Reader Letters

Until last winter, we carried one or two 4 by 5-ft. bales on back of our Deere 4430. That's when I came up with the idea of replacing the front suitcase weights with a front-mounted bale spear that allows us to carry one extra bale to counterbalance the weight on the back.

We simply removed two of the four existing bolts from the weight bracket and made a bolt-on lip for the top of the bracket. We made a pair of 4-ft. side rails out of H-beam and attached an 18-in. hydraulic cylinder to the lip and fitted it with a bar on top to raise and lower the bale spike we used. The H-beams are fitted with "ramps" at the top and bottom so the bale tips slightly backward and up as it's raised and slightly downward and forward as the spike is lowered to make loading and unloading easier, and to keep the bale from falling off in transport.

Since we built it, we seldom feed cattle without hauling three bales at a time. ***(Clair McNutt,. 286 Pine Valley Road, Homer City, Pa. 15948; ph 724 499-2288)***

I bought this early 1960's Simplicity walk-behind tractor for $60 at an auction years ago. It was originally powered by a 3 hp Tecumseh engine and a 6-speed high and low range

transmission with reverse belt drive. The transmission and belt drive were good, but I had to replace the blown engine with a 2 hp Briggs and Stratton engine I already had.

Equipped with a rear-mount cultivator, a 1-furrow plow and calcium-filled tires, the tractor suited me fine until I saw a photo of a Gravely equipped with a pull-behind "sulky" in a gardening magazine. That's when I decided to build one for my Simplicity.

I made a 2-ft. wide frame out of 1 1/2-in. dia. pipe and fitted with 4 by 8-in. wheelbarrow wheels and an old implement seat.

I made a 6-ft. drawbar out of 1 1/2-in. dia. pipe. The drawbar swivels so it trails the tractor on turns and has a spring to counterbalance the weight of the tractor when the operator gets off.

The sulky works so well I haven't taken it off for gardening since I built it. However, it can be detached by simply removing a pin and loosening the spring on the drawbar.

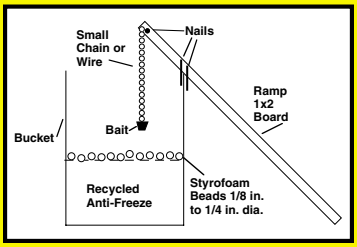
Cost under $300 to build, including the tractor, and it sure beats walking. ***(Brian Gardiner, R.R. 4, Mallorytown, Ontario, Canada K0E 1R0; ph 613 923-2565)***

The problem with the article, "'No Waste' Bale Storage'", in your last issue is that it isn't true. Iowa State University researcher Wayne King claims placing bales on rubber tires on top of a 6-in. layer of crushed rock "increases air flow and virtually stops moisture wicking up into bales".

I put up about 85 tons of hay per year and have stored bales on everything from tires to telephone poles to shipping pallets, and I don't think tires are a good idea at all. Sure, you can get tires for free, but what are you going to do with them after storing bales on them? And tires full of stagnant water make a dandy breeding ground for mosquitoes. Also, using crushed rock under the tires won't affect air flow through bales. The only thing it will affect is your pocket book because it'll be the same thing as throwing money away.

I think the best outside storage method is on a pair of 18-in. dia. telephone poles with a 15 in. gap between them for cats and skunks to catch mice. My local utility company charged me 50 cents per ft. for telephone poles. But at least I have something I can use later. ***(Jerry Deshong, R.R. 1, Box 214-2, Inola, Okla. 74036)***

I've had great success with these simple, foolproof "mouse traps". I use them in tractors,



combines and trucks and around granaries and hay storage areas.

Take any size bucket and use a yardstick or paint stick to make a ramp to the top of it, securing it to the lip of the container with nails. Then hang a gob of peanut butter contained in a 3 or 4-in. sq. of window screening from a chain at the end of the ramp.

I pour a few inches of recycled antifreeze into the bucket, filling it to within a few inches of the bait. Then I cover the top of the antifreeze with 1/8 to 1/4 in. of Styrofoam beads like those used to stuff "bean bag" chairs.

I place the traps anywhere mice are a problem. Mice climb up the ramp and jump down onto the beads, thinking it's a solid floor they can stand on to get the bait. Of course, the beads part, the mouse drops into the antifreeze and drowns, and the beads close up, "reset" for the next mouse.

I had a 5-gal. trap outside one of my granaries last year and ended up with a 2-in. layer of dead mice and two dead rats in the bottom.

Work great and cost nothing to make. ***(Darrell Hoovestol, 9151 Desert Rd., Bismarck, N. Dak. 58504-4234; ph 701 222-1535)***

Here's a drywall "helper" I made last winter when I was sheet rocking my garage ceiling. It mounts on the bucket of my Mustang skid steer loader and made hanging 4 by 12-ft. panels of sheet rock a lot easier.

