



Mike Rising couldn't justify the cost of a commercial walker to get show animals in shape, so he built his own using a car transmission for the drive unit.



Walker is designed to handle 4 animals at a time in separate compartments.

## “Car Part” Walker Gets Livestock In Shape

Commercial walkers for getting show animals in shape can cost more than \$10,000 so Mike Rising built his own. So far he has used it successfully with horses, steers, sheep and goats, keeping them in shape for livestock shows. Made with a car transmission for the drive unit, he can alter the speed and the direction as needed.

“The walker is designed to handle 4 animals at a time in separate compartments, but we prefer to use only 2,” says Rising. “This gives the animals the opportunity to turn or stop for a brief time depending on what gear you are in.”

At the center of the walker, Rising mounted a car rear end with one axle stub mounted to a metal frame on a concrete pad. The other axle serves as the base for the 4 moving (26-ft. long) arms that “walk” the animals. A 4-in. diameter pipe attached to the axle stub reduces down, first to 3-in. and again

to 2-in. The arms, which extend up and out from the base of the 4-in. pipe, are supported by steel straps that lead back to the 3-in. pipe and cable that runs from about 10 ft. from the ends of the arms, back to the top of the 2-in. pipe.

“The cable really makes a difference stabilizing the arms,” says Rising.

Lengths of 1/2-in. sucker rod connect and stabilize the arms at about 8 ft. from the center. They maintain a common distance between the arms.

The arms rotate around 2 rings of livestock panels spaced about 10 ft. apart. The outer ring has sixteen, 10-ft. panels and a 4-ft. bow gate for access. The inner ring consists of nine, 10-ft. panels with a 4-ft. bow gate for access.

Rising hangs 10-ft. panels on 1/2-in. steel tubing hinged at the top to two opposing arms. As the arms move around the ring, the

animals are encouraged to move by the panels pushing them forward. However, should an animal get in trouble or simply stop, the hinged panel will ride up and over them.

To drive the arms and panels, Rising attached a 3-speed transmission to the side of the rear end. A belt drive on one end of the transmission is powered by an 850-rpm electric motor. At the other end of the transmission, a second belt drive transfers power to the driveshaft on the differential. An off/on switch mounted outside the walker lets Rising control power once the speed has been selected.

“It’s hard to estimate how much the walker cost as I had all the parts on hand,” says Rising. “The rear end, the transmission and the pipe were all used. The livestock panels were the most expensive, but the lane could have been made out of wood to defray the cost.”



At center of walker, Rising mounted a car rear end with an axle stub mounted to a metal frame on a concrete pad.

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Dean Nelson got tired of seeing hay laying on the field after falling off both ends of his round baler pickup, so he attached truck mud flaps to the pickup's outside edges.

## Hay Saving Baler Flaps

Dean Nelson's hayfields stay extra clean thanks to the truck mud flaps he attached to his Deere 430 round baler.

“I was getting tired of seeing hay laying on the field after falling off the ends of the baler pickup,” says Nelson. “The newer balers have wider pickups, but I don't want to get rid of a good baler just for that.”

Nelson used pliable rubber mud flaps that were 14 by 24 in. He bolted 1 1/2-in. wide strips of flat steel to one side of each mud flap. Then he bent the bottom half of the strip in a fairly sharp curve bringing the tip nearly parallel with the top half.

The third step was to bolt 13-in. long, 1 1/2 by 1 1/2-in., 3/16-in. angle irons to the top of the flaps, using five, 1-in. long, 1/4-in. carriage bolts. After lowering the pickup to its normal baling height, Nelson positioned the flaps against the outside edges of the pickup so the top of the flaps are pointed at the edges of the oncoming windrow.

“Once I had them where I wanted them, I drilled holes so 2 of the carriage bolts could extend through the pickup,” says Nelson.



He drilled a hole in each flap and put a bungee cord hook in the hole, then pulled it back up and out of the way to keep flap from digging into the ground.

The final step was to drill a hole in the outside corner of the flap. Nelson put a bungee cord hook in the hole and pulled it back, up and out of the way to keep it from digging into the ground.

“I've used mine for about 6 years, and they work great,” says Nelson. “They show no sign of wear, and we bale quite a bit of hay each year.”

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## “Do It Yourself” Concrete Blocks

Stumbebloc heavy-duty plastic molds make it easy to make your own concrete blocks, and the design makes stacking the blocks easy as well. Tabs on the blocks self align and lock in place with no need for mortar. A. Marcelino and Co. is distributing the block casting system, which was developed in South Africa.

“We use Block Bond designed for dry stacking cinder blocks,” says Alan Marcelino. “We dip the blocks in it, and it hardens on the outside like a structural skin. When set up, they are as solid as can be.”

Marcelino, a concrete and asphalt recycler, crushes concrete and turns it back into redi-mix concrete used for precast concrete products. Initially, he began recycling styrofoam too. He would break it up into BB-sized pieces and mix it with Portland cement and crushed concrete for its thermal insulation properties.

The Stumbebloc casting system gave him the option of making blocks with the styrofoam mix and later filling them with the same mix. While he couldn't use them as a load-bearing wall, they could add 8-in. of insulation to the inside of a metal building.

“We live in New England and operating out of a metal prefabricated building can be a challenge,” he says. “Two years ago, we lined one wall of our workshop with styrofoam blocks and filled them with styrofoam concrete,” says Marcelino. “That end of the building was noticeably warmer. This year we are lining the rest of the shop.”

Making the blocks is simple. After oiling the surface, the two halves of the mold lock together with wing nuts, leaving one end open. The concrete mix is poured in. Tapping the sides with a mallet or setting the mold on a vibrating table settles the concrete into place.



Marcelino mold (left) makes stackable blocks (top) that lock in place without mortar.

Once the block has set for 24 to 48 hours, it can be removed from the mold and set aside to cure.

Although the method is labor intensive, Marcelino believes it has potential for use in remote locations where it is easier to bring in bags of concrete mix than pallets of blocks. It also works well with customized mixes, such as his styrofoam concrete.

Marcelino is pricing the molds at \$50 each. Half block molds are \$25 each, with price breaks for larger quantities. Instructions and some plans included. He says he can do about 50 blocks at a time with a 1-yard mixer.

“We don't have a large inventory yet, so it may take a month to fill an order,” advises Marcelino. “These are not likely to be cost effective as a way to manufacture blocks, but they will work great for the DIY market. The molds are heavy duty and don't wear out.”

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