

Reader Letters



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lage in Madison, S. Dak. We completely restored the tractor and planter in time for the show in August 1997. This meant a lot to me since the tractor had been in our family for three generations. Here's the story behind it:

The front-mount 4-row planter and tractor were purchased in 1936 for \$136, after being repossessed by an implement dealer in our area. My uncle made some modifications to it, including taking the steel wheels off the planter and replacing them with airplane rubber tires. He also put truck tires on the rear of the tractor, feeling they made the tractor ride more level. The tractor and planter were used until my uncle retired in 1979. He parked it in the shed and it never ran again until I purchased it. We took it home, tore the tractor down to the frame, overhauled the engine, replaced the radiator, and blasted, primed, and repainted it (all by brush). It drew a lot of attention at Prairie Village since there are so few of these "rare birds" around anymore.

If anyone knows more about these planters, I'd much appreciate hearing from them. Thanks. (Ralph Tragesar, 300 North Front Street, Verdi, Minn. 56164; ph 507 368-4218)

FARM SHOW readers might be interested in an update on my "Flag Corn" (Vol. 18, No. 4).

I began making the patriotic ears in 1991. Since your report in FARM SHOW, I've sold



them in nearly all 50 states and 15 or more countries overseas. It takes about two hours to paint each ear, and I recently finished my 1,700th one. Price is \$10 per ear postpaid, including a stand to display them. I ship the same day or the day after I receive a check. (Duane E. Thompson, 175 East Gasset, Box 116, Roseville, Ill. 61473; ph 309 426-2253)

Here's a low-cost calf shelter I built out of metal garage doors that I got for free from a door installer in our area.

The 16 by 8 ft. shed is built around six posts



driven into the ground. I used four 10 ft. 2 by 4's for side, end and ceiling supports. Metal garage sections are screwed to the posts and 2 by 4's. I installed a couple old barn doors on top for a roof.

I ran a rail across the front about 3 1/2 ft. from the ground to allow calves in but to keep cows out. (Bob Romney, Box 209, Cremona, Alberta, Canada T0M 0R0; ph 403 637-2140)

We were very pleased with FARM SHOW's coverage of Jule Jacobson's "Supermower" built around an old swather (Vol. 22, No. 4). "Best of all, they really understood what I was talking about," he told me.

A gentleman from New Mexico called us soon after the article appeared. Jule was impressed by this as an indicator of the extensive reach of your fine magazine.

Incidentally, Jule's mower is working beautifully. (Doris and Jule Jacobson, P.O. Box

53, Porter, Minn. 56280; ph 507 296-4514)

I wanted to let FARM SHOW readers know about the latest developments with my cornhead crop dividers, called "Corn Shields" (Vol. 19, No. 6).

The triangular attachments bolt to each side of the combine header and deflect ears back



into the header, saving at least 3 to 5 bu. per acre in standing crops where corn borers are a problem.

GVL of Litchfield, Minn., which makes poly corn head snouts, recently signed a 5-year agreement with me to manufacture and distribute the shields. Three models will be available to fit virtually any corn head. The photo (that's me with the shields) shows the patented poly dividers that fit Deere, Case-IH and GVL headers. They sell for \$219 for heads fitted with GVL poly gathering shields and \$199 for heads with factory metal shields. You can reach GVL at 59711 Highway 12 West, Litchfield, Minn. 55355; ph toll-free 888 485-8411 or 320 693-8411. (Herald Barton, 19052 Kale Ave., Silver Lake, Minn. 55381; ph 612 327-2217)

Here are 2 inventions I came up with to make life easier around my Christmas tree farm.

The first is the root rake I use to pile up



brush for burning. I built an 8 ft. wide by 3 ft. tall frame out of 3 in. sq. box tubing and fitted it with nine 36 in. long tines on 9 in. spacings off an old chisel plow. It mounts on the standard front end loader arms on my Deere 5200 equipped with front assist, which is necessary to help push brush. I built the rake three years ago for under \$100, including the \$3 apiece I paid for the chisel tines I bought at an auction, and have pushed thousands of junk Christmas trees with it.

