A handheld remote is used to bring toolbox to back of pickup where it tilts for easy access.

Traveling Toolbox Rolls To End Of Pickup

"The tool I needed always seemed to be on the other side of the toolbox. So I decided to bring the tools to the back of the truck," says Raul Tijerina about his traveling toolbox. At 5 ft. 6 in., the Arizona man was tired of climbing up on the pickup wheel to reach tools. Using mostly scrap parts, he built a prototype that brings the toolbox to the back of the truck and tilts it for easy access.

The box moves on four 1 1/4-in. wheel bearing rollers on rails along the top of the pickup box. The rail is positioned so the toolbox clears the wheel wells and stops at a handy angle to reach inside.

The box is powered by bicycle sprockets mounted on a shaft that's driven by an electric winch. The sprockets "walk" along lengths of chain mounted permanently on the rails. A wired handheld remote is used to toggle the toolbox forward and backward.

Tijerina patented the idea and would like to find a manufacturer. It could be refined with smaller gears and operated from inside the cab. He believes there would be a good market for it.

"You can also use it like a locking cargo box. Ladies who have trucks could use it for shopping," Tijerina says.

A video of the toolbox in action can be seen at www.farmshow.com.

Bicycle sprockets mount on a shaft that's driven by an electric winch. Sprockets "walk" along lengths of chain mounted on rails.

Track angles down at rear of box to tip tool box backwards.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Raul Tijerina, 41936 W. Indian School Rd., Tonopah, Ariz. 85354 (ph 623 393-0326; tijerina372@aol.com).

Hardening Tires Might Prevent Stalk Damage

"I've had a lot of problems with corn stalks damaging my tractor tires, so I've decided to buy new tires and let them harden for two years before putting them on," says Paul Butler, a Macon, Ill., no-till farmer. "I've read and heard that aging tires makes the rubber harder so there's less puncture damage, and that should definitely save on repair bills."

Butler has noticed more damage to his tractor tires from stalk punctures in the past few years. "I think the new hybrids we're planting have much stronger stalks, and when they've got a short and sharp edge, they seem to really raise havoc with my tires," Butler says.

In his no-till operation he drives directly over stalks several times a season. "I'm driving on stalks when I'm planting, when I'm side dressing and when I'm spraying," Butler says, "and every time across those tires are taking a beating. I've heard from tire people that older tires will stand up to stalks better than brand new ones." With that thought in mind, Butler bought a new set of tires for his main tractor and plans to let them "harden" in his machine shed for a couple years.

Titan Tire Corporation says that tires will harden over time much like erasers do on a pencil. Oil used in the manufacturing process evaporates and the rubber compounds get harder. Titan and other manufacturers are working on compounds to make tires more resistant to stubble damage, but there's no silver bullet solution. Titan is experimenting with blends of synthetic and natural rubber and materials like Kevlar in its tires. Some of those produce 6 to 10-ply ratings, but those tires would also cost more.

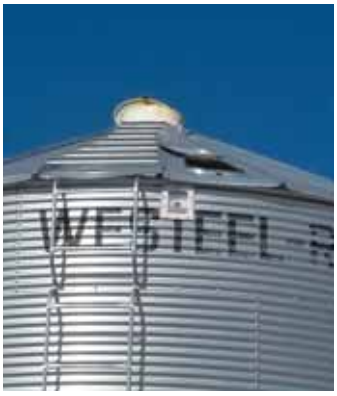
Another solution might come from Custom Tire Cutting of Oaktown, Ind., a company that's been hardening tires for tractor pullers since 1997. They put tires into a large oven for two days and "bake" some of the oil out of the rubber. The lugs become harder, which in turn provides a better grip. Custom's Bob Parkes says the same drying process on conventional tractor tires would produce harder lugs and sidewalls so the tires could be less prone to stalk damage. He's had a few calls in the past year about the process for regular ag tires and expects more interest at his booth during the tractor pulls at the 2012 National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville.

The cost for hardening tires at Custom's Oaktown location would be $225 to $250 a set. That cost doesn't include shipping to and from the company's plant.

