

Cow Catcher Makes Cattle Work Safer

Alvin Findlay's cow catcher provides the security and safety of having a strong cage between himself and protective mother cows during calving time.

The Snowflake, Manitoba man and his hired man, Les Funk, built this 12 by 15-ft., open-bottom cage out of 1-in. steel tubing. Findlay lifts and carries the cage on his tractor's forks, dropping it over the cow, separating her from her calf. He then gets out of the tractor, and tags the calf without having to worry that the cow will attack him.

"There have been many instances of people getting killed or badly roughed up by cows during calving time, but that doesn't have to be the case," says Findlay, a 77-year-old who has had both his knees replaced. This puts him at a particular disadvantage, but he emphasizes that any risk is too much.

If the calf needs to be brought to the barn to warm up, he places it in a 6 by 1 1/2-ft. tapered front carrier compartment he calls the "crib." The crib has access gates at the ends for working in either the interior or exterior of the cage.

There's also a large swinging gate inside the cage for crowding the cow along one side.

A perimeter wall gate, which is spring-loaded and self-locking, allows Findlay to release cows from the cage on foot. He says he plans to add a walk-through gate in the future.

Once a cow is captured, she can be forced to walk in the cage as he drives along with the tractor.

"We've used the cage for four years now, and I can't say enough good about it," Findlay says. "We calve about 250 cows and use it for pretty-near every cow that calves. We've had as many as four newborn calves in the crib at one time and up to 5 cows at once in the cage. The big thing is to catch the calf before he gets really mobile. To make it easier, the presence of my dogs make the cows not want to leave the side of their calves."

In case the cows are elusive, he sets up "pockets" of round bales standing on end, at the start of calving season, which he uses to corner them in.

Findlay points out that the cow cage has multiple uses, too. He uses it if he needs to move a handful of cows a short distance from one pasture to another... for example, across the road. And he also uses it to catch bulls.



Alvin Findlay lifts and carries this home-built 12 by 15-ft. cage on his tractor's forks, dropping it over the cow to separate her from her calf.

"Even if they're trying to get away from you, you just plunk it down over them as they're moving, and they're caught," he explains.

Without getting out of his New Holland TV145 bi-directional tractor, Findlay uses his 8 1/2 by 5-ft. forks to easily pick up or release the cage. "I used to have a TV140 that worked excellent for this, but the TV145 still

handles it well - although I'd like to relocate the weights from the wheel wells on the engine end, to out behind the tractor. This would better counter-balance the weight of the cage at the end of the loader forks," he muses. "The cage weighs 2,100 lbs."

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"Made-It-Myself" Sprayer Looks Factory-Built

The sprayer built by Brent Pitcher, Montrose, Ill., looks like it came from the Case-IH factory except that the company doesn't make an "Exterminator 442".

With an air-conditioned R42 Gleaner combine cab, custom-fabricated hood, and a Steiger tractor grill, this sprayer definitely looks factory-built. Pitcher painted it red because, "I'm an International kind of guy."

His wife named it the "Exterminator" and Pitcher added the 442. "I've always wanted an Oldsmobile 442," he says, laughing. "I have a 442 now. It's just an International 442 instead."

Pitcher says he spent about \$10,000 on it and estimates a similar-sized new sprayer would cost around \$100,000.

He built the Exterminator with the help of sons Jason and Jordan and a couple of neighbors.

An '87 International school bus provided

the frame, diesel turbo 360 motor and Allison 543 automatic transmission. The 2-speed rear axle came out of a Franklin log skidder that had outboard planetary drives with a 25:1 ratio. Its top speed is 28 mph.

The front axle is actually the rear axle off a 1660 IH combine. The rear rims for the 14.9-46 tires were custom-made for the rear axle.

The 700-gal. tank, 30-ft. booms, pump and controllers came off an old pull-type sprayer. Pitcher uses the Exterminator on his corn, beans and wheat.

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With an air-conditioned R42 Gleaner combine cab, custom-fabricated hood, and Steiger tractor grill, Brent Pitcher's sprayer definitely looks factory-built.



Giant Conveyor Moves A Mountain Of Grain

By Janis Schole, Contributing Editor

FARM SHOW reader Jim Armstrong of Westlock, Alta., recently wrote us to say we should contact the Peterson brothers of Jarvie, Alta., for a story about their amazing grain conveyor.

The Peterson brothers - Don, Wayne, Len and Ervin - get a lot of use out of the 100-ft. long, self-propelled unit they built from a 20-in. dia. steel tube and a 30-in. wide Chevron belt.

The Petersons needed a high-capacity grain mover for their joint farming operation and started by building the main frame from 4 by 4 by 1/4-in. steel tubing.

"This rig's capacity is up to 300 bu. per minute," Don explains. "If the angle is really steep, it might drop down to about 150 bu. per minute."

It rides on dual wheels from a truck, with the wheelbase extended to 13 ft. The smaller set of wheels is from a 3/4-ton truck with 16-in. tires.

The conveyor is driven by a 400 Ford engine that's coupled to a hydrostatic pump. At the top of the conveyor, there's a hydrostatic motor from a 760 Massey combine, as well as a baler gear box, which reduces the speed and drives the 20-in. drum with rubber friction pads. The belt is tightened lineally, by sliding the bottom section of the pipe down over top of the main tube, Don explains.

A hydraulic motor drives a transmission

to the rear end, which provides speed options up to a maximum of about 7 mph.

When moving the unit, the Petersons usually walk beside it, operating the waist-level controls. Since there is no seat, they sit on the frame if they move it any distance.

One hydraulic pump drives the machine. They switch back and forth as needed from the belt circuit using a lever on the variable speed pump to control the speed.

Another pump supplies oil for the lift and steering. The scissor-type lift is a telescopic cylinder from a gravel truck box.

The top end of the conveyor can be brought down to ground level for servicing. There's a removable deflector on the end that deflects straight down. It's removed when they're filling a large quonset building, allowing the grain to shoot off the end another 15 to 20 ft.

Another feature of the rig is its catwalk, which allows the Petersons to easily open bins and look into them. One-inch pipe runs the length of the catwalk and loops back again; it's dual-purpose, since it cools the oil that flows through it, plus serves as a hand-rail and guardrail for the catwalk. As a result, it's also a hand-warmer in the winter.

The main purpose for building the rig was to handle peas without shattering them, but it also works great for wheat. They generally run the conveyor at a 40 to 45-ft. height, but the unit is designed to go up to 50 ft.



The Peterson brothers built this 100-ft. long, self-propelled grain conveyor from a 20-in. dia. steel tube and a 30-in. wide rubber belt.

According to Don, added bonuses of having this unit are, they also use it as a crane to lift and move objects weighing up to 1,000 lbs. (such as grain augers on their dryer) and as a scaffold for high buildings or trimming trees. In addition, they have sat at the top of it.

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Conveyor is driven by a 400 Ford engine that's coupled to a hydrostatic pump.