

Stand-On Skid Steer

"I design and build a machine called a Handy Loader. This machine will lift over 1,000 lbs., yet is under 4 ft. wide and just a little over 6 ft. long," says Larry Matthews of Handy Machines LLC, Arundel, Maine.

He says the Handy Loader is built much heavier than other stand-on skid steers on the market and runs much smoother because he uses displacement drives and has a dedicated drive circuit so the drive and lift circuits don't interact as much. Matthews also says his machine also has about three times as much hydraulic oil so it runs cooler and with more capacity for powering snowblowers or other high-demand attachments.

It has two auxiliary hydraulic outlets so it can run several attachments such as a post hole auger, snowblower, trencher, tree spade, bush hog, and several more.

The loader is powered by a 25 hp. Kohler liquid-cooled motor and three hydraulic pumps – two variable displacement pumps to drive the tracks and one 14 gal. per minute auxiliary pump for bucket lift and attach-

ments. The machine has a self-leveling bucket, head light, and 7 gal. fuel tank. All pivots points are greasable thanks to the 32 grease fittings on the machine. The bogie wheels were milled from 5-in. dia. solid bar stock with sealed bearings on each end.

"This machine is ideal for cleaning stalls or doing any other work where you have to get into difficult places. By placing the operator standing on the back, we are able to get off the machine even when the bucket is elevated," says Matthews.

He just started selling the machine last fall. Equipped with tracks and a bucket, it sells for \$13,800. He's also working on a wheeled unit, and an all-electric version. He plans to only sell direct, furnishing buyers with blueprints and detailed parts lists to make maintenance easier if they want to do it themselves.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Matthews, Handy Machines LLC, 410 Old Post Road, Arundel, Maine 04046 (ph 207 590-6170; email lmatt@adelphia.net).



Handy Loader is built heavier than other stand-on skid steers on the market and also runs much smoother, says Larry Matthews.

In-Home Elevator Uses Forklift Mast

"It's always ready to go, and I never have to worry about a power failure," says Jack Michael, Ohlman, III., who built a home elevator out of a salvaged forklift mast. It lifts from his tuck-under garage up to the main floor of his house.

He bought the forklift from a dealer for \$300 and removed all the unneeded parts, anchoring the mast to the concrete floor of his garage. He cut a 5 by 8-ft. opening in the house floor to make room for the elevator cage, which is made of plywood, with paneling on the inside. It has bi-fold doors which fold to the inside only. To steady the cage, he made use of conventional door tracks and carriers, mounted vertically inside the elevator shaft.

The forklift mast has a single cylinder capable of lifting 1,800 to 2,000 lbs. He used 4-in. channel iron to build a 5 by 8-ft. metal frame that attaches to the forklift tines and matches the opening in the floor. A wire leads

to switches that mount in each door.

The forklift is powered by an electric-hydraulic power unit driven by 12-volt batteries, which he keeps charged with a trickle charger.

The forklift's hydraulic release lever and mechanism is unchanged. To operate it, Michael rigged up some pulleys and then used enough rope to reach the height the elevator goes. To go down, all he does is pull on the rope. A motion sensor turns on a light whenever a person enters the cage.

On the upper floor he has built-in safety protection to stop the elevator at the upper level. When the elevator is at the lower level, its roof serves as a floor for the upper level. When the elevator is raised, you can walk through it to get to a large renovation area above Michael's garage.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jack Michael, P.O. Box 155, Ohlman, III. 62076 (ph 217 563-2215).



Homemade elevator was built out of a salvaged forklift mast (left). When the elevator is down (right), floor is level and the family walks right over the top of it.

Sludge Gauge Warns Of Full Septic Tank

You can tell at a glance if a septic tank is full with this simple "sludge gauge" from inventor Roger Perkins of Billings, Mont.

Without using a smelly probe, it'll tell you when you need to get the tank pumped out. This device will help keep sludge from plugging the drain field.

The Sludge Sentinel consists simply of a sealed length of pvc pipe that slides up and down in a collar fitted to the vent pipe above the tank. As the level of fluid and sludge rises, so does the pipe.

A special lining at the bottom of the collar minimizes friction. You can tap the pipe when you check it. If the pipe settles high, this lets you know the tank needs to be pumped.

"The key to success is adjusting the weight of water in the pipe based on the sludge accumulation," he says.

Perkins plans on selling a kit and instructions by internet orders for less than \$50.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Perkins, 6143 Victoria Lane, Billings, Mont. 59106 (ph 406 655-4660; email: aquoroger@rbbmt.org).

Sealed length of pvc pipe slides up and down in a collar fitted to vent pipe above tank. As the level of fluid and sludge rises, so does the pipe.



Round Bale Feeders "Beefed Up" With Treated Lumber

When it's round bale feeder versus animal and manure, the feeder usually loses the battle.

That's why Keith Alft of Tigerton, Wis., decided to beef up his feeders by bolting treated wood timbers around the perimeter of his feeders to hold them above manure.

The timbers have the added benefit of reinforcing the feeders against damage by animals. The idea must work - because the first feeder he modified back in 1980 for use with Texas Longhorns is still in use. "For a feeder that's about 25 years old, it still works good," he says.

Over the years, he's modified three more feeders and all are still in good shape.

Although Alft says the lumber makes the feeders heavier, the added lifespan makes the modification worth the extra hassle. "This process will triple or more the life of a feeder," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Keith Alft Jr., N2604 County Rd. J, Tigerton, Wis. 54486 (ph 715 535-2865).



Keith Alft beefed up his round bale feeders by bolting treated wood timbers around the perimeter to hold them above manure.

