

Concrete Lanes Keep Cows Healthier

Mud, mastitis and footrot. That's what you get when you walk 240 cows up and down a dirt lane twice a day to pasture, especially in a rainy area like the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

Jon Bansen discovered that the solution is simple but it takes a lot of work. He laid down a narrow concrete path that paid off in many ways.

"We have cleaner cows coming into the parlor, less mastitis, less footrot and better grazing," explains Bansen, a Monmouth, Oregon dairyman. "The cows are able to get to the grass easier in the wet spring, just when the grass is really coming on."

Intensive graziers know that if grass is clipped after it heads out, quality and growth will be negatively affected the rest of the season. While mud in the lanes may not stop cattle from getting to pasture, it slows them down and requires time consuming maintenance, not to mention tons of crushed rock. Bansen's concrete lane eliminates the problems and keeps the herd moving.

Bansen laid his first 600 ft. of lane in the 1990's. Last year, he poured several hundred feet more and he's planning another 500 ft. this summer.

Construction is simple. He builds 24-in. wide slip-forms out of 2 by 6 lumber and sets them in the ground on one side of his 8-ft. wide lanes. One set of forms will handle a truckload of concrete.

Two lengths of rebar provide extra strength and the 5-in. deep path is surface grooved for better traction. The remainder of the lane is gravel and used primarily as a passing lane. With light use, it requires only minimal repair.

The biggest benefit is animal health.

"So often, the mastitis strains you get from mud are the nasty ones, and you end up culling the cow," says Bansen. "If these lanes save one cow a year, they are worth it."

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Jon Bansen's cows don't have to walk on mud since he laid down a narrow concrete path. "Cows stay cleaner and have less mastitis and footrot," he says.



James Finch built this 3-pt. mounted hitch that lets him use his 4-ft. Bush Hog mower on roadside ditches and stream banks. Hitch hinges in middle so it flexes up or down.

Side-Mount Mower Hitch Reaches Into Ditches

"I built a heavy duty 3-pt. mounted hitch that lets me use my 4-ft. Bush Hog mower on roadside ditches and stream banks," says James Finch, Roxbury, N.Y.

The hitch hinges in the middle so it flexes up or down. The main part of the hitch is made from heavy wall 4-in. sq. tubing and the hinged part from 3-in. tubing. The mower itself rides on three small wheels and the hitch on a single wheel.

The mower is pto-driven off a right angle gearbox that Finch salvaged from an old Deere corn chopper. He also used some of

the chopper's driveshafts and universal joints. He had to rotate the gearbox on the Bush Hog 90 degrees.

A hydraulic cylinder with a length of chain attached to it is used to raise or lower the mower. "I can use the 3-pt. to raise the entire unit or the cylinder to raise just the Bush Hog," says Finch, who uses an International 2424 tractor to pull the unit.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, James Finch Welding, 2787 Lower Meeker Hollow, Roxbury, N.Y. 12474 (ph 607 326-7529).



Mower is pto-driven off a right angle gearbox and is raised or lowered by a hydraulic cylinder that has a length of chain attached to it.

Push-Type Garden Seeder

If your garden keeps getting bigger and bigger – or if you produce garden vegetables commercially – you'll like this push-type seeder from Earthway.

It furrows, plants, covers the seed, and marks the next row all in one pass. It comes with six seed plates for planting corn, peas, beans, carrots, beets, radishes and more than 20 other varieties of herbs, vegetables and flowers. Five optional seed plates are available for other crops.

It marks rows up to 30 in. apart. An easy-to-set depth gauge wheel keeps you from planting too deep so the entire crop emerges at the same time.

Sells for \$69.95 from Johnny Seeds or is available through some retail outlets (call Earthway at 219 848-7491 or go to www.earthway.com for the name of an outlet).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Johnny's Selected Seeds, 184 Foss Hill Road, Albion, Maine 04910 (ph 207 437-4301; Website: www.johnnyseeds.com).



Human-powered Earthway planter furrows, plants, covers the seed and marks the next row, all in one pass.

Lazy Susan Nuts & Bolts Holder

"It holds a wealth of parts but doesn't take up much room," says Arvin De Cook, Sully, Iowa, about the "Lazy Susan" nuts and bolts holder he made for his shop out of plastic grain elevator buckets.

"Someone gave me 200 of the 9 by 6-in. buckets. I had been having trouble keeping track of all the nuts and bolts and small parts in my shop so I came up with a simple design that holds 51 of the buckets.

"I bolted an old truck axle to a 20-in. truck rim and then made a 6-sided housing out of sheet metal that welds to the axle. The elevator buckets bolt to the housing.

"What's nice about this setup is that I can put it in the corner without taking up a lot of wall space. And it was cheap to build since I already had all the parts."

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Arvin De Cook made this "nuts and bolts holder" out of plastic grain elevator buckets. "What's nice about this setup is that I can put it in the corner of my shop without taking up a lot of wall space," he says.