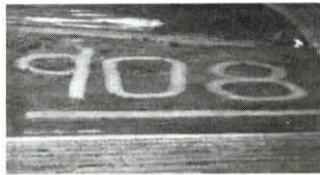
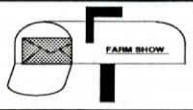


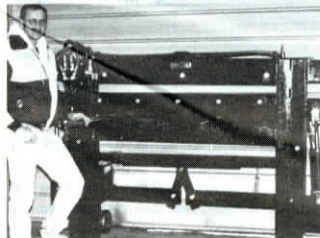
Reader Letters



I used a 40-ft. disk to inscribe the numerals "908" in a cotton field on my farm in honor of the Air Force Reserve's 908th Tactical Airlift Group. The unit is stationed at an air force base not far from my farm and their planes fly over nearly every day so I wanted to show my appreciation and recognition for a job well-done. It took only about 10 min. to create the numerals, which take up about as much space as a football field. I did it last September and redid them a time or two over the winter. I think this is something farmers all over the country could do to honor our fighting men and women who fly. I've heard from the 908th that they were really surprised by the insignia when they saw it. (Malcolm D. "Major" Smith, Prattville, Alabama)



I made this heavy-duty offset hitch for our Schulte rock picker. It's designed for use behind our 150 hp. tractor. Gets the picker out far enough to the side so we can use duals on the tractor and makes it easier to work around the rock pile when dumping without wrecking the pile. Works great. (Mark Herickhoff, Belgrade, Minn.)



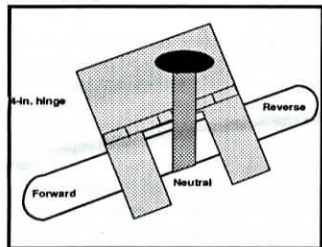
I was looking for a small used metal brake and shear machine but could never find anything - new or used - that I could justify. I also had a space problem so I decided to build a 4-ft. wide combination brake and shear machine that saved a lot because it uses the same frame and hydraulics for both jobs. This compact machine is 5 ft. high, 7 ft. wide and weighs about 1,500 lbs. It can be easily moved around the shop on its heavy castors. The cutting brake is actually about 52 in. wide and handles 10 ga. metal easily. I built a heavier 6-in. brake on the left end to bend heavier bars, square tubing, rods and to flatten ends of pipe. Different brake dies can be built to do various types of bends (smooth or sharp) on both the 6 and 52-in. brakes.

The shear uses 51-in. blades recommended for cutting up to 10-ga. mild steel. Metal can be sheared from the left or right end and stopped at any point. I mounted a square edge guide with a ruler on it to make good square cuts.

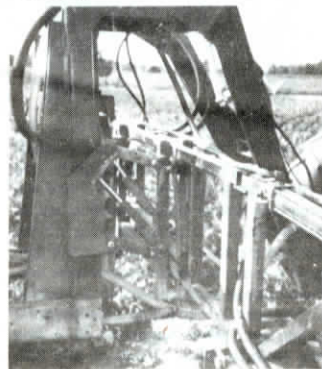
I built the machine with a bandsaw, drill press and a welder. I'm selling the machines for \$4,700 (Canadian) or will make plans available. (Wayne Hagen, Hagen Manufacturing Ltd., Box 215, Lake Alma, Sask. S0C 1M0 Canada ph 306 447-4721)

Because I am a Case/IH farm equipment dealer, I don't feel I should send in a "Best" or "Worst Buy" recommendation since I couldn't be totally unbiased. However, I do feel that Case/IH tractors are superior to anything else on the market in almost every area of performance and durability. They also have the best warranty in the business on the Magnum Series tractors.

One point I would like to make is that although there are times when farmers, or we as dealers, have to look for an alternate source of parts because of availability or price, 95 percent of the time the best parts values are genuine parts from your manufacturer. There are an awful lot of parts "will-fitters" that supply parts of questionable quality. Farmers will find that O.E.M. parts are the best value in the long run with few exceptions. (Dave Budach, Vice President, Budach Implement, Inc., New Richland, Minn.)



If you own an International 474 or 574 tractor, put this simple life-saving device on the shift lever. Might work for other tractors, too. It costs less than \$1 for a 4-in. hinge and it could prevent a serious accident or even a death. Cut a notch wide enough for the shift lever on one half of the hinge and then bolt the other half to the shift lever housing so that when the notched half is down it holds the lever in neutral. Eliminates problems of accidentally bumping the lever when getting on or off. (George Niskanen, Rt. 2, Matheson, Ontario P0K 1N0 Canada ph 705 273-2774)



This tow-behind "bridge hitch" sprayer works great for us. It has a heavy-duty 62-ft., self-leveling boom that's spring loaded. The hitch between the 750 gal. spray tank and tractor arches up over the boom. Boom can be raised and lowered hydraulically to operate anywhere from 24 to 46 in. off the ground. Boom wings fold up hydraulically. Spray tank rides on walking beam axles, salvaged from a New Holland spreader and fitted with 20-in. tires. A 10-ft. long truck frame mounts on the axles. The extra-strong boom was built mostly out of 2-in. sq. tubing. There's also a 15-gal. clean rinse tank that's plumbed into the booms. The sprayer is monitored by a Raven SS440 computer controller.