It consists of a bracket that attaches to the bucket where the grapple forks normally go. It pins in three places, where the two ears are and where the hydraulic cylinder hooks up. A 1-ft. long pipe extends from the middle of the bracket and is fitted with telescoping

arms made from 1 1/2 and 1 1/4-in. sq. tubing. The arms, which swivel on the pipe to position the sheet rock exactly where you want it, telescope from 6 to 8 ft. so the device is suitable for panels up to 12 ft. long. It works on ceilings up to 12 ft. high.

I made the helper out of scrap materials so it cost nothing to build. It definitely made sheet rocking my garage a painless, ache-less project. ***(Richard Hastings, 41410 101st St., Britton, S. Dak. 57430; ph 605 448-2138)***

We're contract turkey growers and we came up with this bucket-mounted "squeegee" to make moving water out of poultry houses easier after we've washed them down with a pressure washer.

It consists of a 6-ft. length of 1/4 by 1 1/2-in. angle iron with 1 1/2-in. flat iron bolted to it. A 4-in. wide piece of 1/2-in. thick rubber fits between the angle iron and flat iron to serve as the squeegee. It has two 6 in. wings at a 40 degree angle on each end to keep water from backwashing behind the device. The squeegee clamps to the cutting edge of the bucket on our skid steer.

If there's interest, we'll make the squeegees for $100 plus S&H. ***(Waylan Burkholder, Burkholder Engines, 3320 Ottobine Road, Dayton, Va. 22821; ph 540 879-9591)***

After inquiring about a factory cab for my Deere 425 lawn tractor, I decided I couldn't justify the $3,000 price tag.

So I built my own using a Deere brochure as a guideline. My home-built cab actually has 5 to 10 percent more window area than a factory job. I bought Plexiglas to use for the side panels, while the big front and rear windows are safety glass out of old storm doors.

The 30-in. wide cab is made of 3/4-in. plywood with galvanized metal to reinforce the inside corners. I lined the interior with Styrofoam and indoor/outdoor carpet. It's equipped with an AM-FM radio cassette and a front windshield wiper out of an old Honda.

The cab mounts on the tractor with six bolts through three holes I drilled in each running board. It can be mounted and dismounted in minutes.

It works as well as a factory-built cab and cost only $320 to build. ***(Earl Line, Box 39, Melita, Manitoba, Canada R0M 1L0; ph 204 522-8346)***

We've had tremendous response from all over North America since FARM SHOW published the article about our "Supermower" (Vol. 22, No. 4). In fact, we've been so swamped with inquiries in the past year, we've decided to put together detailed how-to plans for anyone interested in building their own.

These step-by-step plans explain our patented process of converting an Owatonna 260 swather into a fantastic mower. They include 17 pages and 13 photos. We recommend using an Owatonna swather because we've found it's the best machine for the job. It worked out better than we ever anticipated. ***(Jule Jacobson, P.O. Box 53, Porter, Minn. 56280; ph 507 296-4514)***

I've repaired gas tanks for many years and I guarantee my work for the life of the unit.

Needless to say, I read with great concern FARM SHOW's article "Gas Tank Welding: Readers Tell How They Do It" (Vol. 23, No. 2). I can only say that under no circumstance would I ever advise anyone to introduce any kind of spark anywhere near an old gas tank, having had one friend decapitated and another permanently disabled doing so.

(Continued on next page)

"A Slick Way To Pull Fence Posts" isn't really "slick" at all (Vol. 23, No. 1). In fact, it could be an instant "widow maker" if the post broke while pulling it, turning it into a deadly projectile that could injure or kill the operator of a tractor or pickup.

I know the risks first-hand. When I was a teenager, a 35-year-old cousin of mine was killed instantly when the post he was pulling with a wheel-type puller, like the one described in your article, broke and struck him in the neck. He left behind a widow and four small children.

I'd like to add that if the wheel a person is using is taller than the hitch point on the pulling vehicle, there will be a loss of traction, increasing the risk of an already dangerous situation.

A safer way to pull posts is to use a chain on a front end loader. Another is using a high lift jack and chain. ***(Gottlieb G. Schock, 204 Wheatland Rd., Vida, Mont. 59274; ph 406 525-3744)***

These two bales sitting side-by-side atop a field disk may look odd, but they solved a big problem for me.

I was trying to break up some sod last fall after deep tilling and my "no name" 14-ft. tandem disk just wouldn't cut it because it was too light. I started looking for a way to weight it down and decided to try straw bales.

I loaded two of them onto the disk and used a 20-ft. ratchet strap to secure them to the frame. Each of the 5 by 5-ft. bales weigh between 700 and 800 lbs.

i I pulled the disk to the field hoping the neighbors wouldn't see me and started work. The bales added enough weight so the discs cut right through the sod. What's more, neighbors told me it was a great idea. One or two of them have even done the same thing.

The best part is, it didn't cost me a cent. ***(Peter F. Klassen, Box 196, Austin, Manitoba, Canada R0H 0C0; ph 204 637-2155).***