Silage "Dump Truck" Fitted With Low-Cost Automatic Tailgate

"It works simple and didn't cost much to build. I've never seen anything on the market like it," says Beecher Grose, Harmony, N.C., about the low-cost automatic tailgate he mounted on his Chevrolet 2-ton truck. It allows him to unload silage into bunker silos without ever getting out of the truck.

The truck was originally equipped with a manually-opened door on back of the 14-ft. long, 6-ft. high box. Grose replaced it with his home-built tailgate made from 3/4-in. thick plywood. The tailgate is connected by a 1 1/2-in. angle iron frame to a length of 2-in. dia. steel pipe that serves as a pivot point. A 1 1/2-in. dia. pipe mounts inside the 2-in. dia. pipe and is bolted at both ends to a pair of vertical 4-in. channel iron brackets that bolt onto the sides of the box.

To unload silage Grose raises the box until the tailgate begins to open, then drives ahead until the box is completely empty. Then he lowers the box and goes back to the field. It's that simple. There's nothing on the tailgate to latch or unlatch - the weight of the tailgate is all that keeps it in place.

"It saves a lot of time and legwork," says Grose. "I've used it a lot on our farm and on other farms in our area. Some of my neighbors have built similar tailgates to fit their own trucks. We use the truck to fill our bunker silos as well as upright silos. When the box has a full load the tailgate might open up about an inch or so, but no silage ever comes out.

"The pipe is mounted as high as the top of the tailgate which allows even the largest loads to slide out freely. The pipe is about 36 in. ahead of the tailgate which provides enough leverage for the tailgate to stay closed until the center of gravity changes as the box is raised."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Beecher H. Grose, 561 N. Meadow Rd., Harmony, N.C. 28634 (ph 704 546-2447).

Simple Tree Puller

Pulling small trees and wood posts is easy with this simple home-built 3-pt. mounted tree puller built by Arkansas farmer Larry Zenz.

He made a frame out of steel tubing and angle iron that mounts on a 3-pt. hitch. A pair of grader blades cutting edges form a "V" at the bottom.

He simply backs into a tree or post and lifts the 3-pt. The edges of the grader blades dig into the wood to grab it.

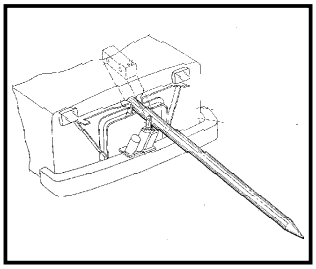
Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Zenz, Box 154, Parks, Ark. 72950.

Pickup-Mounted Bale Spear Uses Snow Blade Lift Arm, Hydraulics

Noel Bablo, Corning, N.Y., made a low-cost bale hauler out of his 4-WD Chevrolet Blazer by mounting a 4-ft. long homemade spear on a hydraulically-operated lift arm that was originally designed to raise or lower a snow blade.

Two bolts hold the bale spear in place.

"It lets me haul bales weighing up to 750 lbs. at highway speeds," says Bablo. "I'm a small time farmer with 12 beef cows and I don't have a tractor. I use the spear to haul bales from my neighbor, who lives about a mile away, back to my pasture where I drop them and put a bale ring over them for feeding. It cost a lot less than buying a tractor and I always stay nice and warm inside the Blazer. The snow blade weighs more than 400 lbs. by itself so the bale isn't that much extra weight on the vehicle. I mounted an extra leaf spring on the vehicle when I installed the snow blade which helps support the extra weight.



"I used 1 1/2 in. sq., 3/16-in. thick sq. steel tubing to build the spear. I sharpened a length of 1-in. dia. steel pipe to a point and welded it onto the tubing in order to make the point. I'm looking for a manufacturer. I think it could be marketed for about $100."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Noel Bablo, 10485 Rogers Rd., Corning, N.Y. 14830 (ph 607 962-5132).

Wrap-Around Bale Feeder

Wisconsin sheepman Peter Wood uses these simple wrap-around feeders to reduce losses when feeding sheep.

The feeder consists of four square panels connected by "hinges" made of loose loops of chain. When not in use, the gates fold up and stack flat.

Wood can set them up in seconds anywhere they're needed, making it easy to keep the feeders off muddy ground. The diagonal slats across each side of the feeder also help reduce losses.

Cattle Working Chute Built Out Of Grain Bin Sections

Some animal behavior experts say circular working chutes are a lot less stressful on animals than conventional rectangular chutes.

Steve McDermott looked at a couple circular commercial units and decided to build his own out of used grain bin sections.

"It's wonderful," says the Epworth, Iowa, farmer. "It used to take two men to work cattle in our old 8 by 20-ft. rectangular chute and we'd always come out completely covered with manure and one or both of us would usually get stepped on. The circular design keeps cattle moving smoothly because there are no corners to spook them."

The chute was built on a 6-in. thick cement pad that originally held a rectangular chute. It uses one of the sides of the original chute which was built out of tongue-and-grooved 2 by 6's covered with flat sheet galvanized metal.

"We used bin sections from a used 48-ft. dia. grain bin to form the circular part of the chute," McDermott explains. "There are seven sections in the 'tub', three and a-half on the bottom and three and a-half on the top for an overall height of 66 in., including the 1 in. gap between the bottom panels and the cement. We pushed bin sections together with our skid steer loader so they'd form an 8-ft. dia. semi-circle and screwed them together with self-tapping steel screws."

There's an 8-ft. tall center post made out of 1 1/2-in. tube steel with a 5 1/2-ft. tall center gate that revolves around it 6 in. off the ground to keep cattle moving toward the squeeze chute. The squeeze chute gate was also made out of 1 1/2-in. tube steel.

McDermott vaccinates 55 beef cows and calves during spring and fall in the chute and says it's more convenient, less time-consuming and less dangerous than his rectangular chute.

Out-of-pocket expense was $1,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Steve McDermott 21738 E. Pleasant Grove Rd., Epworth, Iowa 52045 (ph 319 876-3635).