

Feed Meter Reduces Waste, Boosts Production

The PigEasy "Meal Meter" is a new way to ensure pigs get the feed they need without waste. Pigs spin a wheel on the feeding MealMeter to auger feed into a trough or station. The device turns drop feed tubes into what the company calls ad-lib feeders.

"The MealMeter optimizes feed intake at critical times in the sow's reproductive cycle," explains Katie Holtz, PigEasy, Inc. "In lactation and breeding, you typically see a lot of feed waste. Our MealMeter greatly diminishes feed waste while pushing feed intake."

Without self-metering, excess feed is automatically pushed out twice a day in the hope of the gilt or sow quickly consuming it before it gets stale or the water is turned on. With the MealMeter in place, the pig's natural rooting instincts teach it to turn the wheel/nose whenever it wants fresh feed. Feed and water are available 24/7.

"Our customers report getting more gain in sows, resulting in increased production,"

says Holtz. "They see improved breed-back as well as litter sizes. When used during lactation, the sows leave their pigs in better shape."

MealMeters are priced at only \$35.50 each. They can be used with a traditional dry trough with a customized 3-in. stainless steel PigEasy Feed Tube. It is designed to be installed in an existing crate at the right height and angle over the trough. Other options include using the MealMeter with various PigEasy feeding systems like the PigEasy Breeders Bowl.

Holtz explains that the MealMeter, like other PigEasy products, was developed to improve labor efficiency as well as animal care. Her father, Dave Klocke, is a lifelong hog producer. Company products are a result of his search for efficiencies. New products are still tested at the family hog operation. Holtz reports that initial benefits seen there were quickly verified by customers.

"They saw a great improvement in time



Hogs spin wheel on "Meal Meter" to drop feed down into the trough.



management," she says. "Dry troughs require a lot of time to maintain. Our system takes less time to manage, leaving more time to focus on animal care."

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Cordless drill with a 12-in. length of all-thread rod runs through wire spool to roll up wire.

Electric Fence Roller Powered By Cordless Drill

Rolling up electric fence wire is an easy job for John Stover, Harrisonburg, Va., who built a wire roller that's powered by a cordless drill.

He ran a 12-in. length of 1/2-in. dia. all-thread rod through a wire spool and fastened 1/2-in. nuts and washers onto both sides of the spool. He then slipped a 3 1/2-in. length of 1/2-in. schedule 40 pipe over one end of the rod and fastened a nut onto its end to form a handle.

To unroll wire he ties one end of the wire to a post, then grabs the handle and starts walking. To roll up wire, he attaches a 1/2-in. cordless drill to the other end of the rod.

Stover also came up with a post pounder designed for electric fence posts. He simply welded one end of a 2-ft. length of 1/2-in. schedule 40 pipe onto a 1/2-in. length of 1 1/2-in. round bar stock.

"To drive the post I just insert the open end



Stover made this post pounder for putting in small electric fenceposts.

of the pipe over the post. The long pipe keeps the post from bending or splintering," says Stover.

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Handy Invention Takes The Work Out Of Scaling Panfish

"I catch a lot of fish and scaling them was a big job," says Bernie Coulthurst. But not anymore, thanks to a homebuilt fish scaler he made using the frame of an old propane grill, a black plastic container cut in half, a 1-hp. motor from a meat bandsaw, and assorted pulleys and parts.

He had two 16-in. circles cut out of oak boards and sealed them with fiberglass to protect the wood, then drilled a hole in the center of each for a 5/8-in. axle. The axle turns a series of 4 pulleys to get the right speed.

For the tumbler, Coulthurst purchased a galvanized steel sheet to screw to the round ends.

"I used a can opener to poke holes for cutting the scales off, and drilled holes for the scales to fall through," Coulthurst explains. "I open up the cylinder on the side and pour in fish, up to 50 at a time, and enough water so it's 3 or 4 in. high. Then I close it up, plug in the motor, have a beer, and 15 min. later the fish are scaled."

A hole in the bottom of the drum drains the water and scales into a pvc pipe that goes off to the side, and after removing the fish Coulthurst washes the cylinder and drum



Electric motor belt-drives round metal tumbler to scale up to 50 fish at a time.

with a garden hose.

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"Big Stuff" Skid Steer Splitter

"I made a wood splitter for my 1977 Ford CL40 skid steer that works better than anything I could have bought," says retired Ohio dairyman Herman Borgelt. "I never have to leave the seat to split big wood chunks into several pieces."

The "upside down" hydraulic splitter mounts to the front of his skid steer. "I just pulled together pieces of heavy scrap metal and started cutting and welding," Borgelt says. For the main frame he used two 5 1/2-ft. long pieces of 7-in. channel iron, welding them to a large piece of 3/4-in. flat iron that connects to the attachment bracket on the skid steer. A 4-in. cylinder with 22 in. of travel connects to a 1 1/2-in. mount that he salvaged from an old plow. The push block is an 8-in. square plate that forces wood pieces toward the splitting wedge, which is made from old plow shares.

"The push bar rides on two channels with about 3 in. of space between them, so I can pick up chunks of wood from 4 in. to about 20 in. in diameter," Borgelt says. "If a piece is too large to lift by hand, I can lift it onto a



Log splitter is built from 2 pieces of channel iron mounted back to back, with a "window" in between. It can handle wood chunks from 4 to 20 in. in diameter.

wagon and split it so it drops right onto the pile."

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