

Self-Headlocking Goat Feeder

"It's a real time and labor saver," says Jacob Ploeckelman, Stetsonville, Wis., about his custom-built, self-headlocking sheep and goat feeder. It's designed with 4 headlocks on each side, allowing Ploeckelman to lock in goats and sheep individually.

"It lets me work with the animals calmly instead of getting them worked up trying to chase and catch them," says Ploeckelman. "We usually keep three or four nanny goats and two or three ewes for breeding in the pasture with their young, which are born in the spring of each year. The billies and rams are kept out of the pasture.

"I always found it difficult to catch the mothers for chores such as milking, hoof care, medical treatments, and moving them

to their pen inside the barn when the weather turns cold in the fall. I also had problems with wasted hay and feed because I was using just a small square feeder with no sides."

To solve the problems, he asked a local welding shop to design and build the self-headlocking feeder. After taking some measurements of the sheep and goats, the shop got it built.

"All I do is put some feed in the feeder to coax the animals there. Then, I flip a lever while the headlocks are open and when the animals put their heads in the headlocks, they lock in the goats and sheep individually," says Ploeckelman. "Reduced feed waste is another big advantage."

He says the welding shop, B&G Welding,



Self-locking goat feeder is designed with 4 headlocks on each side. They allow Ploeckelman to lock in goats and sheep individually.

would be interested in building the self-headlocking feeder for others.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jacob Ploeckelman, 5958 Bruckerville Ave.,

Stetsonville, Wis. 54480 (ph 715 212-2593) or B&G Welding, 2579 County Rd. A, Athens, Wis. 54411 (ph 715 654-5901).

He Breeds All-Black Goats

Tom and Meta Syfan's black Spanish goats are unusual in a breed that normally comes in a variety of colors. The uniform black color, while maintaining all the hearty qualities of the Spanish meat goat, is the result of four decades of selective breeding.

The Syfans have been raising sheep, goats and cows on a central Texas hill country ranch since the early 1940's.

"They're not big, but fast growing. They mother very well against varmints like coyotes," Tom says about his Spanish goats. "They are very agile and will climb a tree to get something to eat. They eat all kinds of noxious weeds."

During this season's extended heat and drought, the Syfans shipped out some of their other livestock because of lack of food, but they still have their valuable 1,000-head goat flock.

Syfan is known for his black goats, which start at \$300/billy and \$175/nanny. Some goats do still have a badger face (brown lines)

that's common in the breed.

He was inspired to breed the all-black goats when he saw a uniform herd of goats at an auction many years ago.

"That's where I got the idea," the 87-year-old adds with a laugh. He started with seven billies that were black with badger faces. He adds that color is only a fringe factor for him. His first priority is always to breed goats with the best Spanish goat qualities.

Some of his knowledge was acquired when he attended veterinarian school – leaving just short of earning a degree. But his success with the goat and his prize-winning sheep came about through experimentation.

Now, out of 700 kids a couple might be different colors. The rest are black, and they are popular with other Spanish goat breeders.

Yvonne Zweede-Tucker and Craig Tucker bought Syfan Spanish goats and discovered they thrived on their Choteau, Mont., ranch.

"They are pleasing to the eye," Zweede-Tucker says of the black goats. "They visually



Photo courtesy, Morgan Frederick/Three Mill Ranch

Uniform black color of these Spanish goats is the result of four decades of selective breeding.

differentiate, which is important in the auction ring. It's easier to bid on a group."

The Syfans and their ethical approach to caring for their land and animals – and their black Spanish goats – will be included in "The Meat Goat Handbook," which Zweede-Tucker wrote and will be released in January.

Another great source for information about

Spanish goats is Leslie Edmundson and the Spanish Goat Association website (www.spanishgoats.org).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Three Mill Ranch, Tom and Meta Syfan, 170 Guajalote Lane, Mountain Home, Texas 78058 (830 739-3388; www.blackspanishgoats.com).

Topped-Up Pickup Topper

"My friend Don 'Doc' Mastin isn't one to let anything go to waste," says Duane Sporleder of Lake City, Iowa. "He built a new shop which he heats with wood. He already had a pickup box on which he had installed a tongue. He also had a pickup topper on the box, but the topper was too low to put much stuff in it.

"So he decided to raise the topper to store firewood. Using 2 by 4's, he extended the topper 3 ft. higher and covered the sides with chicken wire. To block the front side

he attached sheet metal housing off some old air conditioner units. The wood was already 'seasoned' for burning, but he wanted some air to get in so he could also store greener wood, if necessary."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Duane Sporleder, 909 N. Woodlawn, Lake City, Iowa 51449 (ph 712 464-3784).

Don Mastin raised the topper on an old pickup bed to provide dry storage for firewood.



Winder Tidys Up Grain Bag Plastic

As the use of grain bags for storage grows, so does the problem of grain bag disposal. The Grain Bag Winder rolls and bales a 10 by 300-ft. plastic bag in about two minutes.

"The end of the emptied grain bag is held by the hydraulic-powered shaft while it turns and rolls. The arm creates pressure to keep it tight. Once finished, the shaft is hydraulically pulled out, and it drops on the ground," says Steve Hood, owner/developer of the Grain Bag Storage System, which bags and unloads grain and uses the Grain Bag Winder to clean up emptied bags.

The bales are 34 in. wide, up to about 4 ft. in diameter and weigh 600 to 700 lbs.

The Grain Bag Winder mounts on any 3-pt. hitch and has a system to tie the bale with twine. While it works for grain bags, it doesn't work as well for silage bags, which are messier and have multiple cuts, Hood noted.



Bale shown above was made from two 10-ft. dia. plastic grain bags that in total were about 375 ft. long.

Hood says the Grain Bag Winder is built heavy duty to last and retails for about \$5,500. Contact him for dealers in your area.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hood & Company, Inc., Springfield, Mo. 65809 (ph 417 865-2100; www.hoodco.com or www.grainbagsystem.com).

Bad Weld Turns Into A Good Thing

A bad weld recently turned into a good thing for Paul Olson of Ogilvie, Minn.

"My stock tank is located quite a ways out in our pasture and we use a garden hose to fill it," says Olson. "I made a hose holder out of a couple of 3/4-in. dia., 8-in. long pipes, an elbow, a short nipple, and an old 'T' that had been broken off. The hose holder hangs on one side of the tank. When I welded up the broken end of the 'T', I accidentally didn't get the center part of the weld closed up. There's about a 1/8-in. dia. hole in the weld, but the mistake turned out to be a good thing.

"First, water spouts out of the hole when I first turn the water on so I know it's running. Second, once the tank is nearly full, pressure builds up in the pipe and starts spouting out again. After a while, you learn how high the water is before you need to shut it off. For example, when the spout reaches 6 to 7 in. high I know the tank is within about 2 in. of being full. Third, the hole acts as an anti-siphon so I'm not draining back my tank water and contaminating my well."



Welding the broken "T" on hose holder accidentally left a small hole that water spouts out of.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul C. Olson, 1278 Delta St., Ogilvie, Minn. 56358 (ph 612 390-0672; redbird@genesisswireless.us).