They Use Hog Manure To Generate Electricity

"Our set-up is probably the most successful system of its kind in the world because of its simplicity and economic feasibility," says Roy Sharp who, along with his son, David, generates electricity from hog manure.

The Tulare, Calif., farmers started making their own electricity in 1982 and now have the capacity to produce more than 240,000 kilowatt hours (kwh) of electricity per month with four generators at various locations. That's not only enough to power their 15,000-head hog operation, but they also sell the excess electricity to Southern California Edison as well. They're one of only three small electricity producers in California to do so.

"With electricity at a cost of 8 cents per kwh, it takes approximately three years to pay off a typical 100 kwh system that costs between $150,000 and $200,000 to set up," Sharp says. "Excess electricity can be sold back to the utility for 2 1/2 to 3 cents per kwh."

Sharps' system consists of covered lagoons that capture methane gas and feed it into diesel engines converted to burn methane. The engines power generators.

The system saves the Sharps an estimated $8,000 a month in electricity costs.

In addition to producing electricity, the system greatly reduces the amount of methane released into the atmosphere, which helps control odor and flies.

"We have three 75 kwh units and one 100 kwh unit operating at various locations," Sharp says. "Each one is site-specific for that particular location. We bought all the components from local distributors."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sharp Energy Inc., 24684 Rd. 148, Tulare, Calif. 93274 (ph 209 688-2051; fax 1111).

Photos courtesy: Bill Fleming

The Sharps' system consists of covered lagoons (top) that capture methane gas and feed it into diesel engines converted to burn methane (bottom photo). The engines power generators.

Apply a layer of foam to whatever you want to clean and let it soak in. After 15 minutes, you wash it off with a conventional power washer. An air compressor is used to power a small air driven pump which produces the foam.

Foam Cleaning System Cleans, Disinfects In Half The Time

A new foam cleaning system cleans barns and stock trucks in half the time and does a more thorough job of disinfecting, according to the company that introduced the new system at the recent Iowa Pork Congress in Des Moines.

The "Foam-It Clean" system consists of a two-wheel cart that carries a 15-gal. tank and a 30-ft. hose and nozzle. You need a 3 to 4 hp air compressor to power a small air-driven pump which produces the foam. The system operates at approximately 40 psi's. No electricity is required.

You simply apply a layer of foam to whatever you want to clean and let it soak in. After 10 or 15 minutes, you wash it off with a conventional power washer.

It works better than pre-soaking with a power washer since the foam adheres to the surface better and stays in place longer than a liquid. And it's easier to see where the detergent has - and has not - been applied, notes Foam-It Clean's Dan Jacques.

The system is also ideal for applying disinfectants, Jacques notes, since the foam stays in place so much longer.

Sells for $680. Detergent sells for $12 per gal.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Foam-It Clean, 3759 Broadmoor Ave. SE, Suite E, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49512 (ph 800 567-5420 or 616 285-6055; fax 4514).

Christen shoves nuts into a slot in a hopper as he rides along. Nuts fall through 4-in. sq. steel drop tube which he bolted onto machine's frame.

3-Pt. Nut Planter Built Out Of Old Gopher Poisoning Machine

When Iowa farmer Louis Christen decided to plant walnuts last fall, he built his own 3-pt. nut planter out of an old Elston gopher poisoning machine.

"It's easy to use. I just shove nuts into a slot in a hopper as I ride along," says Christen.

He removed the poisoning mechanism and cut off part of the machine's tunnel-forming "bullet" to make room for a 4-in. sq. steel drop tube which he bolted onto the frame. A cutting coulter mounts ahead of the 'bullet'. He had his brother build a 3-ft. wide hopper out of 1/8-in. thick steel and weld it onto the top of the tube. A pair of steel slides equipped with handles are used to control the size of the opening into the tube. The machine's press wheel closes the slit trench after nuts are planted.

He also attached a seat from a riding mower onto the frame, facing it backward.

"It isn't fancy but it does the job," says Christen. "I spent about $75 to build it. The tractor driver goes 1 1/2 to 2 mph as I plant the nuts 2 to 4 in. deep. A small steel plate mounted on each side of the press wheel allows me to rest my feet. The hopper holds about 2 1/2 bu. of nuts so it isn't designed to plant large acreages. Last year I used it to plant 8 acres of walnuts. I planted about 30 bu. of nuts per acre in rows 6 ft. apart. I also planted a few acorns. I received a lot of the nuts from people who hunt and fish on my property. I ask them to return the favor by bringing me nuts.

"I think a similar nut planter could be built out of a 2 or 3-bottom mounted plow by removing the moldboards and mounting a drop tube at the back of the frame."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Louis Christen, 18292 D Ave., Elgin, Iowa 52141 (ph 319 426-5230).

Side-Mount Post Hole Digger For Tractors

Improved visibility makes this new side-mount post hole digger from Shaver Mfg. a pleasure to use.

"It provides you with a great view of the auger at all times, which also makes it safer to use," says Ed Parsons.

The hydraulic-operated digger bolts to the tractor frame between the front and rear tires. The boom is raised or lowered by a hydraulic cylinder while a hydraulic motor is used to operate the auger. Both the cylinder and motor operate off tractor hydraulics. The boom hydraulically positions the digger inside the wheelbase of the tractor for transport.

The company offers two models of hydraulic post hole diggers - the 510 which can handle augers up to 12 in. in diameter, and the 1020 which can handle augers up to 24 in. in diameter.

Model 510 sells for $1,149 and model 1020 for $1,174. Prices do not include auger.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Shaver Mfg. Co., Box 358, Graettinger, Iowa 51342 (ph 712 859-3293; fax 3294).

Hydraulic-powered digger bolts to tractor frame between front and rear tires. Boom is raised or lowered by a hydraulic cylinder while a hydraulic motor is used to operate auger.

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