**Floating posts can be spaced out across any wet area, with wire attached to posts.**

# Floating Fence Posts Stay Put In Moving Water

When farmers need someone to doze away brush along property lines in order to build fences in central Alberta, they often call on Calvin Foot.

"Often, we clear ground right up to a slough or marshy area that's under water at least part of the year," says the Red Willow, Alberta, farmer and cattleman.

"Building a fence that will hold and stay in place across an area with rising and falling water levels or even flowing water with ice chunks is difficult," he notes.

To help solve this problem, Foot and his wife, Rita, came up with what they call Wetland Posts.

They started with 5-ft by 4-in. fence posts made from recycled plastic. To these, they add a float capable of holding up 85 lbs. A 65-lb. concrete weight is fixed to the bottom of the post. An aluminum pin above the float, about 2 ft. from the bottom of the post, keeps the float from sliding up the post, and leaves 3 ft. at the top on which to fasten the wire. Another pin a couple of inches from the bottom is inserted before the post is set in concrete to keep the concrete weight in place.

**A 65-lb. concrete weight is fixed to bottom of post, with a float mounted above it.**

Foot says the posts can be spaced out across a wet area like a slough or even across a lagoon or dugout, and barbed wire can be stapled to the posts.

The weight at the bottom of the post holds it down and allows it to settle into the mud if the water level drops low enough. Once the water comes up again, the float raises the post, keeping the wire in place above the water.

If there's likely to be a lot of moving water, Foot runs a 3/16 wire cable from post to post, anchoring them to a solid T-brace on each side of the water. The bracing is necessary to keep the flexible floating part of the fence from loosening the rest of the fence when it moves.

"I use the plastic posts because they hold staples as well or better than wood, but they don't swell up when they get wet," he says. "Beavers won't bother them, either. Cattle might bump against the floating posts, but because they're not set solid, they don't rub on them like they would on posts set in the ground."

The Foots are making and selling Wetland Posts (recycled plastic post, with concrete weight and durable plastic float attached) in their area for about $110 Canadian, not including shipping costs. "They're pretty heavy, so shipping them very far isn't usually cost effective," he says. "We have shipped some quite a ways when we could put them on a truck already going the right direction, though."

Foot says he might be willing to license the patented idea in other areas.

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**May-June, 2001**


**Huyde uses special truck-mounted hydraulic lift jacks to lift both the house's basement footings and sometimes the floor.**

# Moving A House? Take Your Basement With You!

Ron Huyde, Canora, Sask., has been moving grain elevators and other big buildings for years. He figured that if he could move something as big as a grain elevator, why couldn't he move a house with the basement on?

During the past four years Huyde has moved more than 50 homes with their basements intact. He's also developed ways to move big farm shops, seed cleaning plants, and fertilizer storage buildings with their cement floors still on.

To move a house with the basement attached, Huyde uses special-designed hydraulic lift jacks. If the basement has a cement floor, he normally just moves the walls because the floors are too fragile. At the new location, the walls are lowered onto newly-poured footings.

A backhoe first digs a 2 to 4-ft. wide trench around the basement, down to the floor and part way under it. Then he replaces the backhoe's bucket with a 6-ft. long, hydraulically-operated "snout" that makes a series of 30-in. sq. holes in the dirt under the walls spaced about 12 ft. apart. The hydraulic jacks are placed inside these holes and used to raise the walls so they can be blocked up with steel I-beams laid crosswise under the house. He keeps jacking upward and adding I-beams until the basement is out of the ground. He then "wraps" cables around the basement to keep the walls from twisting.

At the new location, the hydraulic jacks are used to lower basement walls onto new footings. Then a new floor is poured, all the utilities are hooked back up, and the area around the basement is backfilled.

"People like to watch us work. We get some pretty big crowds and are often the 'talk of the town'," says Huyde. "A lot of people don't think it will work until they see it done. A house with its basement still on weighs a lot more so to support that extra weight we have to add extra wheels to the trailer. It takes eight extra wheels to move an average size house. The house also rides a lot higher so you also have to consider power lines when moving.

"From the customer's viewpoint, it's a pretty neat way to move a house because in only a couple days you can have the house back in almost exactly the same shape it was in before you moved it," says Huyde. "You have to lay new sewer lines before pouring the floor and do some other plumbing work. However, the power panels are usually located in the basement so you don't have to do a lot of wiring. The entire process takes only about four days. You can start moving the house on a Monday and by Thursday you're back to living exactly as before.

"It costs about $10,000 more to move a house and basement together than it does to move just the house. That's about as much money as you'd spend to build a new basement. However, you eliminate some costs because you don't have to plumb in new water and sewer lines or make new phone and electrical hook-ups. We've done jobs where we moved the cement floor with the house, but we had to add a lot of floor support, which gets expensive.

"We generally use 16 hydraulic jacks around a typical 32-ft. wide, 50-ft. long house. The key to these jacks is that they work on oil volume, not pressure. They all get the same amount of oil and therefore all go up at the same rate. It doesn't matter if one jack is supporting 500 psi and another one 4,000 psi - both will go up the same distance because they're both using the same volume of oil."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron Huyde, Royal Building Movers Ltd., Box 983, Canora, Sask., Canada S0A 0L0 (ph 306 563-5218).

**Photo shows a 42-ft. wide, 76-ft. long house with its basement on, loaded on an 80-ft. long trailer pulled by a semi tractor.**