"Best Ideas"

Insulated "Water Shed" Keeps Cattle Waterers From Freezing

"It keeps my cattle waterers from freezing and lets cattle get all they want to drink," says Rick McKnight, Jarvie, Alberta, who built an insulated, wood shed over his automatic waterers.

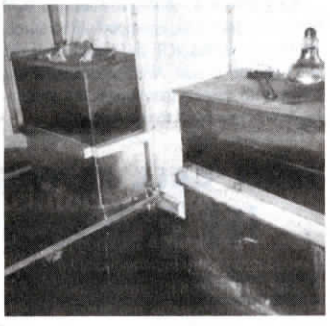
The building is 8 ft. wide and 12 ft. long. Floor, walls, and ceiling are insulated. There are two 350-gal. galvanized water tanks inside, one at each end of the building. The water level in each tank is controlled by a separate float.

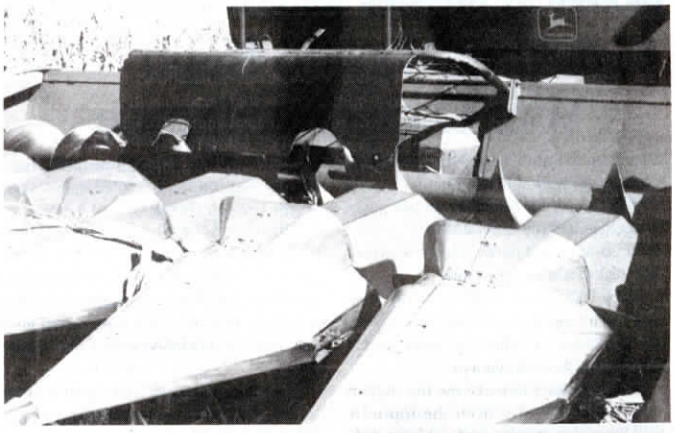
He cut two 2 by 2-ft. openings into the wall next to each tank for cattle to reach in and drink. Metal boxes mount inside each window and extend down into the water about 18 in. They keep cold air out of the shed. He also suspended two heat bulbs inside the building - one 250-watt and one 175-watt. An access door is built into one side of the shed.

"Even in the coldest weather, just a skim of ice appears on the water in the openings," says McKnight. "The shed is located at a point where three pens meet. I use one waterer for my 100 cows and the other for replacement heifers and calves. A big advantage is that the cows always have plenty of water available so they don't have to fight for water and risk slipping on ice which could result in aborted calves. Another advantage is that there's no chance for electric heating elements to come in contact with the water and shock the animals.

"The heat bulbs really help warm up the shed and cost less to operate than propane or natural gas. I made 'curtains' over the openings to help keep out cold air by cutting felt into 8-in. wide strips. I may wrap styrofoam around the boxes inside the shed for extra insulation."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick McKnight, Box 171, Jarvie, Alberta, Canada T0G 1H0 (ph 403 681-2165).





Corn-Saving Apron For Cornheads

It's a simple idea that pays off, says Charles Goodall, Sidell, Ill., about the "corn saver" he put on his Deere cornhead.

He wanted to stop the loss of ears thrown out of the cornhead as they entered the feed auger. But he needed to find a way to do it without blocking his vision of the header.

What he did was to make a frame out of steel tubing that fastens to the top back edge of the header. It extends out over the feed auger and is covered by steel mesh that stops pitchouts yet doesn't block the view. Hanging from the end of the steel frame is a large rubber flap made out of a piece of conveyor belting. It stops ears that are thrown forward.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Charles Goodall, RR, Sidell, Ill. 61876 (ph 217 288-9523).

Old Water Tanks Make Intensive Grazing System Work

A pair of 800-gal. steel tanks, salvaged from a water treatment plant, saved Ohio farmer Dave Dailey the expense of installing underground concrete tanks to supply water to cattle on pasture.

Dailey keeps two herds of Holstein replacement heifers - 55 cattle in each herd - on an intensive grazing system where cattle are regularly rotated between 70 by 130-ft. pastures. Water is pumped from a well through black plastic pipe to the aboveground tanks. From the tanks it gravity flows through plastic pipe to a "push pump", powered by an electric motor, that delivers the water to 40-gal. "watering tanks".

Dailey moves each herd to a new pasture every day and uses a 4-wheel ATV to move the portable watering tanks with them.

"Taking water to cattle instead of making cattle come to water is a more efficient way of grazing. There's always plenty of water available to the cattle during the day because the tanks automatically fill up overnight. There's a float valve on top of each stationary tank so that when it gets full, the well stops pumping. A timer automatically shuts off the pump if the well runs out of water. As the well fills back up, the pump starts filling the tanks again."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dave Dailey, Dailey Fencing and Supply, 5385 Edgemore Rd., Adamsville, Ohio 43802 (ph 614 796-6531).

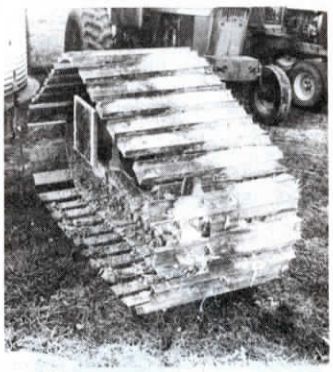
Photo courtesy Ohio's Country Journal

Modified Tracks Reduce Compaction

Illinois farmer Joseph Burt has used add-on tracks on his combine for years. He found a way to increase floatation of the tracks even more by widening them out with with 2 1/2-ft. long pieces of channel iron.

Burt bolted the channel iron pieces to the original track, which added about an extra foot of width to the track. He says the modification doesn't affect operation of the tracks and has the benefits of boosting flotation while at the same time reducing compaction.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Joseph C. Burt, Rt. 1 Box 232, Flora, Ill. 62839 (ph 618 662-4040).



Custom-bred Sows Become Money-Making Sideline For Them

Jerry and Alice Van Braak are making an extra buck or two in the hog business and their customers are getting back into business a lot faster thanks to a sideline business the couple recently started.

They sell custom-bred sows instead of open gilts to farmers who have depopulated.

"We breed sows to suit the customer's schedule," says Jerry who, along with wife Alice, owns Grandview Farms, Coaldale, Alberta.

For the service, the Van Braaks charge $125 over the price of an open gilt.

The Van Braaks plan to use the extra money generated from the sideline business to transition out of a commercial operation into a purebred breeding operation. (From the National Hog Guide).