Reader Letters

Shame on you for printing the article "Square Firewood Burns Better, Longer" in your Nov.-Dec. issue (if should have run on April 1st!). While square-cut firewood chunks may burn longer, Mr. Williams left out some important facts.

1. Splitting a square chunk requires 4 strokes, compared to the three needed to cut a log into quarters. If a chainsaw were used, as stated in the article, even more time and energy would be used.

2. He claims it saves wood but even if you cut the largest possible square out of a given chunk of wood, mathematically the square could contain only 64% of the wood. No mention was made of the slabs which are cut off the sides. Does Mr. Williams throw out 36% of his wood?

3. The article stated that the square-split chunks have 1/3 less surface area than conventionally-split wood. But if he is burning the slabs, the exposed surface is actually 41% more than with conventionally quartered firewood. And the slabs will burn rather quickly.

If Mr. Williams' goal is just to watch a pretty, long-burning fire, rather than to warm a room the most efficient way possible, then to each his own. But the fact is that no matter how you slice it, a tree has only a set amount of energy to release. If all he wants is a slow fire, perhaps he should use whole logs or split his logs in half and save himself an awful lot of work. ***(Gordon Goodwater, 25114 S. Rupp Rd., Cheney, Wash. 99004 ph 509 235-1942)***

My brother in Texas makes these small mini-buggies. He's built five in the last two years. The buggy shown is 38 in. long with 14 and

16-in. dia. wood wheels. It has a toolbox under the seat and behind the seat. My 14-month grandson is sitting in it for a parade. You can pull them by hand like a wagon, or we've had them pulled by a dog and once a goat. My brother rigged up one to look just like Doc's buggy on Gunsmoke. He also built one half-size buggy designed for an adult. These buggies are well-made, accurate replicas. For more information, people can contact my brother: Fay D. Sexton, 3801 Deann Lane, Joshua, Texas 76058 (ph 817 297-1527). ***(Marion Sexton, Riverside, Iowa)***

I've been doing a lot of work in the woods, making skidding roads. I needed something to level the ground. At first I tried a heavy fence post but it got hooked up on roots and stumps. So I made one out of a couple big tires and it just bounces over objects. You could also use it to level gopher mounds and manure on pastures because it would do little

damage to grass. I pull it behind a 3-wheeler, garden tractor or a big tractor.

To make it, I cut a big tire in half with a jigsaw. You could also use a Sawzall. Then I bolted the sides together, putting a nut and big washer inside the sidewall of each tire. A short chain attaches to the front of each tire, running up to a 1/2-in. pipe that runs across the front. Then a single length of chain runs from the pipe to the tractor or ATV drawbar. Works great. ***(L.F. Bruckner, 1755 E. Tuthardt Rd., Traverse City, Mich. 49684 ph 616 228-6716)***

In the last issue you featured some expensive tractor-mounted equipment for cutting round bales. I thought I'd show you something a lot simpler that'll also do a great job cutting up bales. This is an old hay knife that we use on alfalfa bales. I'm retired now but I milked cows by hand until after World War II, so I know something about doing work by hand. ***(Lee Hunter, 636 N 194 Ave., Buckeye, Ariz. 85326)***

After looking for a post pounder last spring and finding that one would cost $8,200, we decided to build our own. We bought a bunch of steel and hydraulic equipment and

then spent two days welding. We made the post driver and a wire roller all in one.

The hammer weighs 852 lbs. and mounts on an upright beam. It tilts back and forth and front to back 45°. It'll also slide out to the side as much as 30 in.

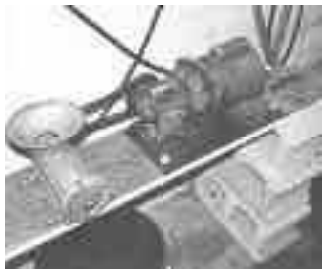
The attached wire roller is hydraulic-controlled and holds 1,600 ft. of wire. It can roll or roll-out wire under power or it'll free-wheel.

The entire unit mounts on the tractor 3-pt. and uses hydraulics off the tractor. All materials were new and, after pounding 3,000 posts, we are totally impressed with how well it works. ***(Doug Tessier, Box 2657, Stony Plain, Alberta T72 1Y2 Canada)***

I turned a pickup cab brush guard upside down and mounted it on the back of my tractor bucket using brackets made out of pieces of channel iron. It's a simple idea but it sure helps when pushing brush and it protect hoses, too. Dismounts in seconds when not wanted. ***(Dennis Shelts, Camden, Ill.)***

We invite horseback riders or other visitors to cross our place as long as they respect our property and close all gates. But nothing is more frustrating to a visitor - or myself - than a gate that you cannot open or close easily. If a gate's too slack, it'll cause trouble because stock will be able to open it.

