Made It Myself

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4-WD, 4-Wheel Steer "Skidder" Tractor

"It works great for skidding logs and is articulated so it goes just about anywhere," says Roy Aebi, Dayton, Ore., who built a 4-WD, 4-wheel steer "log skidder" tractor using two truck rear axles.

The hydraulically-steered tractor is equipped with a heavy duty rear-mounted winch, front-mounted blade, and large 13 by 24 tractor tires. It's powered by a 100 hp Oldsmobile 88 V-8 Rocket gas engine. A 4-speed Chevrolet truck transmission chain-drives two heavy duty double reduction International truck differentials to reduce speed for more pulling power.

"I built it for less than $200 in 1955 before 4-WD tractors had been widely introduced," says Aebi. "I've used the tractor to skid logs 24 to 32-ft. long and up to 2 ft. in diameter. I winch logs up to the tractor, then drive forward. An old car differential chain drives a countershaft which gear-drives the winch. The countershaft is mounted on two arms fastened to a lever behind the tractor seat. I push or pull the lever to engage or disengage the winch and use another lever to lock the rear wheels while I'm winching a log up to the tractor. The cable is guided onto the winch by a pulley mounted near the top of a 5-ft. high A-frame. The pulley raises the front end of the log slightly off the ground. The axles are geared low so it has lots of torque. The only thing I'd change would be to use a larger gas tank than the 4-gal. tank mounted behind the tractor seat."

Aebi used channel iron and steel plate to build the tractor's frame and welded 24-in. tractor rims onto the 20-in., 10-hole truck hubs. He built his own bell housing to match up engine and transmission. He angled a pair of engine exhaust pipes ahead of the tractor. He used heavy gauge sheet metal to build the 7-ft. wide, 2-ft. high blade and bolted an old road grader blade onto the bottom edge. "I use the blade to push brush and scoop out dirt," notes Aebi.

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Pickup With Hydraulics Pulls Dump Trailer

"After having back surgery three years ago I realized I could no longer push round bales off my flatbed trailer, so I decided to add hydraulic power to my pickup and buy a dump trailer," says Pace Guthrie, Forest, Miss., who owns a Ford F-250 with a 4-speed transmission.

"I used a junked pto drive gear. I bought a new U-joint and welded a 7/8-in. rod to a broken tractor pto shaft to drive a Farmhand loader pump salvaged from a loader I had junked. I used 2 by 2-in. angle iron to build a frame under the truck to mount the pump.

"Since the truck shaft turns in the opposite direction of a tractor, I had to reverse the Farmhand pump. You can run it backward by putting the pto shaft on the opposite end of the pump shaft.

"I mounted the Farmhand valve and tank in the corner of the box and, with a little plumbing and quick couplers, was ready to plug into anything that would normally be powered by tractor hydraulics. I put the pump in and out of gear with a ball crank connected to the pump by a long rod.

"My hay trailer is a Hillsboro flatbed that has a dump cylinder. I extended the bed 2 ft. so I can haul 11 bales on our long hauls. I leave my front end loader in the field until I've got all the bales out, and then bring it back to the barnyard to stack the bales I've dumped.

"After three years I've had no problems. My next new truck will have a pto drive - I can't live without it now."

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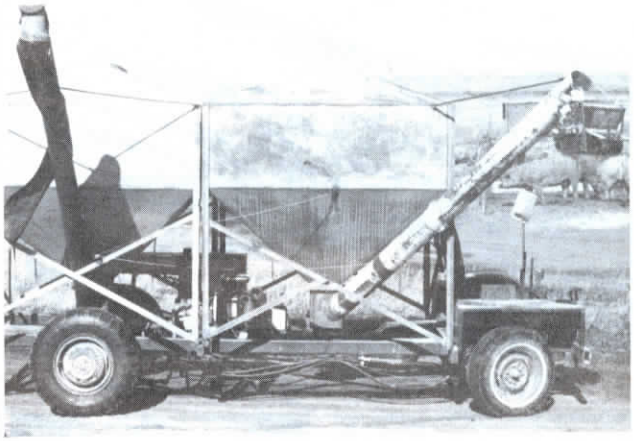

Self-Propelled Hydrostatic Drive Hog Feed Wagon

"It saves lots of time and labor," says Wayne Rodocker, Halsey, Neb., about the self-propelled hydrostatically-driven hog feed wagon he built from scratch.

"The tank", as Rodocker calls it, is powered by a 16 hp Briggs & Stratton engine salvaged from a riding lawn mower. It's equipped with two tanks salvaged from an old grain vacuum rig that each hold 100 bu. of feed. Rodocker sits in front and uses a directional lever to steer the rig along a fenceline. A dump scale bolted to the output end of the front tank's unload auger lets him dump measured amounts of feed on-the-go over a fenceline onto the cement floor of each sow pen. An 8-ft. long canvas "sock" mounted on the end of the rear tank's auger is used to drop feed into feeders for small pigs. The rig travels at up to 4 mph.

"I built it after my kids went to college and I was left to feed alone," says Rodocker, who operates a 160-sow outdoor farrow-to-finish operation. "It does the work of a feed mixer truck, but is more versatile because it has two separate tanks. The front tank is set up for sow feed and contains a separate compartment that holds 300 lbs. of medicated feed. A 2-in. dia. auger, activated by an electric switch, slowly adds medicated feed to the sow feed as needed. I drive non-stop along the fenceline and feed the exact amount of feed needed by each sow. The dump scale lets me drop 3 to 12 lbs. of feed at a time by pulling a lever. Colored flags mounted on the pens show how much to feed. A green flag means the sow has farrowed and gets three dumps of feed. A red flag means she hasn't farrowed and gets only one dump of feed.

"To feed small pigs, I get off the machine, stick the end of the sock into each pig feeder, and pull a spring-loaded cable that's hooked to an electric solenoid valve. When the feeder is almost full, I let go of the cable.

"I had been bucket feeding from a pickup, but it took too much time. I can feed 160 sows in about five minutes compared to 1 1/2 hours when I was bucket feeding and I had to grind a new load of feed twice a day. Each tank on my home-built feeder wagon holds two tons of feed so I can grind feed less often."

The feed wagon has three levers. The hydraulic steering lever works like an airplane steering stick. Rodocker pushes it left to turn left and right to turn right. Another lever controls forward and reverse direction. The third lever controls the augers. A dual hydraulic pump runs off the engine with one pump powering and steering the rig and the other pump running a pair of hydraulic motors that power the augers on each tank. A foot pedal lets Rodocker speed up or slow down. To steer the rig he connected a hydraulic valve to a two-way hydraulic cylinder mounted on front axle's tie rod.

Rodocker built the rear end with the axle, wheels, and rear end from a 1976 Ford 3/4-ton pickup and the front end by salvaging an axle from a Chevrolet van. The 16-in. high rear tires are cleated. He built the chassis from 2 by 4-in. channel iron. The augers are off an old feed mixer truck and the seat is from the van. A 12-volt battery is used to start the engine. On the left side of the wagon Rodocker mounted a fold-up catwalk. The rig is equipped with headlights, brake lights, and a light that shines on the augers for feeding after dark.

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