



Wire fastener consists of a 1-in. long, 1/4-in. wide aluminum alloy clip (left) with a slot near the toe that holds the wire and a self-tapping torx head screw.

## “Big Heel” Fastener Holds Wire In Place

This new wire fastener holds the wire much better than a staple and works in the hardest posts, making fence construction and repair a much faster and easier job, according to the manufacturer.

Each Big Heel Fastener consists of a 1-in. long, 1/4-in. wide aluminum alloy clip, with a slot near the toe that holds the wire, and a self-tapping, corrosion-coated torx head screw.

The fastener can be used with all types of wires including barbed, bare, and electrical, as well as cattle and hog panels, wire netting, horse fence and vineyard wires.

“It works better than anything on the market. The fastener won’t pull out because the fastener’s wide body has more surface on the wire than a staple,” says inventor Vonada Comm, Lincoln, Kan. “The high, thick heel applies pressure on the holding area of the toe for a tight grip. Pressure on the heel is transferred to the toe. With the

screw near the holding area only one screw is needed. It keeps the wire so tight that it’ll hold livestock from both sides of the fence. When the tie wire is broken or loose around the post you can just zip in a fastener. It also makes it easy to move wires up or down on the post at any time.

“The drilling tip on the screw makes it go in easy, and because of the fastener’s big heel the screw won’t bend. A lot of hardwood fence posts are so hard you can’t even drive a nail or screw in. The screws are corrosion protected so they won’t rust.”

Sells for 52 cents apiece including S&H for orders of up to 2,000; for orders of more than 2,000 there’s a different price depending on the quantity ordered.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Vonada Comm, 126 West Park, Lincoln, Kan. 67455 (ph 785 524-4737 or 785 483-1685; email@bigheelfasteners.com; www.bigheelfasteners.com).

## How To Make Compost Indoors With No Smell

Raising worms to create compost doesn’t have to be difficult or expensive. That’s the message worm composter Mark Follansbee is determined to get out to people in northern areas where winter limits outdoor composting. Instead of throwing vegetable peelings and scraps down the garbage disposal, worms can turn it into nutritious compost for the garden.

All it requires is a plastic tote or other container you already have. Follansbee details how to set it up on his WormMaine website. He drills several 2-in. holes in the lid of the bin for air holes and covers them with screen, cheesecloth or pantyhose. Shred newspaper to line the bottom. Add 1/2 lb. of food and at least 1 lb. of red wiggler worms. Then top with another 2 to 3 in. of dry shredded newspaper.

“The critical step is to cover the scraps,” Follansbee says. To avoid smell and fruit flies, he pulls the worms and bedding to one side, puts the food scraps on the bottom, and covers them over with the worms and bedding. If scraps have a lot of water, such as watermelon, he adds more newspaper to absorb it.

The amount of scraps the worms can process increases as the worms multiply, starting with 1/2 lb./week for 1 lb. of worms.

“Start slowly and don’t overfeed them,” Follansbee says. “They double in number every 10 to 12 weeks depending on space, soil temperature and food.”

By week 16, they will consume about 2 lbs. of scraps a week. Also, continue to add more dry shredded newspaper as needed (at least a few times a month).

“On a day above 60 degrees with sunshine, dump out the compost and worms. Give the bin a thorough cleaning with diluted bleach or vinegar. While you were away, the worms



Mark Follansbee makes compost indoors using a plastic container with 2-in. dia. holes drilled into the bin lid for air holes.

will have fled to the center of the pile to escape the sun. You scrape off the surface soil and continue until you have just worms,” Follansbee says. Use the compost, and put the worms back in the container, and start the process over. As worms multiply, you can start more bins to make more compost, but Follansbee recommends starting small with just one bin and one pound of worms.

Follansbee sells worms, but notes they are usually available locally in most regions for \$25 to \$30/lb.

“Once the bin is up and running it’s really easy. My school age daughter is an avid vermicomposter and loves to help,” he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Follansbee, 33 Arbor View Lane, Scarborough, Maine 04074 (ph 207 885-9745; www.wormmaine.com).

## Bander Makes Castration Easy

Banding bulls, bucks and rams is fast, easy and safe with a California Bander, according to Stephen Fairbanks who makes and sells the device. He says it can be used on animals of any age and size.

“We recommend waiting until meat animals have had their full testosterone growth, between 450 and 650 lbs. with beef,” says Fairbanks. “However, we’ve used the bander on smaller animals and full-size bulls.”

Fairbanks, a medical equipment and electronics engineer, designed the bander at the request of a friend and neighbor, an animal nutritionist at the University of California, Davis. The nutritionist needed to process cattle for small feedlot research and was dissatisfied with available banders.

“He asked me to come up with a better solution,” recalls Fairbanks. “I worked on it for a year and a half. Then one night I woke up and knew what I needed to do.”

His device is simple and inexpensive to manufacture. It consists of a handgrip that holds a clip with a T-slot. One end of a length of surgical tubing is inserted in the clip, and the device is held against the animal. This leaves the other hand free to grab the other end of the tubing and stretch it into place for the appropriate pressure on the animal’s scrotum. A large bull may require two tubing lengths. With the completed loop, the free end of the tubing joins the other end on the clip.

“We recommend about 14 to 17 lbs. of pull,” he says. “It only takes about 10 sec. to process an animal and from 18 to 37 days for castration to be complete.”

He began doing test runs with the system, and users liked its ease. Word spread. “Probably 80 percent of my business is word of mouth from other customers,” says



California Bander consists of a handgrip that holds a clip with a T-slot.



One end of a length of surgical tubing is inserted in the clip. Operator grabs other end of tubing and stretches it into place.

Fairbanks. “One guy will try it and then tell all his friends. It has been used for dehorning and even prolapses. One vet told me he had never done a prolapse so easily.”

Fairbanks sells the bander tool and a pack of 25 bands for \$55.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Inosol LLC, 1774 Citrus Lane, El Centro, Calif. 92243 (ph 760 337-9244; toll-free 800 847-2533; shf@inosol.com; www.inosol.com).



Photo courtesy The Draft Horse Journal

Two large work horses or four draft ponies on a forecart can pull the Esch no-till drill.

## How To Go No-Till With Horses

No-till seed your wildlife plots and small acreages with horse power and a 7-row drill from Esch Manufacturing. Two large work-horses or four draft ponies on a forecart can pull it.

“Our Esch Model 5503 weighs about 2,500 lbs.,” says Paul Esch, Esch Manufacturing. “The horse power required to pull it depends on the horse’s size and the type of terrain. A pair of Belgians can handle it on flat land, but drilling all day would really make them work.”

The weight is the key to the effectiveness of the no-till drill. The desired row penetration and seeding depth is controlled by the press wheel settings. Up to 350 to 400 lbs./row weight can be applied to the turbo-coulter openers and press wheels. Extra weights can also be added to the frame.

“The drill comes with a hand-operated hy-

draulic lift, but it’s also available with either a 12-volt pump or hydraulic valves for use behind a tractor,” says Esch.

The seeding mechanism runs off an infinitely variable speed gearbox, allowing the operator to pick about any seed rate desired. The two drive sprockets are interchangeable for switching from a low speed range to high or back.

“The 5503 is nearly identical to our larger, 15-row Model 5507 that has been available since 2005,” says Esch. “Our customers tell us they like the versatility of our drills, since they can handle about any kind of seed, whether cool or warm season grasses, wildflowers or native grass.”

The Model 5503 is priced at \$8,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Esch Manufacturing, 2210 Creek Hill Rd., Lancaster, Penn. 17601 (ph 717 397-1051).

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