



Harlan Balgaard made a rotating deer stand by mounting a pickup cab on top of an old combine. Cab rotates 360 degrees on a turntable mechanism.

Pickup Cab Deer Stand Rotates 360°

Harlan Balgaard has figured out how to legally hunt from his pickup by mounting the cab on top of an old combine. What makes it even more unusual is that the cab rotates 360 degrees.

No more excuses that you missed a big buck because you couldn't turn around far enough, says Balgaard's son, Sam, who works with his father farming and running a custom repair shop in Ashby, Minn.

After removing the dashboard from a 1988 Chevy, the cab was mounted on the hub of a 38,000 lb.-rated semi axle and connected to a wheel inside the cab.

"The wheel is fixed and the cab rotates around it," Balgaard says. "In the center of the wheel there's a braking system that allows you to lock it in any position."

The turntable mechanism is quiet enough that he has completely turned the stand around with a deer as close as 35 yards away.

The hunter can roll down either window for a right or left-hand shot. Up to three people can sit on the roomy, full-size pickup seat. It's ideal for different generations to hunt together, Balgaard says, to introduce young hunters and keep the elderly in the field longer.

The first pickup deer stand Balgaard made mounted 14 ft. above ground on a trailer made from a cultivator axle. It worked so well he's made 3 more pickup stands, including the one



Balgaard sells a rotating deer stand on a trailer. It raises up to 14 ft. high.

mounted on a combine

He plans to sell rotating deer stands for \$3,000 to \$7,000.

Check out his website's video to see the deer stand in action.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Balgaard Services, LLC, 30733 St., Hwy. 78, Ashby, Minn. 56309 (ph 218 747-2929; www.roadhunter360.com).

Can World's Biggest Sheep Improve Shrinking Farm Flocks?

Norman Kohls admits the idea of breeding the world's largest breed of wild sheep with domestic sheep sounds far-fetched to most people. And at 60, he says he's unlikely to see it, but he has been promoting the idea for sound reasons.

Kohls, a retired county extension agent, raises sheep and goats on his Texas ranch. He's a goat expert and was one of the U.S.'s earliest importers of Boer goats from South America.

His focus now is the Altai Argali sheep in Eastern Asia, which is considered to be an endangered species due to habitat loss from domestic animal grazing. A Mongolian hunt for the sheep can cost upwards of \$70,000. It's a sought after trophy because it's the largest sheep breed with horns that weigh up to 75 lbs.

Kohls recognizes the potential of the hunting market in the U.S. if Argali were raised in high fence enclosures. The U.S.

only issues two permits a year to bring the head and horns back from a Mongolian hunt, because the breed is on the endangered species list. But his idea is to use the breed to improve domestic sheep herds. He explains that many growers have shifted to markets for wool-less, small sheep to meet the needs of Muslim consumers. That shift has reduced the numbers in larger sheep breeds, and he fears that there won't be enough supply in the future.

"When you lose any part of the industry, it hurts everyone," Kohls says. "If we could get some (Argalis) here, they could be used for the feeder market. They want heavier lambs."

Kohls notes that breeding wild sheep has been difficult in the past because of their susceptibility to diseases. He believes Argalis would be different. They live in extreme heat and cold and seem to thrive on poor grazing grounds like those found in West Texas.

"They don't have wool on them, and they

They Turn Trash Into Clean Energy

Instead of hauling garbage to the dump, IST Energy Corp., in Massachusetts, offers an onsite solution that turns trash into electricity or heat. The all-in-one Green Energy Machine (GEM) is a dumpster, processor, gasifier and energy producer capable of going through 3 tons of trash a day and producing up to 100 kW of electricity and/or 187 kW of heat.

With an estimated \$1.1 million cost, it's not designed for homeowners. But hospitals, universities, hotels, stadiums and factories will see a payback in 3 to 10 years, according to Cathy Leonard, account manager at IST. The payback comes in part from reduced energy costs. But, for many companies, the biggest savings is from landfill fees.

"Many customers on the East and West coasts pay \$100/ton," Leonard explains. The GEM reduces that cost and is good for the environment by reducing trash taken to the landfill.

Based on estimates that each person generates about 4.5 lbs. of waste/day, it takes about 1,400 people to generate the 3-ton capacity of GEM. Leonard emphasizes that recycling comes first - removing glass, metal and recyclable paper from the waste stream.

Everything else - soiled paper, food scraps, plastics, packaging, etc. - can be tossed into the GEM.

The machine shreds, dries and pelletizes the trash before it's fed into a downdraft gasifier for conversion into an efficient, clean-burning synthetic gas. Up to 95 percent of the trash converts to energy.

The energy can be customized to the client's needs to power a generator for electricity or a boiler for heat. The first GEM is being customized for Edwards Air Base to mix the GEM's synthetic gas with 1.2 gal. of diesel/hour to generate 100 kW of power. At Edwards, a forklift will load waste into the GEM, but most companies will likely prefer loading bags onto a conveyor.

Whether it's heavy equipment or a custodian tossing bags in the Green Energy Machine, IST is eager to work with all types of companies interested in reducing landfill bills and energy costs and taking a positive step for the environment, Leonard says.

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"Retrofit" Pickup Topper

When retired carpenter John Kravenas decided to put a topper on his 2000 Chevy 1500 1/2-ton pickup, he didn't like the ones he found on the market.

"I wanted a topper that would fit around the side toolboxes in my pickup bed. I talked to a couple of local companies about building me a custom topper, but they weren't interested or would have charged a lot to custom build one. So I decided to make my own," he says.

He found a used aluminum topper in someone's yard and paid \$50 for it. "After making a few measurements I knew I could make it work."

He removed the topper's side windows, which happened to be the same height and length as the toolboxes, but kept the topper's aluminum trim and gaskets. The topper was a little shorter than the pickup bed so he had to do some fabrication work to fit the rear window over the tailgate. He also added a garage door gasket between the topper and the toolboxes. A piece of plexiglass on front



John Kravenas modified a used aluminum topper to fit his 2000 Chevy 1500 1/2-ton pickup.

forms the front window.

He sawed out a piece of aluminum that ran the length of the topper, ensuring the topper would fit when lowered down onto the pickup bed.

"I have no idea what kind of pickup the topper had been used on originally. But the conversion turned out really good and I've had a lot of compliments on it. I spent only about \$100 on the entire project," notes Kravenas.

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Altai Argali is the world's largest breed of wild sheep but is an endangered species. Norman Kohls wants to breed the animal with domestic sheep herds.