Total cost of building sprayer was \$4,900. (Lee Thelen, 3077 Whyde Rd., St. Johns, Mich. 48879 ph 517 224-7073)



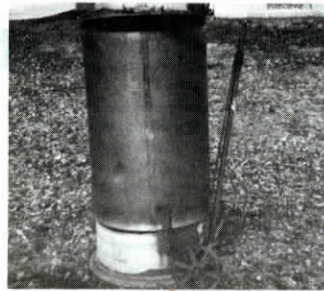
We've had tremendous interest in our new state-of-the-art aluminum flatbeds for pickups. For a full-size pickup they weigh just 350 lbs., less than half the weight of a conventional flatbed that's built as heavily as this unit. It's got 3-in. channel crossmembers, 4-in. channel stringers, and a 1/8-in. treadplate deck. The heavy-duty headache rack is fitted with see-through louvers. Sealed beam backup and tail lights are standard as are stake pockets and rub rails on both sides. There's also a covered opening for gooseneck hookup. We use all stainless bolts and lock nuts for assembly. The flatbed simply bolts on in place of the box and can be easily removed when the pickup is sold. We build the bed in one solid piece or in two pieces that fold up for shipping and make installation easy for one man. Lists at \$1,425 for a full-size pickup. We'll custom-build for any model, full-size or compact. (David Whitford, Sun Valley Fabrication, P.O. Box 156, Hollandale, Wis. 53544 ph 800 236-4146 or 608 967-2146)

Here's an idea I learned from playing hockey that helps improve your grip on hand tools such as an axe or splitting maul. Use 1 1/2-in. wide athletic tape to make a "custom grip" on handles. Start by making one or two wraps on the end of the handle then pull about a foot of tape off the roll without removing the end attached to the handle. Next, twirl the roll so the foot of slack becomes a rope shape. Then wrap the "rope" down the handle in a spiral as far as you want to improve the grip. Go clockwise or counter-clockwise, depending on whether you are right or left handed. Once you have made the spiral wrap, overwrap with tape to finish the job. You'll be surprised at how durable it is. If you want a stouter spiral, just make another pass to build it up. Really helps when tools are wet, covered with snow, or gloves are slippery. Cheap, too. (Mike Hoolik, Rt. 2, Box 2506, Manistique, Mich. 49854)



We have been manufacturing our T-Post Popper since 1989 and recently received a patent on it. It's made out of heavy gauge steel with hardened pins at pivot points. Requires no maintenance and will last for years. No need for chains, jacks or tractor loaders to pull T-posts. It pulls them easily and doesn't damage the post at all. Sells for \$32.50 (\$3.50 postage). (Mark Beideck, Beideck Welding, 903 East 15th, McCook, Neb. 69001 ph 308 345-6967)

We built this trash burner. The base is an old truck rim with three angle iron brackets welded to the top side to hold a stainless steel drum centered. The brackets hold the drum about 1/2 in. above the wheel rim allowing for air intake. The drum was originally closed on one end. I cut out the end,



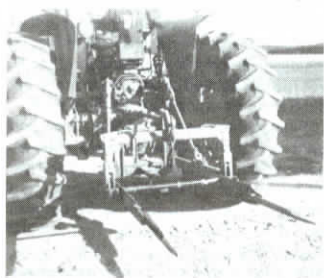
leaving about a 3/4-in. lip to hold a stainless steel grate at the bottom of the drum just above the wheel rim. The grate is made out of stainless steel rods in a 1 1/2 by 3-in. grid. The burner unit mounts on a small axle with two metal wheels and a metal pipe handle that makes it easy to roll it around. Can be parked anywhere and easily moved when ashes build up. Then I just let the ashes blow away. It should last a lifetime. (Rollin Wachter, Hubbard, Neb. 68741)



Here's a repower idea for northern farmers who use snowmobiles for towing loads and feeding cattle. I replaced the engine in my 1981 Polaris Indy with a lightweight 3-cyl., 4-cycle, 78-lb. Suzuki engine from a 1987 Chevy Sprint car. It now has plenty of low rpm torque and lots of power for fast trail riding at up to 90 mph.

My goal was longer engine life, better fuel economy and elimination of 2-cycle oil. I now get up to 30 mpg while riding trails at 50 to 60 mph while companions get 15 mpg or less. I can ride over 200 miles a day without refueling (7.3 gal. tank) and never have to worry about adding expensive, dirty-burning 2-cycle oil. I used a conventional snowmobile belt and a quick shift primary snowmobile clutch to transfer power to the track.

I rode the snowmobile 2,800 miles last season with satisfactory results. I hope to improve fuel economy even more next season since this engine gets up to 58 mpg when mounted in a car. An added benefit is that 4-cycle engines burn much cleaner and are better for the environment. (Daryl Hoch, 513290 St. Rd. 93, Eleva, Wis. 54738)



After reading many great farmer ideas in FARM SHOW, I decided to send in one that has worked out for us. My fold-up bale forks mount on the tractor 3-pt. The forks attach to a piece of 1 1/2-in. dia. steel shaft that runs across my 3-pt. hitch. A heavy piece of 36-in. long 3 by 3-in. angle iron, 1/2-in. thick, is welded in place 4 in. from either end of the shaft (the shaft runs through the angle iron) and two teeth from a manure bucket mount at the end of each piece of angle iron.

The forks tip up when not in use, reducing the danger from those extended teeth when

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