



Homemade "snow packer" creates a 6-ft. wide trail for sleighs. It was made out of a 6-ft. wide, discarded wire reel from a utility company.

"Snow Packer" Makes Trail For Sleighs

A horse-drawn sleigh whisking through deep snow makes for a romantic image, but for the horses it's nothing but hard work. To make it easier for them, Paul Olson of Ogilvie, Minn., packs his trails with a homemade "snow packer" that creates a 6-ft. wide trail for sleighs.

Olson operates a sleigh and buggy ride service for weddings and anniversaries and also holds an open house each February. His friend Brad Wahlstrom built the snow packer, using a 6-ft. wide, discarded wire reel from a utility company. The reel rotates on a steel shaft with bearings at each end. A series of 3-in. sq. wooden slats made from rough sawed poplar wood are spaced 2 in. apart and screwed to the outside edges of the reel. Steel bands go all the way around the slats and can be tightened as necessary.

The driver sits on an old steel tractor seat. "I use either two or three horses to pull it. I've used it in snow up to 18 in. deep with a team of two Percheron horses that were in good shape. However, if I had to use it in much deeper snow I'd want to have a couple more horses or I wouldn't be able to go very far," says Olson. "It could also be pulled by a tractor. I plan to build one a little smaller out of fiber optic reels measuring a little under 5 ft. in diameter. I'll use the rear seat of a Chevy Suburban so that I can take a companion along." Olson says Wahlstrom is willing to sell the snow packer for about \$1,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Olson, Bunker Hills Carriages, 1278 Delta St., Ogilvie, Minn. 56358 (ph 320 272-4490).



Feed is dumped between two electric lines spaced about 4 ft. apart and positioned 3 1/2 ft. high. If cattle start pushing feed around, it just gets pushed over to cow on other side so waste is reduced.

Easy Way To Feed Cattle

"We used to use round bale feeders but the cattle would throw hay out of them, wasting a lot of feed. We started looking at using some sort of concrete feeder but they were expensive and hard to clean," says Ed Walder, Wittenberg, Wis.

"Finally we thought of this idea and I can't imagine a better way to feed cattle. The idea consists simply of two electric lines spaced about 4 ft. apart and positioned 3 1/2 ft. high. We dump feed in the middle. If cattle start

pushing the feed around, it just gets pushed over to the cow on the other side. So there's virtually no waste.

"Clean-up is easy with a skid steer loader and you can set this up anywhere - in a feedlot on a concrete pad or out on pasture. We spent only about \$25 to set it up since we already had a fence charger."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ed Walder, 1525 S. Cty. Rd. I, Wittenberg, Wis. 54499 (ph 715 454-6458).

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Harold M. Johnson

Founder & Publisher Emeritus

Editor/Publisher - Mark Newhall

Associate Editor - Bill Gergen

Associate Editor - Jim Houtsma

Office Manager - Anne Lash

Circulation - Nora Nagel, Marcy Isaacson

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"Inverted Handle" Post Hole Digger

When you dig a post hole with a conventional post hole digger, the deeper you go the bigger the hole has to be at the top to make room for the spread of the handles. You end up removing a lot more dirt than necessary.

Terry Penkert solved the problem by designing a new post hole digger with inverted handles that lets him dig a 30-in. deep hole that's the same diameter all the way down. He started with a conventional digger and used a torch to cut off the handles just above the clam. Then he heated the handles, bent them crosswise, and welded them back on. He also heated the top part of the handles and bent them crosswise. The handles can now be pulled open without hitting the sides of the hole.

"It saves a lot of time and work," says Penkert. "I can make fences faster because I don't have to dig out so much dirt. The smaller hole also requires less fill which results in a stronger anchor for the post. It makes holes that look like they were dug by a power auger. However, unlike a power auger I can use it anywhere including right up against buildings. I mounted motorcycle grips on the handles to make it easier on my hands. The proof that it works is that my friends and neighbors borrow it a lot."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Terry K. Penkert, Box 303, Miles, Texas 76861 (ph 915 468-5351).



Forage harvester's spout actually extends inside the truck. Note big flotation tires on front of trailer and hydraulic-operated dovetail ramp on back.

"Piggyback" Forage Truck

(Continued from cover page)

because it reduces drying costs.

"When people see it for the first time many of them aren't sure what they're looking at. I cut about 4,000 tons of haylage every year so I save a lot of money on labor."

To modify the forage harvester, Alexander stripped it down to the cab, cutting mechanism, axles, and engine. He had to shorten the body of the harvester so the truck could be backed up against the spout. To do that he turned the engine sideways and also lowered it 2 1/2 ft. The engine originally drove a gearbox but now belt-drives the pickup and cutting mechanism. The engine also direct-drives a hydrostatic pump that drives a transmission - the final drive off a Gleaner combine - on the front axle. The rear wheels aren't powered. The steering is done by a separate hydraulic pump. It operates a pair of hydraulic cylinders that mount on each side of the steering axle and are connected to a tie rod. The steering axle consists of an 8 by 12-in. rectangular beam that pivots in the middle on a 3-in. dia. king pin. The front axle is also built from an I-beam.

The cab was originally mounted in the middle of the machine. Alexander moved it over to one side and also raised it 2 ft.

He used steel I-beams to build a frame that supports the engine, cab, pickup, and cutting mechanism. He used more I-beams to build the 22-ft. long, 16-ft. wide deck and bolted and welded it to the frame on front. Deck is covered by 1-in. steel bar grating.

The forage harvester was originally powered by a 240 hp engine. Alexander wanted more power so he replaced it with a 300 hp, 619 cu. in. diesel engine off a Deere 8640 4-WD tractor.

"It seems to have a million hoses on it," says Alexander. "Electric-hydraulics are used to control the steering, belt tension, raise and lower the ramp, pickup, power the cutting mechanism, and turn the forage harvester spout. Everything's operated by toggle switches in the cab."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gunther Alexander, Box 78, Vauxhall, Alberta, Canada T0K 2K0 (ph 403 654-2754).