

Self-Loading Forage Wagons Chop And Unload Crop

Self-loading wagons designed to out-perform self-propelled chopper wagons are now available in North America after having been widely used for years in Europe. Poettinger wagons with rotary pickups save labor, fuel and time over self-propelled choppers, especially within 5 miles of an unloading site. The adjustable knife system lets the operator custom cut forage length as it loads or not cut it at all.

"With our self-loading wagons, one man and a tractor can do it all. With a self-propelled forage harvester, you need an operator and one or more men in trucks or with tractors and wagons," says Anders Hansen, general manager, Poettinger North America. "We can cut labor costs by 50 to 60 percent and fuel by 40 to 50 percent."

With the Poettinger wagon, the operator picks up a load of forage and delivers it for storage in silos, bags or other systems. Research at numerous centers in Europe and at Pennsylvania State University show it will move more material faster than working with a self-propelled forage harvester.

"The biggest fuel saving is because you can leave the stem length longer and you don't blow it back into a box," says Hansen. "Our knives are stationary. The rotor pushes mate-

rial through the knives and into the box. That eliminates the need for a flywheel-powered blower and rotating knives."

Hansen points out that a longer chop improves digestion and reduces the need for buffers. The simple pickup system allows alternate knives to be removed for longer chop or removed entirely for no chop at all. The unique serration and pull-through design ensures material will be cut even if the knives have dulled.

The knife bank releases at the push of a button and swings to the side for maintenance or knife removal without a tool.

High load volumes and high transport speeds are possible, thanks to the steering tandem axle with parabolic suspension and pneumatic brakes. A boogie tandem axle, hydraulic braking and tandem axle with hydro pneumatic suspension are all optional. If soil compaction is a concern, larger wagons can be outfitted with an 8-wheel chassis.

The self-loading wagons are also adaptable to a wide range of materials. "You can pick up anything you can put in a swath, from freshly mowed material to dry hay, straw or corn stalks," says Hansen.

All loading and unloading functions are controlled from the tractor cab. Trailer inte-



Self-loading Poettinger wagons save labor, fuel and time over self-propelled forage harvesters, says the company.

riors can be accessed easily via a drop down ladder. The frame is bolted, not welded, for greater strength.

Poettinger makes a wide variety of sizes to match tractors ranging from 50 to 300 hp. Capacity ranges from nearly 1,600 cu. ft. to more than 3,500 cu. ft. Prices range from

\$50,000 to \$150,000.

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He Uses A Miter Saw To Cut Firewood

"It's the safest way I can think of to cut up small branches and trees," says Kenneth Gustafson, Carney, Mich., who uses an electric-operated, 10-in. miter saw equipped with a 10-in. carbide-tipped blade to cut small chunks of firewood.

The miter saw is mounted at one end of a 6-ft. long, homemade wooden frame that serves as a makeshift sawhorse.

He cuts logs into 16-in. lengths, which fall into a wheelbarrow.

"I've used it for 4 years. It's amazing how well it works and how safe it is to use," says Gustafson. "I use it on logs and tree branches

up to 5 in. in dia. I came up with the idea because I live on 40 acres of woods, and whenever I cut a tree down I don't waste any branches. I had been using a chainsaw to cut up the smaller pieces but I find that a miter saw works faster than a chainsaw because I don't have to start up the saw every time I want to cut more wood," says Gustafson. "Another advantage is that I can set the saw at any angle I want."

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Ken Gustafson uses an electric-operated, 10-in. miter saw to cut small chunks of firewood.

Oilfield Sucker Rod Put Out On Pasture

When the fiberglass sucker rods on oilfield pump jacks wear out, they don't have to be thrown away. They can find a second life as electric fence posts.

"They last a long time and are fire resistant," says Bert Rivera, distribution manager for Twin Mountain Fence, San Angelo, Texas, which buys the sucker rods to cut to size as fence posts.

The rigid fiberglass rods are easy to drive into the ground a couple of feet. Twin Mountain sells torsion springs to slip over

the sucker rods to hold wire. For fencers who prefer to drill holes in the rods to hold the wire tighter, the company also sells cotter pins and wire clips.

Because of their availability from Texas oil fields, Twin Mountain Fence fiberglass rods tend to be less expensive and bigger than the 3/8-in. dia. posts sold by most companies. They come in various diameters and can be ordered by the foot. For 6-ft. posts, prices range from \$2.40 for 5/8-in. dia. to \$9.30 for 1.2-in. dia. rods.



Fiberglass oilfield sucker rods make great electric fence posts, says Twin Mountain Fence Co.

"Their longevity and strength make the posts a good investment for electric fence jobs," Rivera says.

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"Solar Charged" Lay-Down Cart

"It makes field work quieter and saves my back. I built it entirely out of scrap metal and other parts that I already had," says Chris Juel, Scobey, Mont., about his battery-powered crop-picking cart.

A planetary gear motor keeps the cart moving. A 12-volt, deep cycle battery with a solar-powered charger provides power. The solar panel is located just above the battery and mounts on a pair of hinged metal arms.

A pair of foot paddles control the drive system which consists of bicycle sprockets and chains. A 4-in. long pipe that's connected to a pair of metal tie rods is used to steer the front wheels.

"I use it to pick strawberries, transplant seedlings, and for weeding," says Juel. "The solar panel lets me go all day long and never run out of power. I also added a 12-volt-to-

110-volt converter, so I can play a radio or tape player," says Juel.

The 4-wheeled cart was built with wheels and other parts from several different bicycles. The frame is made from 1-in. sq. tubing.

A shaft across the back is fitted with small sprockets at either end that chain-drive a set of sprockets above the rear wheels.

The picking platform is equipped with vinyl-covered foam pads. A storage tray mounts underneath the operator for setting out plants or picking produce. The lightweight cart can easily be pulled into position by hand.

Juel also built a wider cart for cucumbers that grow out up to 6 ft. from the row. "I can pick 5 pails of cucumbers in just a few minutes and set them in a tub underneath the



Battery-powered, crop-picking cart is equipped with a solar-powered charger.

cart that slides in or out."

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