Other farmers have less costly methods of hardening tires. One internet post by an Illinois farmer suggested storing tires on top of an aluminum or steel roof during the hot summer months to speed the hardening process. Parkes said that might work, but tire manufacturers are using compounds that stand up better to sunlight and ozone than they did 10 years ago.

Another post suggested putting tires in an empty grain bin and turning on the heat. That poster thought it might cost $250 to speed dry a set of new tires. Butler, however, is content to just store his new tires in his shed for a couple years. "It's not costing me anything, in fact I'm getting stronger new tires two years from now for today's prices."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Butler, 6671 Hibbard Rd., Macon, Ill. 62544 (ph 217 865-2415).



James Haskins installed a sight gauge on his grain bin to prevent overfilling. It extends into the bin 1 3/4 in. with a 1 3/4-in. hole in the middle.

Easy-To-See Sight Gauge For Grain Bins

James Haskins can look out the window of his home and tell if a grain bin located 200 ft. away is full or not, thanks to a sight gauge he installed to prevent overfilling.

What makes his sight gauge different from other ones on the market is the white background inside the window. "That's the big trick to it," Haskins says. "The background makes it much easier to see the grain."

His patented idea is now manufactured as the J-MAC Bin Sight and available for right at $80.

"It has a clear outer Polycarbonate lens and a white nylon inner piece that looks like a box with a flange to the outside. It extends into the bin 1 3/4 in. with a 1 3/4-in. hole in the middle," explains Bill Thomas, who's marketing the bin sight. "We add reflective tape so the customer can see when the bin is full after dark by using a light on the auger."

A template comes with the unit to help cut the bin. Some producers place it about 4 in. from the top, while others prefer it 12 to 16 in. from the top.

The J-MAC Bin Sight is attached with self-tapping metal screws and sealed with a sealer to make it watertight.

"It's visible from a distance well over 200 ft., which as far as I know, is better than anything on the market today," Thomas says.

The J-MAC Bin Sight is manufactured in Minot, N. Dak., and went on the market last fall. It can be purchased through Bill Thomas Sales and through a few North Dakota dealers. Thomas welcomes inquiries from interested dealers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill Thomas Sales, 13821 156th Ave. N.E., Deering, N. Dak. 58731 (ph 701 340-3146; wlthomas@srt.com).

Poly Bogies Outlast Rubber On The Road

Polyurethane bogie wheels will outlast rubber if you have to drive your tracked machine on the road, says Dale Nordman, Butler Machinery Company.

"Rubber has its place, but not on the road," says Nordman. "If you aren't having problems with premature failure, rubber may be just fine. The big problem is heat generated roading or roading under weight."

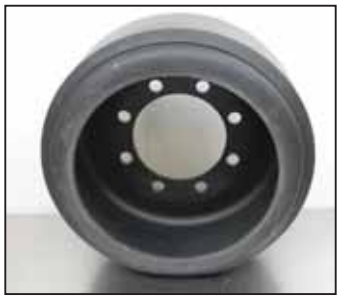
Steel is better on the road, but it doesn't perform as well in the field. Poly bogies work on the road and in the field.

Nordman says rubber can pick up small pebbles and debris. Once embedded, the small rocks work their way into the rubber, creating a small pocket. Eventually, the rubber deteriorates and starts to peel.

"Rocks and debris are less likely to enter a poly wheel," says Nordman.

While poly bogies are available from OEM's, Butler has found a lower cost source. While OEM bogies for a Challenger MT800 run around $725, Butler sells them for $280 when the customer turns in the old core.

"Without the core, you can add another $105 to the cost, but most everyone turns them in," says Nordman.



Polyurethane bogie wheels are said to work better than steel or rubber, both on the road and in the field.

Butler's 12 locations are in North Dakota and South Dakota and one county in Minnesota. However, they will ship poly bogies beyond their trade area.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Butler Machinery Company, 3402 36th St. S.W., Fargo, N. Dak. 58103 (ph 701 280-3100; toll free 800 726-7475; www.butlermachinery.com).