



Cody Powell converted his MTD riding mower into a garden tractor "tow truck". An electric winch mounts in front of the steering wheel within reach of the driver.

## Garden Tractor "Tow Truck"

"I use it like a tow truck to pick up broken down ATV's and riding mowers that I bring home on my trailer. It works great," says Cody Powell, Vinita, Okla., about his MTD riding mower converted into a garden tractor "tow truck".

The mower is fitted with a triangle-shaped, 5-ft. high "pipe boom" equipped with a pulley that's positioned about 3 ft. in front of the mower. A self-contained electric winch mounts in front of the steering wheel within reach of the driver. The boom is made from 1-in. dia. thick-walled pipe that's welded onto the mower's front and rear axles, and also reinforced by a pair of strap irons at the middle. A "push plate" protects the front of the mower when moving "dead" vehicles around.

"It saves a lot of hassle and time," says Powell. "I operate my own small engine repair business on the side and use a trailer to haul the vehicles back to my shop. In the past, if they wouldn't start I had to push them by hand to the trailer and then winch them on."

"Now I just hook a chain onto the vehicle and winch it off the ground, then back up to the trailer. I can also use the boom to lift the vehicle and put jack stands under it without



"I use it like a tow truck to pick up broken down ATV's and riding mowers," says Cody.

needing a jack. The winch is operated by a 12-volt pickup battery, which I can use to jump start a vehicle's dead battery. It has a lot more power than the riding mower's battery and works much faster.

"The riding mower gets a little light on the back end when lifting, so I welded an old wheel rim on back of the mower and set a bucket of concrete in it to serve as a counterweight."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Cody Powell, 15795 S. 4350 Rd., Vinita, Okla. 74301 (ph 918 244-1290; dieseljunky38@yahoo.com).



Craig Spierling replaced the pto drive on his bale elevator with a gas engine, eliminating the need for a tractor.

## He Likes His Motorized Elevator

Craig Spierling made moving bales easier by motorizing his bale elevator with a gas engine to replace the pto drive.

"Sometimes a tractor is just in the way," says Spierling. "Adding a motor makes the elevator more convenient to use."

Like other pto-powered elevators, Spierling's Kewanee elevator had the pto shaft on one side and drive sprockets on the other. He removed the pto and bolted angle irons to either side of the elevator to support a motor.

"I welded tube steel to the angle iron to make a platform with steel plate for the engine," says Spierling. "I mounted a

Predator engine from Northern Hydraulics and a centrifugal clutch."

Spierling used no. 40 roller chain. To gear it down, he mounted a 68-tooth sprocket on the elevator driveshaft.

"It's a lot more handy for delivering straw or hay to a barn on a neighboring farm or transferring grain from a gravity box in the field to a truck," explains Spierling. "I just hook it on behind the truck or wagon and take it with me."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Craig Spierling, 1627 Cassidy Rd., Levering, Mich. 49755 (ph 231 537-2324).



Larry Newland powers his home-built grapple fork with a 12-volt winch, instead of hydraulics.

## Winch-Powered Grapple Fork

There's no need for auxiliary hydraulics to power Larry Newland's home-built grapple fork. He powers it with a 12-volt winch mounted to the backplate on his skid loader's forklift attachment. A wireless remote opens and closes the grapple forks.

"I burn firewood to heat my shop," explains Newland. "I wanted an easier way to haul wood, but didn't want to pay for a hydraulic grapple."

The forklift attachment made rigging up the grapple forks easy. It had a solid steel backplate. Newland mounted 2 uprights and a baseplate for the winch to it.

"You could bolt grapples like mine to the lighter style pallet fork backplates, but mine was heavy-duty," he says. "I just welded them to it. I had a 2 1/2-ton winch, which was plenty strong."

The 26-in. tall uprights are made from 3 by 1 3/4-in. channel iron mounted 13 in. apart and centered on the backplate. The grapple frame consists of an upper and lower section.

The grapple forks work like rocker arms to open and close.

The pivot point is a 1 1/8-in. dia. pipe welded between the uprights and inside a free-moving 1 3/8-in. pipe. A hole for a grease zerk tapped in the outside pipe provides lubrication.

Newland attached connector links for 1/2-in. chain to the 2 rocker arm cross pipes on the upper section. A short length of cable runs from one link through and around the cable drum and back to the link in the second cross



Grapple fork is opened and closed by a rocker arm mounted between two uprights.

pipe.

"The cable is wrapped in 2 directions, so when it's activated, it's releasing one cable and wrapping the other," he says. "A bolt through the frame of the winch keeps the 2 cables separate, even though they both go between the same guide rollers."

With less than \$100 invested in the grapple forks and 3 years of use from them, Newland is well satisfied. Like the steps he welded to the side and rear of the forklift plate, they simply make life easier.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Newland, 9400 Baldwin Ave., Northfield, Minn. 55057 (ph 507 645-7883).



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