I also built this Christmas tree planter out of scrap metal. I built the frame out of 2 by 4 in. box steel and used 8 in. wheelbarrow wheels for press wheels on back to press the seedlings into the soil. I mounted an old plow coultter on front to open a furrow to drop the



seedlings into. I mounted an old spacer wheel built from rolled round tubing on the side. Every time it completes one revolution, as indicated by a white mark on the side, I know it

has traveled 9 ft. That's the spacing I use for trees. I used a plastic tote box for the seedling box on front and a seat off an old lawn mower on back for the operator. The planter mounts on any Cat. I 3-pt. and cost under \$100 to build. I usually plant between 2,000 and 4,000 Christmas trees a year. (Paul Ezra, 9341 S. St. Rd. 39, Winamac, Ind. 46996; ph 219 278-7219)

This truck-mounted hydraulic crane I built during the winter of 1953-'54 out of a semi tractor and heavy-duty army surplus parts is still going strong after 44 years, unlike a lot of commercial machinery I've used in that time. I've used the crane for all sorts of projects over the years, including putting a new steel roof on my house last fall.



The semi tractor is a 1947 IH KS-8 I bought used in 1953 with between 150,000 and 200,000 miles on it. It's powered by an IH "Black Diamond" OHV in-line 6-cyl. 269 cu. in. engine that was overhauled in 1952 and hasn't been opened since.

The truck is fitted with a standard 26 ft. boom with 16 ft. jib extension I fabricated from stock pipe and metal. A large boom cylinder was fabricated for me in Winnipeg. All other hydraulic components - hoses, fittings, cylinders, pumps and valves - were purchased from Princess Auto in Winnipeg.

Four 2 by 26 1/2 in. horizontal outrigger extension cylinders came from B-17 bomb bay doors. Four 4 by 18 in. vertical outrigger cylinders came from the landing gear out of a P-47 fighter plane. I operate the boom and outriggers with five army surplus "Berry" hydraulic pumps (12 gpm at 1,500 psi).

I've used the crane for heavy lifting on bridge construction and concrete work, loading and digging with a clam bucket, machinery rigging and grain bin construction. It's never balked at any job.

It cost \$5,000 to \$6,000 to build in 1953. If one were to build a comparable rig today, it would probably cost 10 times that amount. (Alan Kennedy, Box 10, Miami, Manitoba, Canada R0G 1H0; ph 204 435-2101)

I use this gas-powered tricycle to run to the store and drive in parades. It was originally electric powered.



I repowered it with a 3 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine and a centrifugal clutch like those used on go-carts and motor scooters. Purchased new for the project, the clutch cost more than the tricycle itself.

The tricycle's original belt-drive was converted to chain and sprocket drive.

I made a stick-type throttle which I operate with my hand from the driver's seat. By pushing the stick forward, the clutch engages and drives the cycle.

I also built this mini grader out of salvaged parts when I was on the farm and I still work it hard even though I've retired to town. Besides using it for regular driveway and yard chores, I also recently used it to shape ground for a swimming pool for a friend.

It's 9 ft. long with a main frame constructed of 2 1/2-in. sq. tubing. It's powered by an old International 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hp stationary en-



gine. I chose this engine because I had always wanted to hook up one of those old engines to a set of wheels just to see how it would work. The grader has a gearbox of an old 6-speed Wheelhorse garden tractor transaxle. A V-belt off the engine drives a jackshaft which is fitted with a #40 roller chain that powers the transaxle. The tandem drive wheels are 12-in. tires off an old garden tractor.

The 5-ft. blade was cut out of a full-size grader blade. Position of the blade is adjusted with a rear-mounted hydraulic pump and com-



ponents. The blade raises up to 1 ft. off the ground, can be adjusted up to a 45 degree angle either way, and can be moved 1 ft. out to either side with a hydraulic sideshift I rigged up.

Finally, I added a big magnet to the rear of the machine. It comes in handy for cleaning up nails, wire, screws and other unwanted hardware from roads and yards.

Besides being a real workhorse, the grader is also a big hit in parades I take it to. (Earl McEvers, 157 Ross St., White Hall, Ill. 62092; ph 217 374-6280).

I recently spotted a unique lantern that needs no batteries because it runs on salt water. All you need is a little ocean water to get the light going. It sells for \$49.95 and is listed in the Imagine Concepts catalog (23011 Moulton Pkway, Bldg #D-One, Laguna Hills, Ca. 92653 ph 714 587-1300). The ad stated that the high intensity fluorescent Salt Water Lantern is activated by placing a tablespoon of salt dissolved in water into the lantern's battery case, which is fitted with two anode power plates. The energy created by the interaction between the plates and the salt creates a low level voltage that lights the bulbs. Each set of plates lasts for at least 8 hrs. of use. Comes with replacement power plates. (J. Debus, P.O. Box 250, Cheyenne Wells, Co. 80810)

