the pick-up slip clutch, the pressure increased from 700Nm to 900Nm. This makes the clutch less liable to slip in heavily raked swathes.



PHOTO 8

- ➔ Panel covers on rear make it easier to keep the baler clean. This is an easy way to tell if the machine is pre- or post-2008.



WIZARD CONTROL

- ➔ All McHale F550s were controlled by the Wizard console between 2005 and 2011.

2011-2015 – F5500 Baler

The new McHale F5000 series

The new McHale F5000 series of balers are designed and built to the highest standards providing:

- Higher intake capacities.
- More chopping options.
- Higher bale density.
- Lower running costs.
- Better operator comforts.
- Cleaner and easier to maintain.

➤ In 2011 McHale launched a new model, the McHale F5500 which benefited from the proven technology McHale had developed in the F550 and added a number of new features:

- A new axle mounted bale kicker gently guides the bale to the ground.
- New Lights on rubber mounts.
- Access hole on the platform to change the gearbox oil.



Visually the F5500 was much different from the earlier F550 featuring new panels and a sleeker design.

Top 10 Checks When Buying a Used McHale Baler

1. Visual inspection including paintwork and tyres.
2. PTO shaft including joints and covers.
3. Check the control console is functioning and ensure there is no damage to the wiring loom.
4. Pick-Up: Check for wear and damage to bands and tines.
5. Greaser and Oiler functioning correctly.
6. Chain wear in all areas – driveline, chamber and pick-up.
7. Inspect chamber rollers for damage.
8. Netter Unit: Check tension bar, rubber roller and net knife.
9. Chopper Unit: All knives present and in good condition. Check for roll pin damage on the knife bar.
10. Ensure all safety decals and protective guards are in place and the machine is being supplied with an operator's manual.



PHOTO 9

- A new five tine bar pick-up system.
- The F5500 is fitted with a higher performance crop roller.
- The pick-up floatation on the F5500 is better due to new mounting.



PHOTO 10 & 11

- New durable twin skinned (ABS) panels were developed and their gull wing design reduced crop build up and made the machine easier to work on and maintain.



PHOTO 14

- A new long life double row rotor bearing.
- A drop floor sensor and a knife sensor were incorporated to inform the driver and maximise chop quality.



PHOTO 15

- The McHale F5500 round baler can be equipped with a 15-knife chopper unit. The operator can select to bale with a bank of seven knives, a bank of eight knives or should a chop length of 46mm be required all 15 knives can be engaged.



PHOTO 12

- A new rock and roll net loading platform to make net replacement easier.



PHOTO 13

- New high-performance netter was developed, which included:
- Net tension can be simply adjusted on a variable pulley on the right hand side of the machine.
 - Endless adjustment of tension to ensure optimum net usage and bale shape.
 - 180-degree wrap around on the rubber feed roller, eliminating any net slippage while feeding material into the baler.
 - Capacity to take rolls of net wrap up to 1,300mm in width and any length.
 - On the F5500, net is adjusted by moving a handle on the side of the machine.

PHOTO 16

James Heanue – McHale Irish Sales Manager:

- “A new ‘Wizard Plus Control Console’ has been developed for the F5500 baler. The Wizard Plus contains a large graphic display, which allows the operator to control machine features such as drop floor, knife position, and knife selection”.

On the large graphic display the operator can see:

- Floor position.
- Knife position.
- Knife pressure.
- Tailgate position.
- Net feed indicator.
- Voltage supply display.
- Lube alarm.

“This is a very user friendly console, which gives great functionality and visual displays.”

