

Custom Applicator Uses Dredge To Pump Lagoons

Custom manure applicator Eric Dresbach has a specialty that keeps him in high demand. He uses a dredge to get to the bottom of lagoons and open pits, pumping up the sludge and sand that can reduce a lagoon's volume. For Dresbach, the dredge is a moneymaker and a business-building tool.

"Dairy lagoons especially tend to lose capacity over time because the solids are so difficult to remove," says Dresbach. "The only way to do it has been to pump out the liquids and then break a wall and bring in a bulldozer or big tractor. It's a sloppy, expensive job. I can use my dredge to pump the sand and sludge into a tank or sand separator and then spread the sludge on fields."

Land application of manure and other biosolids is a good business for Dresbach, who started out hauling grain and switched to biosolids. His slogan in manure application is, "If it smells, we knife it in." He points out that manure is a resource that only has value in the ground. Odor in the air means nutrients are going to waste. That odor is also likely to bother friends and neighbors living around the farm site or spreading area. Keeping down odor satisfies customers and helps build his business.

"In the same way, when you use a pump

to aerate a lagoon to get the sludge into solution for pumping, you put odor into the air," says Dresbach. "The dredge helps us conserve nutrients and protect the environment."

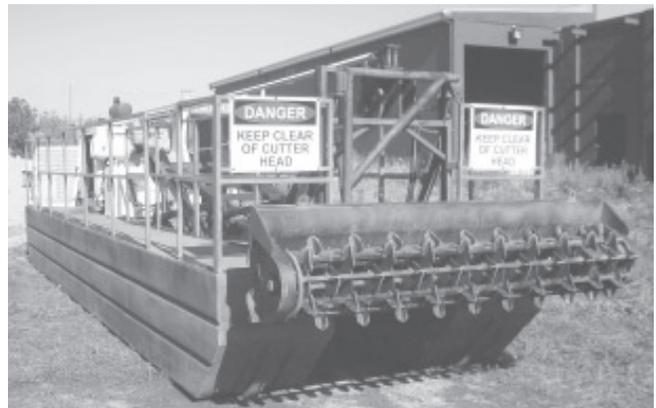
The pontoon boat is outfitted with a cutterhead that operates at variable speeds and a 1,000-gal. per min. pump. A gripper winch on up to 1,000 ft. of cable pulls the dredge across the lagoon as it works. Dresbach controls the speed of the winch, the depth and speed of the cutterhead and the speed of the pump mounted behind the head.

"We can operate 15 ft. below the water surface and take out a more uniform product," says Dresbach. "I put the cutter head into the sludge and can physically see the product as we are pumping it. I can dial the speed up or down to make it as thick as we want."

Dresbach says every livestock situation is different. While dairy sludge is heavy and often has a high sand content, hog manure solids are light and fluffy and easier to pump. Working with the sledge has been a learning experience and one he has had to do on his own. While similar dredges are used in industrial settings, they are rare in agriculture.

"To my knowledge, I am the only operator in Ohio using a dredge in manure lagoons," says Dresbach.

The dredge is only one of his tools. He has



Custom manure applicator Eric Dresbach uses a dredge to get to the bottom of lagoons, pumping up the sludge and sand that often reduces a lagoon's volume.

four JCB tractors rigged with 7,300-gal. honey wagons and 9-shank toolbar applicators for injecting manure. He uses a large tank for primary pumping. Five semi-trailers transport manure from the tank to the honey wagons in the field. He also uses three tractors for lagoon pumping and doing applications, as well as three trash pumps for pulling stored manure out from under hog barns.

"Our goal is to move at least 200,000 gal. of manure per day," says Dresbach. "We pull manure samples every hour as the manure is being loaded to let customers know exactly what nutrient levels are being spread," says Dresbach. "That lets them adjust their fertil-

ity program as needed."

In addition to his land application business, Dresbach consults with livestock producers in the design, construction, renovation and operation of manure lagoons. He also consults with new custom manure applicators on business entrepreneurship, operations and growing their business.

