New Ideas From Britain

Our friend Andrew Sewell in England, recently sent us a few new ideas he's spotted while making the rounds to shows throughout Britain.

Metal fencepost splits apart as you pound it into the ground to help keep post from working loose. Metal clips let you quickly string fence at any height.

Expanding Fencepost

We've never seen anything like this metal fencepost that literally splits apart as you pound it into the ground. It helps keep the post from working loose, rising up, or sinking in soft ground.

The patented metal posts from Hampton Steel can be driven by conventional post drivers. As they go in, dirt forces the bottom few feet of the post to widen out.

The posts are heavily galvanized to prevent corrosion and have a unique "Versalok" clip system that uses metal clips to quickly string fence at any height.

The posts sell for about $6 a post, including clips. The company does not yet have a distributor in North America. *(www.hamptonsteel.co.uk; ph 011 44 1933 234070)*

Simple Tire Pressure Monitors

To monitor pressure in any tire, just blow them up to correct pressure and screw these pressure sensor caps onto the valve stems. If pressure drops 15 percent, the sensor caps will alert a small hand-held monitor.

To check pressure, just hold the monitor near the valve stem and the tire pressure and battery life of the sensor will flash on the monitor screen. It lets you quickly check pressure on all tires before starting out.

A single unit can monitor a total of 12 sensors. Pairing is automatic as soon as the sensors are powered up. If pressure drops, the monitor will receive an alert within 5 to 15 seconds so you can fix.

Wheely Safe, Ltd., also released the world's first alert system that tells the driver if a wheel is working loose, and if a hub is overheating. Michelin tire is distributing Wheely Safe products in Europe. *(www.wheely-safe.com; 011 44 1543 415823)*

Pressure sensor caps screw onto valve stems and send alerts to a small handheld monitor if tire pressure drops.

Mini thumb-controlled joystick at one end of mouse is used to control loader operations.

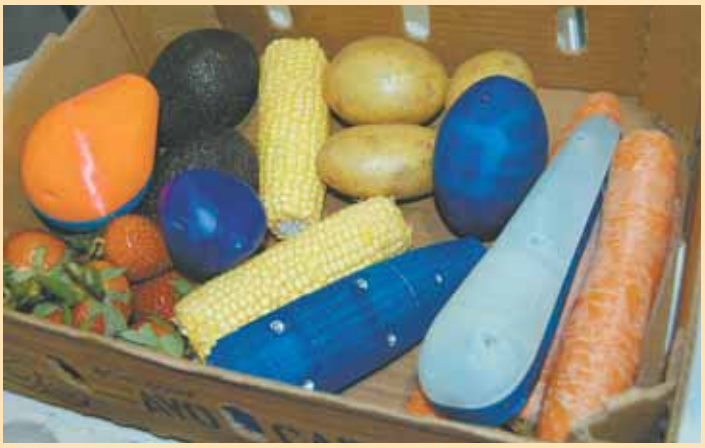
"Loader Mouse" Mounts On Steering Wheel

A French manufacturer has come up with a new mouse-shaped add-on called a "Tract-Pilot" that's designed to attach to a steering wheel. It allows you to control a front-end loader without taking your hand off the steering wheel.

It functions like an old-fashioned steering wheel spinner knob when you turn the wheel, pivoting 360 degrees as you turn. It's designed to control the Canbus system on any make or model of tractor if an MX front-loader on the tractor has an electronic joystick.

The mini thumb-controlled joystick at one end of the mouse controls forward and reverse shuttle along with gear changes for powershift machines, and a neutral to allow for extra revs to speed up loader controls.

Powered by a lithium battery, the wireless mouse controller takes just minutes to install and lets the operator keep one hand on the wheel and one hand on the loader controls. (http://www.m-x.eu/en/default.aspx).



Battery-powered, data-gathering cases are shaped like the produce being monitored.

"Impact Cases" Measure Produce Damage

Andrew Sewell in England sent us photos of electronic, plastic "shock and temperature loggers" designed to monitor damage to fresh produce caused during transport and handling. Creator Martin Lishman Ltd., won an innovations award for the idea at a recent farm show in England.

ImpacTrack cases monitor temperature and impact shock during transit. The data gathered can be downloaded at the end of the journey via Bluetooth to a smart phone or tablet by using an app.

The battery-powered, data-gathering cases are shaped like the produce being monitored. Shapes already created include apples, sweet corn, avocados, carrots, parsnips, strawberries, potatoes and eggs.

The company says the impact cases can help find "trouble spots" in handling machinery that could lead to better transport. That may result in fewer discarded items, leading to less waste and higher production yields.

"Right now about 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted globally each year, with almost 60 percent of crops spoiled, damaged or wasted during post-harvest operations. More efficient post-harvest handling methods could someday reduce food losses to as low as 1 to 2 percent," says Dr. Gavin Lishman, managing director of Martin Lishman Ltd.

Battery life may be the biggest issue in the success of the idea, says Sewell. "In some cases, 5 min. might be enough to get through a processing line, for example. But in other cases, battery life may need to be at least several days."

He says the electronics in the devices are priced at about $250. The case that encloses the electronics varies in size, but as a guide, a parsnip case costs about $290.

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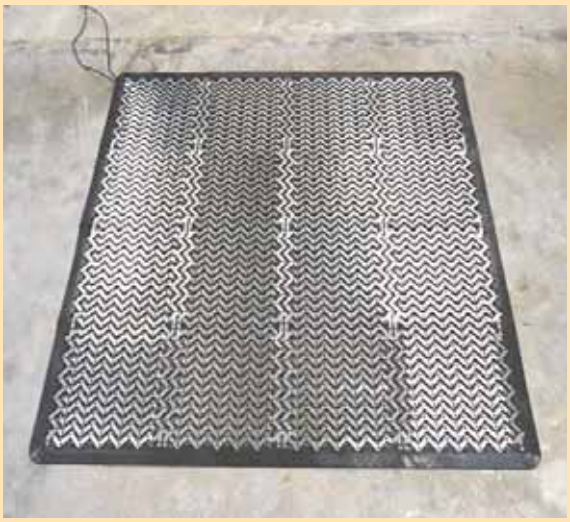

Electrified mat of interlocking metal grids shocks any rodent that steps onto it.

RatMat Keeps Rodents Off Equipment

We've seen a lot of different ideas for keeping mice and rats out of stored equipment but this one may take the cake. Invented by Tony Bateson and now on the market, the idea is deceptively simple.

The RatMat is an electrified mat of interlocking metal grids that shocks rodents if they step onto it. The idea is to park each wheel of a car, truck, combine or other equipment on a mat. Because the mats lie flat to the floor and are made of durable, hard-surfaced materials, the inventor says they will hold up in tough shop or garage conditions.

The metal grids rest on plastic mats that insulate them from the floor. The grids come in separate tiles that can be added as needed, depending on the size of the tires. *(www.hammertechltd.com or http://killgerm.com/)*