

Editor's Notebook



Mark Newhall

Editor & Publisher

Anyone For "Flatwurst"?

Hundreds of FARM SHOW inventors I've interviewed over the years have told me that once you get the "inventor bug", it never goes away. It's not about money. It's about ideas. Jack McAllister, 84, is living proof. He's been entering inventions at the Minnesota Inventor's Congress for 49 years. He showed up again this year with his latest idea. "Flatwurst" is literally a flattened bratwurst that McAllister says is easier to grill and fits better on a bun. It's the latest in a long line of inventions, many of which he's patented. However, he admits he's never made a dime on any of them. He told the Redwood Falls Gazette, "I'm an idea man. It's what I do."



Photo courtesy Redwood Falls Gazette
Jack McAllister showed off his latest new idea at the Minnesota Inventor's Congress in June.

Coconut-Harvesting Robot

The urge to invent knows no geographical boundaries. We were intrigued recently by reports of a remote-controlled coconut harvester invented by a fellow in India. Having spent quite a few vacation hours over the years watching workers climb trees to retrieve coconuts, I wanted to hear how such a gadget would work.

Growing coconuts in Kerala, a southern state of India, is like growing corn in Indiana. It's the area's biggest crop, but the harvest has always been done by hand.



Coconut-harvesting robot is controlled by a hand-held remote from up to 100 ft. away.

Prakasana Thattari hopes to change that with his motorized coconut picker. "Coconut tree climbing is a risky job, and there is a great scarcity of tree climbers," Thattari told FARM SHOW. "All coconut farmers are facing this problem. If the coconuts are not harvested in time, there is the possibility ripe coconuts will fall on people and cause casualties."

"My machine is handmade, without much engineering accuracy. But even so this prototype works well," he says.

A rechargeable battery powers the electric motor, which moves the machine, mimicking the motions of a man climbing a tree. Once at the top of the tree, the plucking portion reaches out to cut coconut bunches or twist off individual coconuts. All movements are controlled by the operator using a 100-ft. range radio frequency remote control.

"Usually an average coconut tree climber is able to climb 50 to 60 coconut trees a day," Thattari says. "This machine has no such limitations."

A YouTube video (Coconut Harvesting Robot) and recent publicity has attracted a lot of attention. So Thattari is hopeful he'll find a manufacturer.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Prakasana Thattari, Nambary House, P.O. Mayanad, Kozhikode District, Kerala State, PIN-673008, India (t.prakasana2008@yahoo.com).

Presstime Report From Europe

Frequent contributor Andy Sewell in England recently attended a couple British shows on our behalf and we received his report right at press time. We'll have a full report next issue but a couple things stood out right away.

Andy reports that Deere's new "no back door" round baler attracts big crowds. It has a canvas "clamshell" back end instead of a solid door. The clamshell rises



Canvas clamshell rear gate opens quickly to eject bale. Inside there are just two large rubber belts.

up so quickly the bale is ejected in just 5 sec. Inside there are just two big belts on top and a couple rollers at the bottom so overall it looks like the baler is a lot lighter and requires less maintenance.

One interesting trend Andy spotted was new chisel plow/cultivator shanks with "add ons". The Vaderstad (www.vaderstad.com) Top-Down shank has a curved "shin" that attaches to the face of the shank to thoroughly lift and mix soil and residue. Amazone's new shank (www.amazone.co.uk) is fitted with a flat shield that deflects soil to one side. It's used on the outside edge of the field cultivator.



Vaderstad (left) and Amazone designed new add-ons that enhance function of standard field cultivator shanks.

Another hot idea: A German-built, tractor-mounted "crop reading" system that can be used to map fields and determine nutrient needs of standing crops. Manufacturer Isaria (www.fritzmeier.de/umwelt) says it's the only system of its kind in the world.



Isaria crop reader mounts on front of tractor to map fields and determine crop needs.

