

Loader-mounted plywood box fits under a gravity wagon to fill with feed.



Loader Box Helps Fill Feeders Fast

Filling bulk feeders out on pasture is no longer a tough job at Auntie Annie's Fields farm. A former employee, John Riley, built a feed handler that fits into a loader bucket for the farm's owners, Ian Rhoades and his wife, Elizabeth. It helps them quickly fill ten 800-lb. feed bins for their pasture-raised poultry and hog operation.

Made of plywood, scrap 2 by 3's, and angle iron brackets, it fits snugly into the bucket of their 25 hp. Deere tractor and is easy to secure with a couple of straps.

"We wanted it to hold about 600 lbs. of feed. It's based on an attachment for dumping cement that is roughly shaped like this," Ian Rhoades explains. "It fits under a gravity wagon to fill with feed, and the chute narrows to fill our bulk chicken and hog feeders."

Rhoades says it's simple enough for anyone on the farm to use. Just fill the bucket, drive to the feeder, tip the bucket, and manually lift the gate off the front. Meant as a prototype,

an upgrade could include a way to open the gate while on the tractor, he notes.

Still, it's a big improvement for the couple who first hauled chicken feed in 5-gal. buckets, after moving from the city to the southern Minnesota farm a decade ago. Later, they bought the bulk bins and adapted an old mixer mill to fill them. It was a clumsy and unreliable process.

"Now I can fill all the feeders in a couple of hours, or just fill a couple when I have a little time," Rhoades says.

The Rhoades have an organic, pasture poultry operation raising about 800 layers and 3,600 meat birds this year. They also raise a few hogs that they direct market along with their chickens.

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Operator tips loader bucket and manually lifts gate off the front to fill feed bin.



Home-built trailer dolly is equipped with a ball hitch. "It keeps all the tongue weight off the back of my 18 hp. tractor," says inventor Ron Byelich.

Handy Trailer Dolly

Ron Byelich, Higgins Lake, Mich., used the wheels and part of the axle off a snowmobile trailer to make a handy trailer dolly equipped with a ball hitch. He uses it behind his Case 646 18 hp. loader tractor.

"It keeps all the tongue weight off the back of the tractor and lets me pull several different kinds of small trailers that are quite heavy when loaded," says Byelich. "I made sure the coupler is higher than the dolly wheels so they clear the trailer's tongue when turning."

He used a torch to cut 4 ft. out of the axle and welded it back together, then enclosed it with a sleeve made by welding 2-in. tubing onto the axle's spring shackles.

The ball hitch is bolted to a short piece of 2-in. tubing that's welded to a flat strap arch, which is welded to the axle. He used 1-in. tubing for the tongue and welded a flat strap drawbar hitch onto it.

"The tractor came equipped with a weight box on back, and I mounted a combination receiver hitch and drawbar underneath it. I also welded a pair of strap irons onto the weight box to support the hitch," says Byelich.

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Lightweight Plasma Rope Stronger Than Steel Cable

A recent advertisement for Plasma® 12-strand synthetic rope in Farm and Dairy magazine caught our eye. Plasma rope is being marketed by Samsel Corp., a distributor and fabricator of various lifting and rigging products for the construction, industrial, and marine markets.

The braided, high-performance synthetic rope is manufactured from high-modulus polyethylene (HMPE), and is said to have the highest strength-to-weight ratio of any synthetic fiber on the market.

"Size for size, it's stronger than steel cable but is 7 to 10 times lighter with less risk of recall," says owner Chris Samsel. "We've been selling plasma rope for the last 10 years but it's still new to many farmers. Our customers have included everyone from heavy equipment construction to oil and gas drillers and the Army Corps of Engineers. We also work closely with the maritime industry, where several vessels use plasma rope instead of steel cables for their mooring lines."

"Plasma under tension has a fraction as much tension build-up compared to steel cable or chain. If breakage does occur, the plasma line simply drops to the ground instead of recoiling or snapping back," says Samsel.

Plasma rope's light weight is a big advantage. "Winch cable 150 ft. long weighs about 50 lbs., whereas 150 ft. of plasma rope weighs less than 7 1/2 lbs. And it won't



Size for size, Plasma® 12-strand synthetic rope is stronger than steel cable but 7 to 10 times lighter. If the rope breaks it drops to the ground instead of snapping back.

deform under stress and bending," notes Samsel, adding that plasma rope is expensive compared to other materials. Pricing available upon request.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Samsel Supply Co., 1285 Old River Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44113 (ph 216 241-0333 or 800 892-8012; csamsel@samselsupply.com; www.samselsupply.com).

Pull-type, battery-operated "recovery module" allows Reining to lift and tow disabled tractors around his yard.



Garden Tractor Tow Rig

"At my lawn mower repair shop I often have trouble moving riding mowers around that have bad transmissions," says Steve Reining, Mt. Zion, Ill. "A lot of times the transmissions are locked so all you can do is drag them."

That's what prompted Reining to build what he calls a "recovery module" to tow disabled tractors around the yard. "I used an axle and some scrap steel that I had laying around. The lifting device came from an old wheelchair loader that a friend gave me. I took it apart to get the parts I needed. It had electric controls but I had to rework those slightly to get it to do what I needed."

"The lifter is 12-volt so I just made a tray for a small garden tractor battery and power the system using that. It provides plenty of power. I keep it on a battery maintainer when not in use."

"Now I just back up to the rear of the tractor I need to move, lower the lift until I can place the hook under the mower, then lift it up so the wheels are off the ground."

"You do need a fairly heavy towing tractor. I have an old Wheel Horse tractor that's fixed up as a sort of utility unit. I built a wide seat for it so I can actually drive it from either



Lifting device is operated with a handheld control.

side. It's a hydrostatic unit so it works great for doing all my odd jobs."

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