## Manure Spreader Works Great For Spreading Straw

**By Janis Schole**

A manure spreader works as well as a commercial bale processor for spreading bedding, according to Neil McMillan who started using his New Holland 791 manure spreader for bedding cattle about five years ago.

I've tried the idea with various kinds of round bales, including hay bales, and it works fine on all of them. Most of my bales are 5 by 6-ft., made with a Deere 535 baler," says the Pickardville, Alberta, farmer. "I place the bale in the middle of the spreader and cut the strings. Then I push the bale fork into the side of the bale about 10 in. from the top and lift up with the fork so it tears and sort of separates at the top. Part of the bale falls to the front and part to the back. Then I hook onto the spreader with the tractor and start spreading. It doesn't damage the beaters and I haven't had any trouble yet."

McMillan says he used to simply cut the strings and start spreading without tearing the bale with the fork. However, it would overbalance and the whole bale would go over the beaters and fall out the back of the spreader.

He uses the system primarily to spread straw in front of his cattle shed.

McMillan uses the system to more easily spread broken bales, which are otherwise awkward to handle. The beaters work well to catch and wrap strings that have been missed, he notes.

The system saves him time, energy and money and required no modification to his spreader, he says.

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## Street Sweeper Brushes Make Great Cattle Scratchers

Worn-out rotary street sweeper brushes make low-cost, portable cattle scratchers, says dairyman Eric Clifford of Starksboro, Vt., who has five of them on his farm.

Clifford, who farms with his father Art, got the brushes free from the Burlington, Vt., street department three years ago. He installed three of them outside his free-stall barn and two in a pasture.

"They're rugged and cows seem to love rubbing up against them," says Clifford. "The brushes can be mounted horizontally or vertically. I move them with a front-end loader."

The 30-in. dia., 5-ft. long brushes have 8 to 10-in. long poly bristles attached to an 8-in. dia. steel drum. To mount a brush vertically he inserts a 6 or 7-in. dia. wooden post into a truck tire filled with concrete and then sets the brush over the post. "The brushes are quite heavy so it takes a good-sized tire to keep them from tipping over," says Clifford.

To mount a brush horizontally he runs a steel pipe through the drum and welds rings to each end of the pipe, then chains it to a steel plate on the barn. "One brush is suspended between two posts and is about 6 in. below the cow's shoulder. I have another one that's mounted a few inches lower. The drum rotates on the pipe as cows scratch, but due to friction and the drum's weight it doesn't turn too fast," says Clifford.

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FARM SHOW

# "Best Ideas"

## He Feeds Cattle In A Circle To Reduce Fighting

**By Georgina Campbell**

Cattle do less fighting when grain is fed to them in a circle instead of in a straight-line windrow, says Byron Hart, Vermilion, Alberta, who has a 140-head cow-calf operation.

"When we fed in a straight line, the cows all ran down to the end and bunched up. Then they would start fighting on their way back down the line. If the hay and grain is laid out in a circle, they just line up on both sides and start eating."

He generally lays out circles of feed where organic matter is needed, such as on hill tops.

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## Better Lighting, Ventilation May Boost Milk Production

Better lighting and ventilation in dairy barns may be the easiest and lowest cost way to boost milk production, say farmers and researchers involved in a two-year Minnesota study.

It's funded by a central Minnesota power cooperative with input from University of Minnesota ag engineers and local electricians. Retrofitting three dairy barns with energy-efficient fluorescent lights and more air intakes and fans began earlier this year and was completed by spring.

One of the farmers involved, Terry Greenwaldt, milks 90 Holsteins with average production of 21,000 lbs. near Henning, Minn. "Cleaner drier air alone is bound to help with overall herd health," he says.

Greenwaldt removed four 30-in. ceiling fans in his 1971 free-stall barn and replaced them with air intakes, three 24-in. fans in walls, three pit fans, and replaced incandescent lights with energy-efficient fluorescent light that are set to turn on for 18 hours and off for six.

Likewise, Allen Schroeder, who milks 70 to 75 Holsteins with 22,000 lb. average production near Fergus Falls, Minn., added extra air inlets to his 60-cow tie-stall barn. He put in an additional 20,000 cfm summer fan and three winter fans, plus replaced all incandescent and fluorescent lights with newer energy efficient fluorescents.

Schroeder's cows are already consuming 3 lbs. more dry matter per day, he estimates conservatively.

That translates directly to increased milk production, notes Dr. Gerald Beehler, an Elbow Lake veterinarian who's monitoring herd health in the study. Improved body condition after calving can mean improved breeding and shorter calving intervals, he adds.

Beehler expects dry matter consumption could increase to 5 lbs. per day per cow, boosting milk production anywhere from 5 to 16 percent.

Drier, less dusty barns from improved ventilation benefits producers in three ways, he says.

First, because it's drier there's less incidence of mastitis. Second, there's less respiratory disease. Third, there's improved cow comfort. **(Excerpted from the Pioneer Journal, Wadena, Minn.)**