

## This Livestock Chute Built To Last

When Larry Olson built a loading chute for his hogs, he built it to last and included all the bells and whistles he could. Olson had been building chutes for others and planned to stop with a last one for himself. He admits he rather outdid himself with a design that makes it as easy to bring feeder pigs in as it does to load them out at finish. And it makes clean up even easier.

"I had never built one like this," he says. "It ended up costing twice as much as I expected. Materials alone ran at least \$8,000."

The lighted chute consists of a 32-in. wide walkway for pigs with an 18-in. walkway alongside for people. Its 6 1/2-ft. height gives plenty of clearance, and the 28-ft. length lets pigs climb up or down even from the highest point of a triple deck trailer.

A light steel roof over both walkways keeps pigs and people out of the weather. Accordion-like hoods at either end adjust to match respective doorways for a windproof connection. The chute sides are 16-ga. steel, and the floor is 14 ga.

"I worked with a local steel yard that cut and fabricated the steel to my plan," says Olson. "They formed the side panels with V's or ridges to add strength."

A scissor hoist with two 4-in. dia., 30-in. stroke cylinders raises the chute to 11 1/2 ft. The load-out (or in) platform at the upper end of the chute is raised by a single action cylinder (lowers by gravity) to keep it level with the truck floor when the angle of the

chute changes.

The platform is designed with a twin layer floor under the load-out doorway. A double action cylinder extends the upper layer with the three-panel doorway when a little more reach is needed.

"The floor extension means we don't have to back the truck up tight to the chute," explains Olson. "The accordion curtain between the load-out doorway and the chute keeps the connection weather tight."

The load-out platform doorway is equally versatile with two side panels hinged to uprights at the "truck end" of the platform. By pulling pins at the chute end, either panel can be turned to form a 45-degree angle bend in the end of the chute.

"The moveable panels let us load out straight from the chute or to the left or right of the platform," says Olson.

Olson designed the framing for the chute with 2 by 2-in. square tubing for the sides and 3-in. angle iron and tubing under the floor. The scissor hoist lifts against a frame of 3 by 3-in. square tubing that also anchors the axle and two 3 by 3-in. outriggers on 3-in., 8-in. stroke hydraulic cylinders.

"The hydraulics are all self-contained with an electric hydraulic pump," says Olson. "All I have to do is plug it into a 110-volt outlet, and the hydraulics and interior lighting are all functional."

The floor panels have 1 by 1-in. square tubing fastened to them at 4-ft. intervals.



Side view of Olson loading chute (left). A scissors hoist with two 4-in. dia., 30-in. stroke cylinders raises chute up to 11 1/2 ft.



Chute consists of a 32-in. wide walkway for pigs with an 18-in. walkway alongside for people (left). Load-out area is equipped with a 3-panel door.



They provide periodic foot holds for young pigs being delivered. They also provide supports for expanded metal panels that are hinged to one side of the chute floor.

"When we are loading pigs out, we lower the expanded metal panels to provide them with secure footing," explains Olson. "When we are bringing young pigs in, we lift them so they can't get footing to turn around and

go back up the chute."

The expanded metal also lifts out of the way for easy cleaning. "We wash it out after every use," says Olson. "I hope it will last a long time."

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## They Outfit Pickups With Legal Sleeper Cabs

As more and more over-the-road haulers downsize to pickups and flatbed trucks, there's growing interest in adding sleeping berths to pickups that meet DOT regulations. Besides meeting logbook requirements at DOT weigh stations, the additions make traveling more convenient and save money on hotel bills.

Regulations require that the bed must be 75 by 24-in., have a restraint to protect the sleeper while the vehicle is moving, have ventilation and protection from exhaust and fuel leaks, have two exits including one into the driver's area, and provide a way to communicate with the driver.

Models range from economical to almost luxurious.

Woodhouse (ph 888 859-7697; www.woodhouse.com) installs sleeper berths for \$2,495 in the back of newer 1-ton Dodge, Chevrolet and Ford trucks with quad, crew and mega cabs at their Blaire, Neb., shop and at Dan's Repair in Elkhart, Ind. In addition, they sell a self-install kit for \$2,095 (plus

shipping) that comes with a DVD that shows how to remove door panels, back seat and install the sleeper berth components in 4 to 6 hrs.

Cowtown Sleepers (ph 817 293-9100; www.cowtownsleepers.com) of Fort Worth, Texas, removes the truck's back window to install an accordion boot to attach a sleeper unit. Prices for the commercial sleeper start at \$3,350 (plus installation) for pickups, \$4,350 for flatbeds, and they also offer units for Peterbilt trucks. Customers can also install their own units. Cowtown offers a variety of models that can be customized with 12-volt plug-ins and lights and seats when the space isn't used for sleeping. Cowtown offers models that can be adapted to fit over toolboxes and tanks as well as less expensive recreational models that don't meet commercial requirements.

Roadmaster (ph 252 412-3980; www.roadmastertruck.com) sells installed commercial units starting at \$9,695 for pickups. The 54 by 84-in. extension mounts

Cowtown Sleepers removes the pickup's rear window to install an accordion boot, which is used to attach sleeper cab.



Roadmaster does conversions on new and used 3/4 to 2-ton pickups.

on the truck, is grafted to the truck's frame, and painted to match the truck. The Grifton, N.C., company does conversions on new and used 3/4 to 2-ton trucks. The package

includes exterior and interior lights, heavy-duty commercial fabric, carpeting and other features.

## Hinged Shed Door Breaks Away From Snow And Ice

LeRoy Momper couldn't get the 10-ft. wide, 12-ft. high door on his pole shed open without first having to shovel away snow or chip ice. He solved the problem by making a cut through the bottom 2 ft. of the door and adding hinges.

"Now as soon as I start to push the door open, the bottom 2-ft. section immediately starts to lift up over the snow and ice," says Momper. "I came up with the idea one day last winter when I wanted to get my tractor out of the shed to blow snow. I had to chip ice away from the door before I could get the door open."

He nailed a 2 by 4 horizontally across the back side of the door about 2 ft. up from the bottom, directly underneath another 2 by 4

that was already on the door for support. Then he used a sawzall to cut the door all the way across between the two 2 by 4's and bolted on some metal hinges.

"It works perfect. As soon as I start pushing the door open the bottom section swings back and starts to lift up over the snow. I don't have to do any shoveling at all. When I'm ready to close the door, I use a rope to hold the bottom section up. To attach the rope I installed an eye bolt at the bottom of the door and a nail farther up."

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Momper cut through the bottom 2 ft. of his shed door and added hinges. "As I push the door open, the bottom section immediately starts to lift up over snow and ice," he says.