

Mini-Mixers Great For Smaller Farms

In 1980, Ivan Rissler was a 25-year-old dairy farmer who figured there had to be a better way to feed dairy cows than scooping grain from a feed cart with a shovel. So, he invented a self-propelled grain cart and built more than 2,000 of them over the next 30 years.

"A few years ago I had people asking me to build a small TMR cart that would mix dry hay and baleage and work in a dairy barn," says Rissler. He took the idea and ran with it, developing what he calls the Rissler TMR Mini-Mixer. He has two models of the new self-propelled machine that he likes to call "a dairyman's best hired man". The main selling features of the Mini-Mixers are their maneuverability and small size, which allows the operator to drive them inside a barn and under the typical 6-ft. height of a stainless steel milk pipeline.

"More and more dairy farms are moving to baleage for their main roughage, and this machine is made to tear apart those bales and mix it into a TMR ration that can be fed inside a stallion or freestall barn," Rissler says. The new Mini-Mixer has stainless steel mixing chambers with 2 stainless steel augers 24 in. in diameter. Each auger has a 14-in. wide serrated cutting knife attached to the top and bottom fin to thoroughly cut up baleage and dry hay. The augers have 8-in. dia. pipes to prevent loose hay from wrapping as the machine operates.

Rissler built two sizes of the self-contained mixer, both powered by a 24 hp motor. One has tanks that are 42 in. wide at the bottom and 48 in. wide at the top. The smaller unit's

tanks are 32 in. wide at the bottom and 38 in. at the top. Both of them are 4 ft. tall. The mixing chambers are made of 3/8-in. thick stainless steel. A chute at the bottom with a side discharge deposits the TMR mix right in front of the cattle, no shovels or forks needed. The Mini-Mixers ride on 16-in. 10-ply tires with lugs. The larger machine is about 110 in. long and 48 in. wide and the smaller one is 100 in. long and 38 in. wide.

"I know there's a demand for carts like these," Ivan says, "because we've had people tell us they're making 10 to 15 trips a day with a regular feed cart. That's a lot of hand work and a lot of time for just feeding." Rissler says his "new hired man" will be just the ticket for stallion and tie-stall barns.

A single hydraulic motor drives both augers on the machines, connected by 2 large 20-in. diameter sprockets. Auger speed, which is about 50 rpm's, is regulated by the engine throttle, which ranges from 1,000 to 3,600 rpm's. Two small hydraulic motors power the wheels, controlled by a joystick that regulates the valves. "The augers and wheel drives are direct link, no cables or chains," Ivan says. "The operator stands on a platform and rides along as the mixer moves through the barn."

The Mini-Mixers are built on a sturdy steel frame and weigh about 2,000 lbs. Ivan says they're built strong to withstand everyday use for many years. Prices will be in the \$13,000 range for the small one and \$15,000 range for the larger model. Both of them will have electronic scales as standard equipment.



Ivan Rissler's new self-propelled TMR Mini-Mixer is small and maneuverable, making it easy to use inside a dairy barn.

"We'll build all of the Mini-Mixers ourselves," Ivan says, "just like we did with the 2,000 or more powered feed wagons in the past 30 years." Those were sold in the U.S., Canada, and also shipped to England. Ivan says, "We're a family business that builds everything in our own shop and we take great pride in what we do. These new mixers will be manufactured and sold the same way."

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Mixer uses 2 stainless steel augers with serrated cutting knives to cut up baleage and dry hay.



Old chisel plows can be converted into heavy-duty brush rakes. "They work great to handle cut-down cedar trees and brush," says Perry Easley.

Chisel Plow Makes A Great Brush Rake

Anyone who can weld can turn an unused chisel plow into a useful heavy-duty brush rake, says Perry Easley, owner of Easley Welding.

Remove all the shanks, take the longest bar and slip the shanks back on, evenly spaced about a foot apart. They work great to handle cut down cedar trees and brush.

"One guy mopped up 400 acres with his," Easley says.

He welded his 10-ft. rake to a quick-attach plate (less than \$200) universal hookup for

his skidsteer, but the rake could also be mounted on a tractor loader. With producers abandoning chisel plows for no-till and other tillage equipment, the plows are inexpensive if you don't own one, Easley says.

He has built and sold a few of the rakes in Missouri, but says it's any easy and useful project farmers can do anywhere there are chisel plows waiting to be repurposed.

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He welded his 10-ft. rake to a quick-tach hook-up on his skid loader. Shanks are evenly spaced about 1 ft. apart.



Sidney Stubbs uses steel pallets from a local ATV dealership to make frames for small trailers.

Steel Pallets Make Quick Trailers

Steel pallets left over at a local ATV dealership make fast frames for small trailers, according to Sidney Stubbs. The pallets are free for the taking. Stubbs makes slight alterations depending on the end use.

"They come in different sizes, but they are all tube steel," says Stubbs. "I clean off any extra material with a carbide blade on a circular saw and then reinforce with more tube steel as needed."

Stubbs buys new wheel hubs and tires at a local auto parts store, as well as ball hitches and tongue jacks. Flooring varies from plywood to used rock crusher screens. Pallets can be mounted end-to-end for longer trailers or side-to-side for wider ones.

"I have one that I keep a water tank in, another for a generator and several for hauling lumber slabs and firewood," says Stubbs. "I can make a complete trailer in a day and a half, depending on sides and flooring."

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Flooring varies from plywood to used rock crusher screens. "The trailers work great for hauling lumber slabs and firewood," says Stubbs.