I came up with an excellent gate closer made out of an 18-in. long piece of old barn door track. It mounts along the top fence rail. A bar that pivots in one end of it attaches to a piece of cable. You drill a 1/2-in. hole through the top of the fence post and feed the cable through. The bar gives you plenty of leverage to pull almost any gate shut, and you can hang a nail on a piece of string to lock the bar down in the closed position. Any 10-year-old can close any gate tight with little effort. ***(Orrin Hart, Willabar Ranch, Box 578, Claresholm, Alta. T0L 0T0 Canada ph 403 625-2127)***



Grinding home-butchered meat can be a big chore, especially if you use a hand-cranked grinder. My son Carl, Jr., and I took the hand crank off a standard meat grinder and rigged up an electric motor to drive it. We put a drive sprocket on the grinder and on the motor gear box. The motor and gear box were salvaged from a grocery store checkout belt. It runs at just the right speed - perfect for this application. Makes processing deer meat a lot easier. ***(Carl Marley, Oconee Ave., Nokomis, Ill. ph 217 563-2007)***

I built a self-propelled front-end loader tractor based on the one built by William Leiser who was featured in the "Best of FARM SHOW Video - Volume I." Leiser, of Grand Island, Neb., built two combine loaders, one out of a 1966 Deere 95 Hydro and another out of a 1976 International 715 Hydro. He fitted both with Deere 158 loaders.

I tried to improve on Leiser's design by shortening the wheelbase 10-in. to give it greater maneuverability for hauling big round bales on soft ground. First, I bought a junked mid-1960's Deere 55 Hydro for $260 and stripped it down to its frame. I beefed up the frame with 6 by 2 1/2-in. channel iron to handle my 5 by 6-ft., 1,600 lb. bales. I lowered the back and cab of the combine 3 ft. so the cab mounts right on the frame. Finally, I redesigned the tin work on back of the combine so the machine looks more like a windrower than a combine. Shortening the wheelbase, lowering ground clearance, and reworking the tin made it a very streamlined machine.

Then I bought a used Farmhand 236 loader for $2,000 and bolted it right onto the channel iron frame at the drive axle. (Mounting the loader on the combine was the toughest part of the project since I had to shorten up its main frame assembly by 2 ft. to get it to fit.) I control the loader with existing levers on the steering column hooked into a 3-spool selection valve mounted ahead of the cab. My loader has a 20 gpm hydraulic pump and 6-gal. reservoir for oil. I operate the loader with a foot control on my left side.

It took three months to build the loader last winter, including installing a 303 cu. in. engine out of 1969 Deere 55 to replace the combine's original blown engine. I've got about $3,000 invested in the loader and it works great. It's a vast improvement over the Farmhand F11 loader mounted on the Deere 3010 tractor I used before. In part, that's because my combine loader has a cab to protect me from the elements in winter time when I do all my bale-feeding. ***(Gary Yindrick, Rt. 2, Box 122, David City, Neb. 68632; ph 402 543-2488).***

With the help of my son and some friends, I made an interesting and eye-catching lawn ornament out of an old single bottom horse-drawn plow. It mounts on a revolving stand with a large gear that's driven by an old coal stoker I got from friends. It's got a 1/4 hp. electric motor. The plow takes 35 min. to make a complete revolution. Makes a great conversation piece. ***(Russell Hoover, Box 71, Atwood, Ontario, Canada N0B 1B0 ph 519 356-2155)***

I'd like to comment on the article in Vol. 19, No. 5 about the farmers whose barns were not covered by insurance when their aging silos fell on them. The barn should have been covered under a "falling objects" clause the same as trees, etc. Also, if their insurance company had coverage for this and did not offer it to the insured, the loss should have been covered under the "agent's errors and omissions policy". This story is an example of an insurance company trying to duck coverage. Our company had a similar case and paid out under the falling objects clause for the barn only. ***(Daryl Cherry, Cherry Farms Ltd.)***

I added a 26-in. sweep blade to each end of a large blade plow. This gives the original plow an additional 4 ft. of cut for very little money. We run the extra sweep where we overlap. Since that strip gets worked twice, it doesn't need the additional harrow attach-