Liberty Quotes

"I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there is purpose and worth to each and every life." *Ronald Reagan*

"Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, Marines don't have that problem." *Ronald Reagan*

"Those prepared to give their lives in freedom's cause, come over to me." *Col. William Barrett Travis (died at the Alamo)*

"When you subsidize poverty and failure, you get more of both." *James Dale Davidson*

"How does something immoral, when done privately, become moral when it is done collectively? Furthermore, does legality establish morality? Slavery was legal; apartheid was legal; Stalinist, Nazi and Maoist urges were legal. Clearly, the fact of legality does not justify these crimes. Legality, alone, cannot be the talisman of moral people." *Walter Williams*

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." *Alvin Toffler*

"Advances are made by answering questions. Discoveries are made by questioning answers." *Bernhard Haisch*

"The trouble with most folks isn't so much their ignorance, as knowing so many things that ain't so." *Josh Billings*

"To educate a man is to unfit him to be a slave." *Frederick Douglass*

"In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies." *Winston Churchill*

"There was never a good war or a bad peace." *Benjamin Franklin*

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Grain Truck Poker

"I have a 2-ton truck that's 30 years old, and so I'm pretty good at loading it up. But I've never been this good before," says frequent FARM SHOW contributor Jim Niemann, Litchfield, Ill., who plays "grain truck poker" when hauling grain to the elevator. Last winter, he had his best "hand" ever.

"I hauled 7 loads of beans to the elevator one day and 4 of the loads came out with the exact same net weight. The gross weight of the truck was different for each load because I was burning fuel. But the net weight of 4 loads was exactly the same. In poker, 4 of a kind is a great hand. The best hand I ever had in the past was a full house - 3 of a kind and 2 pair.

"When I told people about what happened, they said I ought to head right to a casino and try my luck at real poker. But when I get the urge to play cards, I just get my grain truck out. Trying for a good poker hand when hauling grain just makes it more interesting."

"Made It Myself" Memorial

You don't have to spend a fortune to memorialize loved ones at the cemetery. Larry Zenz, Parks, Ark., wanted a nice memorial for himself and his wife Eunice. To mark the grave, he designed a 4-in. stainless steel cross that stands 5 1/2 ft. tall by 35 in. wide. Attractive laser cut lettering by Eric Vesperman at Larry's Welding in Lancaster, Wis., is easily visible from a distance. The marker is anchored in a base of concrete.



Larry Zenz designed his own grave marker.

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Ole announced to Lena one morning, "I'm giving a 'surprised' birthday party fur yew."

"A 'surprised' birthday party? What's dat?" she asked.

"Dhat's where I invite a bunch of your friends and if any ov dem come, I'll be surprised!"

Ole and Sven were waiting at the bus stop when a truck went past loaded up with rolls of sod. Ole said, "I'm gonna do dat when I win da lottery. 'Vhat's dat, Ole?" asks Sven. "Send my lawn away to git it mowed," Ole replied.

Ole and Sven went fishing in a rented boat from a resort. They rowed out a ways and started to fish. They caught one fish after the other.

"Ole says to Sven, 'I wish ve could mark dis spot. It's da best fishing I've seen since I was a boy!'"

Sven replied, "I got some chalk in my tackle box, so vhy don't I put an 'X' right here on da bottom ov da boat?"

Ole laughed, "You dummy! Vhat if ve don't rent da same boat next time?"

A drill sergeant had just chewed out one of his cadets. As he was walking away, he turned to the cadet and said, "I guess when I die you'll come and dance on my grave."

The cadet replied, "Not me, Sarge . . . no sir! I promised myself that when I got out of the Army I'd never stand in another line!"

A married couple in their early 60's were celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary in a quiet, romantic little restaurant. Suddenly, a tiny, beautiful fairy appeared on their table saying, "For being such an exemplary married couple and for being loving to each other all this time, I will grant you each a wish."

The wife said, "Oh, I want to travel around the world with my darling husband." The fairy waved her wand and two tickets for a luxury cruise liner suddenly appeared on the table.

Now it was the husband's turn. He said, "Well, this is all very romantic but an opportunity like this will never come again. Sorry, my love, but my wish is to have a wife 30 years younger than me."

The wife and the fairy were deeply disappointed in his choice but a wish is a wish. So the fairy waved her wand and - poof! - the husband became 92 years old. The moral of this story . . . be careful what you wish for.