



Bernier attaches chain and a pair of 70-lb. tractor suitcase weights, to his loader bucket to hold big loads in place.



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“Poor Man’s” Grapple Fork Uses Chain, Tractor Weights

“It handles big piles of brush and weeds with no problem. Best of all, I didn’t spend a nickel to build it - just my time,” says Paul Bernier, Geyserville, Calif., who made his own “poor man’s” grapple fork using a chain and a pair of 70-lb. tractor suitcase weights.

He welded chain hooks to the corners on back of the 8-ft. wide bucket on his Kubota 50 hp tractor. A 12-ft. long chain is threaded

through the 2 weights, which set side by side and are centered with the bucket as it’s raised above the ground.

To grab a pile of brush, Bernier drives forward until the weights are up and over the pile and then lowers the weights to the ground. He then backs up with the weights dragging along the ground, until they trap the brush inside the bucket.

To dump the load, he tilts the bucket down until the weights clear the pile and the brush falls out.

“The weights trap the brush on the lip of the bucket so it can be lifted up without anything falling out,” says Bernier. “When we’re done handling brush the chains can be quickly removed, allowing us to use the bucket for other jobs.

“My total cost was about \$50, which was mainly for the weights and chain hooks. Other objects, such as an old engine block or a big tire, could be used instead of the suitcase weights.”

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Calf-Hauling Crate Built For ATV

“I work cattle alone on my ranch, so when cows have calves in different places in the corral it’s tough to get the Mamma and the baby into the barn by myself. So I built a ‘Critter Cage’ to haul calves into the barn with my ATV,” says North Dakota cattleman Elliot Iszler.

Iszler’s Critter Cage is about 2 ft. wide, just over 4 ft. long and about 3 ft. high. One end has a door with an opening on top large enough for a calf’s head to look through. The frame is made of 1-in. tubing and Iszler has metal on the floor and 2 ft. high on the sides so a baby calf’s legs don’t get caught in the metal frame. A metal tube extends out from one side of the portable pen and slips into the receiver hitch of an ATV or a pickup. He makes adapters so the device will work on different size receivers.

“I realized when I built my first one that the mamma cow needed to see her calf when I was transporting it into the barn,” Iszler

says. “As soon as I get the little one loaded, I let the cow see that the calf is okay, and off we go. I drive into my barn, make a swing around the pen and the mamma cow is right behind me.”

Iszler says the Critter Cage is also protection for the rancher who works cows and calves alone. “I’ve been head-butted while carrying calves on foot, I’ve been chased when I held them while driving my 4-wheeler, and I’ve been thoroughly ‘bawled out’ when I’ve put a calf in a pickup so the cow couldn’t see it. Having a secure place to carry a calf into the barn has been a real benefit for me. I can also keep the calf in the carrier to give it an ear tag and shots, jobs that I used to do just by holding a calf by hand.”

He says the added weight on the back of the ATV isn’t a problem because the cage only weighs about 60 lbs and a calf is usually about the same. Iszler says if a rancher thinks that’s too much weight he should add ballast in the



One end of calf hauling crate has a door with an opening on top large enough for a calf to look through. Unit hooks up to the receiver hitch on an ATV or pickup.

front basket of his ATV to even up the load.

“I spent a couple years working on the design and I’m really satisfied with the way it turned out,” Iszler says. “I’ve got a few dealers handling the product in a 100-mile radius of Bismarck and might have interest from others further away if I promoted it

some.” Iszler builds the Critter Cages himself in his shop and says if someone is interested they should give him a call. The Critter Cage sells for \$369.

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Planter-Mounted Spray Hood

A few years ago Missouri farmer Patrick Turnage became fed up with planting cotton into a fertile seedbed, only to see weeds ambush the crop when weather prevented him from following up with a timely herbicide application. That’s when he came up with a hooded device to mount behind his planter so he could plant and apply herbicide to individual rows in a single pass.

“My farming goal has always been to start with clean fields and keep them clean,” Turnage says. “By putting down herbicide at planting, in a precisely controlled location, I was able to keep those early weeds from emerging with the cotton. I was able to get excellent coverage, control drift and protect the crop immediately.” Individual hoses are plumbed to each hood from a supply tank that can be mounted on the planter or a tractor. Liquid flows through nozzles inside each hood to mist herbicide directly on the ground.

After seeing the advantages his hooded spray units provided, Turnage teamed up with Tyler Perkins who runs an equipment sales business in Bernie, Mo. In 2014 Turnage

and Perkins planted and sprayed 3,000 acres of cotton with 3 planters equipped with the invention he now calls ‘Cotton Tail Hoods’. The hoods are made of molded poly with curved urethane skirts on each side. They mount on arms that extend behind the row units and closing wheels on Case IH, Deere, and Kinze planters. Perkins says another advantage of the Cotton Tail design is that the hood closely follows the contour of the field because it’s mounted to the row unit frame. “We really get precise application close to the ground. A large pull-type or self-propelled sprayer with a fixed boom doesn’t provide that type of accuracy.”

Perkins says each Cotton Tail hood has a spring-loaded trip mechanism so it glides back into place if it hits an obstruction in the field. “A Cotton Tail Hood can be installed in about 30 min.,” says Perkins. “It’s a simple mounting process that one person can do.”

The University of Nebraska has done testing on the downwind drift of hooded vs. conventional bar sprayers and noted that wide bar hooded units reduce drift by 90 percent.

Testing was done when the average wind speed was 9 mph and the travel speed of the sprayers was 8 to 9 mph. Perkins thinks their individual hoods may match or even exceed that efficiency. Perkins also says the Cotton Tail results in cost effective applications in a single pass without the worry of wondering when the conventional sprayer will get across the planted field.

“Better yet, a farmer buys only the number of units for the size planter he has. It’s a one-time purchase that provides better coverage than broadcast spraying.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Perkins Sales, Inc., 3900 County Rd. 609, Bernie, Mo. 63822 (ph 877 293-5794; www.perkinssales.com).



Mounted on planter row units, Cotton Tail hoods confine spray treatments to small, isolated bands that reduce drift during application.

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