"Hoop-Type" Drive-Over Gate

Darryl Enns uses a tractor to feed cattle in his feedlot, but he grew tired of always having to stop to open and close the gate. So he came up with a way to simply drive up and over the fence using steel hoop building trusses - the same ones used to make the innovative hoop buildings he's been selling for the past couple of years (Vol. 26, No. 4).

The 42-in. wide trusses are made from 2 by 2-in. steel tubing. Enns uses four trusses and welds rungs made out of 1 1/2-in. sq. tubing between them, placing the rungs 6 in. apart. The trusses are supported by welded-on vertical legs made out of the same sq. tubing as are the unload "points" at each end of the ramp. The unit can be adjusted to any gate opening by varying the placement of the trusses.

The result looks like a rounded ladder that starts on the ground a few feet away from one side of the fence and ends on the ground a few feet away from the other side.

"It works great for feedlots and saves a lot of time going in and out with your tractor," says Enns. "I placed the gate that I built alongside my fenceline feed bunks. I use my Ford 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader to drive over the gate and dump silage into the bunks.

"The four trusses sell for $850 (U.S.) plus S&H. It takes about 600 linear ft. of 1 1/2-in. sq. steel tubing to build the rest of the gate, which will cost an additional $400 to $500. One good day of assembly and you'll have a handy drive-over gate for less than $1,500.

"The gate I built is about 15 ft. long and 10 ft. wide and is 3 ft. high at the top. It's built high enough that even with 2-ft. high snow drifts cattle will still see the bars and not want to walk over it. It's high enough that cattle will never try to run over it like they might with a conventional flat cattle guard."

"Enns says that when building the ramp you want to make sure the two inside trusses are on the same spacings as your tractor wheels in order to provide adequate support. "On my ramp the two outside trusses are 2 ft. apart, with 6 ft. of space between the two sets. It's strong enough that I can drive my 12,000-lb. tractor loaded with a 1-ton round silage bale over it with no problem.

"The only limitation is that if you have a 2-WD tractor you may have to lower the ramp's profile or the rear wheels won't be able to get enough traction to climb the ramp, especially if the tractor is carrying a load."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Darryl Enns, Silver Stream Shelters, Box 393, Neche, N. Dak. 58265 (ph 877 547-4738).

Darryl Enns used steel hoop building trusses to make this drive-over gate that leads into his feedlot. "It's high enough that cattle will never try to run over it," he says.

A winch-powered mechanism makes it easy for Richard Martin to fold and unfold the 5-ft. long ramp on back of his trailer.

Easy-To-Handle Fold-Out Ramp

Have you ever struggled with a heavy metal ramp on the back of a trailer? Richard Martin decided to fold his ramp in half using a winch-powered mechanism that folds and unfolds the ramp.

Before his modification the 5-ft. long ramp stood at a 90-degree angle at the back of his trailer. "I never liked the high profile and the wind resistance created drag on the road." Martin's solution was to cut the ramp in half and hinge it together. But then the ramp was tricky to deploy because the two parts would often swing closed on his hands. "We got our hands pinched a number of times, so I figured we'd better come up with something else," he says.

"An old grain auger winch raises and lowers the ramp while a chain on the opposite side straightens it out as it drops down," he says. Despite being in two parts the ramp is still strong enough to accommodate his Deere Gator and other heavy loads. "It's pretty heavy duty. We haven't had any problems with it and I don't have to struggle any more lowering that ramp."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richard Martin, 542 1800th St., Lincoln, Ill. 62656 (ph 217 314-3349).

Cloth Strips Stop Wolf Attacks

Strips of cloth hung from fence wire or lengths of twine can be used to protect large areas from wolves, say researchers for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Called a "fladry" fence, the idea has been used for centuries in Eastern Europe where hunters would hang large sections of fladry in the shape of a "V." They would drive wolves into the narrow end of the "V" and shoot them. Though desperate to escape, the wolves wouldn't cross the fladry fence.

The fence consists of ordinary strips of cloth cut to 4 in. wide by 20 in. long. These strips are hung from fence wire or heavy twine about 17 in. apart with the bottom of the cloth strips hanging only a couple inches off the ground. The strips of cloth create a psychological barrier the wolves won't cross.

Recently the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service experimented with the fencing in Idaho. Workers hung nine miles of fladry fencing around a ranch just outside the town of Salmon, which covered a large area with an active wolf population. The simple barrier kept all wolves out for two months. After that some wolves started to cross.

Researchers think fladry fence could be used to protect livestock at vulnerable times, such as calving.

Strips of cloth hung from fence wire create a psychological barrier that wolves won't cross.

(More information is available online at: http://www.defenders.org).

Rare Spotted Hog Breed Making A Comeback

Gloucester Old Spot hogs are one of the oldest recognized swine breeds. Thanks to the efforts of a number of small producers in North America and Great Britain, the breed is coming back from the brink of extinction.

Gloucesters are large white pigs with black spots. British breeders have selected toward less black over the years and in Great Britain, at least, the breed is predominantly white with only a spot or two. The breed also has heavy drooped ears that almost cover the face of mature animals.

The breed was traditionally kept in orchards where the pigs lived by foraging for windfall apples and pears. Folklore says that the breed's spots were caused by bruises from fallen apples.

By some reports, a loosely organized Gloucester Old Spot breed society was formed in 1855. The Gloucester Old Spots Breed Society, the official breed organization today, was formed in 1913 and the first pigs were registered right away. The Gloucester breed became rare after World War II, as producers began moving swine indoors. The breed nearly became extinct in the 1960's.

Kelmscott Farm, a rare breed conservancy group at Lincolnville, Maine, has taken a lead role in increasing Gloucester numbers in the U.S. In 1995, Kelmscott imported 20 Gloucester piglets to reestablish the purebred population in America. Since that time, they've continued to produce and sell breeding stock, mostly to small producers with a similar interest in preserving the breed.

Producers describe the breed as docile and extremely hardy, able to withstand harsh weather and adverse conditions. Some say it's the ideal pig for pasture production on low input or organic farms because of its ability to graze and forage. Sows are prolific milk producers and known for producing large litters of fast growing piglets. The breed has a higher than average body fat ratio, which may be one of the reasons it can thrive outdoors. It also explains the reputation for producing more flavorful meats. And why it's seen as undesirable by modern hog producers striving to produce the leanest pork possible.

Gloucester Old Spot hogs are one of the oldest recognized swine breeds.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kelmscott Farm, 12 Van Cycle Road, Lincolnville, Maine 04849 (ph 207 763-4088; fax 207 763-4298; website: www.kelmscott.org).