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They Cater To Vacationing Horsemen

Providing a facility for horse enthusiasts to vacation with their horses looks to be a profitable new enterprise for Jodi and Ron Hansen, Leonard, N. Dak. Their Sheyenne Oaks Horse Camp and RV Park borders the Sheyenne National Grasslands Park and offers amenities for both humans and horses.

"It's such an awesome area," says Jodi Hansen. "When this property came up for sale last fall, we felt like it should be a campground. So many people are missing out on an opportunity to visit this area and ride."

With no vehicles allowed in some parts of the Grasslands, Sheyenne provides easy access for people who want to bring their RV, trailer or tent and spend time exploring.

Hansen's husband, Ron, grew up in the area and often spent entire days riding in the Grasslands. The Hansens and their five children all ride horses and operate a horse stable and dog kennel business at their

home. After purchasing the new property last year they set up 21 roomy sites for campers and horse trailers with full hookups, and also built a row of individual 12 by 12-ft. corrals for horses. The shower house includes three individual units with geothermal heated floors and cozy knotty pine walls. Propane, coffee, ice and other convenience items are available at the camper office.

The Hansens also have certified hay for sale that they bale themselves. Many national areas such as the Grasslands require clean hay to prevent the spread of weeds.

"This area is good for beginners, as well as advanced riders," Hansen says. "They can ride in the open or go into the trees and take some of the steeper hills. We have all kinds of terrain here."

The 70,000-acre grasslands has 27 miles of trails that vary from cow paths to the gravelled North Country Scenic Trail, which also attracts hikers, bikers, bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts. The best way for riders to explore is off the trail, occasionally criss-



Jodi and Ron Hansen started up a business that provides facilities for horse enthusiasts to vacation with their horses.

crossing the trail to keep your bearings, Hansen suggests.

For those who don't have horses, the Hansens offer horses and trail rides, as well as wagon rides behind a team of Percherons.

In addition to full hookup sites, there are primitive sites for tents and two rental houses. Wireless Internet is available throughout the RV Park. Rates for camper hookups start at \$25 for weeknights with discounts for long term camping.

"We're at stage one," Hansen says about the campgrounds. "There will always be a reason to check back for new additions."

The Hansens plan to add music evenings, a tipi, chuckwagon and other events and amenities in the future.

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"Do It Yourself" Log Furniture Business

When Scott and Wendy Sullivan decided to make furniture for their rustic home, they weren't impressed with the tools on the market. Scott, an engineer, built his own. They worked so well the couple started building furniture to sell.

"The tools caught on more than the furniture," Sullivan laughs. "We use a better grade of aluminum, which is stronger and 35 percent lighter."

Their tenon cutters make tenons strong enough to build buffalo fences yet stylish enough to build log furniture and railings. In 2002, the Sullivans started manufacturing and selling their woodworking tools through their new company, Lumberjack Tools.

Some customers buy the tools to make furniture for themselves. Others buy them

to make furniture for sale.

The tenon cutters have two blades, which keep the log rail in the center and balanced, plus it reduces how hot the tool gets and extends blade life. Sullivan's tenon cutter has an in-sight measurement and radial rings every half-inch, to cut the tenon to a specific length. He makes three types of cutters. The Pro series tenon cutters make radius-style tenons and come in five sizes from 1/2-in. to 2-inch diameters, ranging from \$99 to \$189. They can be powered with an 18-volt cordless or a 1/2-in. electric drill. The industrial series models come in 60-degree or 90-degree (no shoulder) styles ranging from 3/4-in. to 3-in. and cost between \$239 and \$399. They are designed to run on a heavy-duty 1/2-in. drill.

One customer made tenons on 5-in. diam-



Scott Sullivan designed his own tools to make furniture for his home. They worked so well he and his wife started manufacturing tools to sell.

eter poles with the 3-in. cutter for buffalo fencing, but most customers are homeowners, landowners or entrepreneurs who want to make furniture and decorative railings.

The cutters can be ordered directly from Lumberjack tools or found at Rockler Woodworking and Hardware, Schroeder Log Home

Supply, Inc., Woodcraft Supply, Northern Tool & Equipment, or Sears.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lumberjack Tools, P.O. Box 63928, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80962 (ph 719 282-3043; www.lumberjacktools.com).