Reader Letters

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commodities such as grain, silage, hay bales, or manure. The box is 8 1/2 ft. wide. Height varies from 4 to 7 ft., depending on model. Hydraulic lift side gates allow for fast, efficient clean-out. The box quick-releases off the trailer to allow all-year use of the trailer. ***(Jim Courtney, Courtney Berg Industries, Ltd., Box 365, Linden, Alberta, Canada T0M 1J0 ph 877 546-1816; Website: www.courtneyberg.com)***

Here's a photo of a tractor umbrella that I made from a discarded aluminum cot and a piece of linen that my wife sewed together. I use it on my 1973 International Harvester 454 tractor. The umbrella measures 44 in. wide by 5 ft. long. Each side of the umbrella frame pins into a metal "foot" that's bolted to each tractor fender.

The umbrella folds down like a convertible top, and can be quickly removed when not needed. It can also be tilted forward or backward by changing the position of the frame's back braces, which pin onto upright pieces at the back of each fender. ***(Merlyn Rieffer, 1864 Mothershead Lane, Desoto, Mo. 63020 ph 636 586-2901)***

Kids have a lot of fun with this Minneapolis Moline "playground tractor" that I made for my wife Fran's home-based day care business. It just may be the busiest tractor in the county.

The tractor is made out of exterior plywood and 2 by 4's. It measures 9 ft. high and 12 ft. long. I built it to resemble a 1960's G1000 model, which I used for many years before retiring from farming. I still collect Moline tractors.

The play tractor has a 10-ft. long metal slide on one side that kids enter from the cab. Enclosed steps on one side of the tractor lead up to the cab, which measures 4 ft. sq. and has a seat in back and a small box in front by the steering wheel. The cab floor is 4 ft. off the ground. There's plenty of room for kids to crawl under the tractor to play games. Toys and balls and bats, etc., can be stored in a compartment on front of the tractor. The engine area of the tractor is painted brown just like the engine on the real tractor.

The tires are used rear tractor tires with short 2 by 4's inside to push them out and make them look like they're full. I put a sheet of plywood on each side of each tire. ***(Robert Nennig, 814 4th St. NE, Little Falls, Minn. 56345 ph 320 632-5861)***

I cut off part of a front-mount cultivator from an old Case tractor and mounted it on front of my Yamaha 4-wheeler. I used it last spring in my garden to control weeds between rows of peppers, string beans, cabbage, and tomatoes.

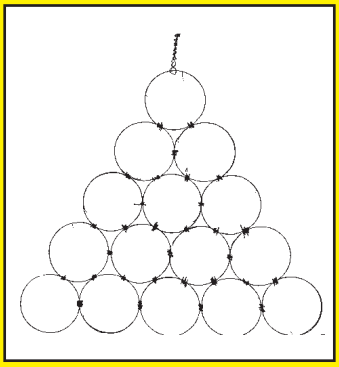
It consists of three coil sweeps on each side. The frame bolts to the front of the ATV. The shanks are raised and lowered by an electric winch that mounts on the ATV's front rack, just ahead of the handlebars. The winch is powered by a 12-volt battery pack. The shanks pivot on a pair of homemade clevis assemblies. Each side of the cultivator is free to pivot up or down independently. A pair of rubber wheels on each side of the cultivator provide depth control.

It works good. There's about a 10-in. gap between the two sets of shanks. I can cultivate 3 to 4 inches deep. ***(Stanley Broda, 10 Ideal Park Rd., Catawissa, Pa. 17820 ph 570 799-5407)***

I made a towbar for my 1983 Ford F-250 pickup that mounts on the front bumper. It consists of a V-shaped metal hitch off an old rotary hoe, which bolts onto a length of angle iron that attaches to the bumper. I use the hitch to tow the pickup behind my tractor. The hitch hinges on a pair of bolts, allowing it to be folded up out of the way. (***Gary Warner, 1900 N. Ave., Sheffield, Ill. 61361 (ph 309 452-4293)***

My son Kennley saved the cost of a new planter by converting a folding 8-row, 38-in. International Harvester Cyclo air planter into an 8-row, 15-in. soybean planter. He removed the row units and moved the planter's lift assist wheels and drive wheels in to leave 24-in. skip rows. Then he remounted the row units on 15-in. centers. This is my third year using it. He also modified the markers by shortening the outer half and then welding brackets to the planter to hold them. ***(Duane Wright, 46577 232nd St., Wentworth, S. Dak. 57075 ph 605 483-3461)***

I've found that old tires hooked together in a triangle-shaped pattern make a low-cost pasture drag to level out cow pies. Each tire fastens to the tires around it. I rotate cattle from pasture to pasture, and the drag levels the pies out so that they don't kill as much of the grass. Spreading out the manure this way adds a lot of



nutrients - I can see a big difference in how the grass greens up. I had tried everything from bed springs to logs, but this idea works the best. ***(Fred King, 1360 Texla Rd., Vidor, Texas 77662)***

I made a "window air diverter" for our bedroom that we use during winter months to draw cool air in over our bed.

My wife and I like to sleep in cool air. Rather than leaving the window open and filling the entire room with cold air, we leave the window open only two or three inches and use the diverter to direct cool air only to the part of the room where we sleep.

The air diverter is made out of 1/4-in. plywood and is 25 in. long by 7 in. high and 5 1/2 in. deep. It's open on the window side and has an opening set at an angle at one end. Both ends of the diverter's top side fit against the window frame. ***(Lyle Dawson, Rt. 1, Wheatley, Ontario, Canada NOP 2P0 ph 519 825-7339)***

We want to thank you for the article on the Ford Windstar vans. We had a '95 that blew the head gasket. We traded it off after fixing it. After reading your article about the warranty being extended I knew our van would have qualified for the new warranty. I contacted Ford Motor Co. and our dealer and even though this van no longer belonged to us, we were still reimbursed for the engine repair bill, about $800. Our local dealer was very cooperative. Thank you! **(Michael Young, 1920 Hurricane Church Road, Clinton, S.C. 29325 ph 864 833-4461)**

This home-built 2-wheeled trailer is designed to hold a roll of drainage tile vertically for transport and then tip it back in the field to unroll into a trench. To load a roll, the operator removes a reel from the

top end of the spool and then backs up and inserts the upright shaft through a 12-in. dia. pipe in the roll. In the field, a pair of hydraulic cylinders are used to tip

the spool horizontally to the ground.

The spool can handle pipe up to 6 inches in diameter. There's 3,300 ft. of tile on a roll, and on a busy day we go through three to four rolls a day.

I built it five years ago for less than $500. Commercial rigs cost $4,000 to $5,000 so I saved a lot of money. ***(Ken Reynolds, 15826 Shermanville Rd., Linesville, Pa. 16424 ph 814 683-4890)***

After reading a story on live traps in one of your past issues, I knew I could make a better one. My trap is made of steel and aluminum. A pan serves as a trip lever and has an adjustable weight on it to control how sensitive it is. A metal rod outside the trap is welded to the trip lever. A release arm extends through a guide and into a small hole in the bottom part of the door. The release arm can be moved into the door to further adjust sensitivity. There are large U-shaped handles on the door and at the ends of the trap, where a pole can be slid through allowing two people to carry the trap. By tieing a rope to the door handle and running it up and over a tree branch, I can open the door at a safe distance.

"I used angle iron and expanded metal to make two of these traps. Each one cost less than $100 to build. The traps can be set to catch pests as small as rats or as large as raccoons. I'd like to hear from manufacturers, dealers, or distributors. ***(James Polluch, 1350 Burkholder Dr., Alpena, Mich. 49707 ph 989 356-3230)***