

Gin Pole Turns Gator Into Mini Crane

Adding a gin pole to his Deere Gator was a relatively simple task for Larry Faulkner, and it made his side-by-side a lot more versatile. His home-built hoist puts the machine's snowplow frame and winch to year-round use.



The Gin Pole uprights are welded to a base plate that bolts to the snowplow frame. The base plate has 2 by 2-in. steel tubing that slide into the Gator front receiver hitch.

"It's the handiest tool I have," says Faulkner. "I can pick up and move anything the winch rope can handle."

Faulkner fabricated the framework of the gin pole using 1/4-in. thick, 3-in. wide, flat steel for uprights. The uprights are about 2 1/2 ft. high with tabs at about 6 in. from the bottom that bolt to existing holes in the snowplow frame.

The uprights are welded to a base plate that also bolts to the snowplow frame. The base plate has 2 by 2-in. steel tubing that slides into the gator's front receiver hitch just ahead of the winch. A pulley mounted to the tubing redirects the winch rope upward to the gin pole tip.



To adjust the pole out farther, Faulkner runs short chains between the hooks and the cable loops on the frame.

"I used heavy-duty, 1 by 1-in. steel tubing for the gin poles," says Faulkner. "They are pinned to the uprights at their base so their angle can be adjusted."

Faulkner ran steel cable from chain hooks pinned at the top of the uprights to the sky pin that holds the upper ends of the gin poles together. The cables are looped at both ends and cross each other to even the pull on each pole and keep it centered.

"I hung a pulley from a safety latch on the sky pin, and I run the winch rope up through it," says Faulkner. "When I want to lay the pole out farther, I run short chains between the hooks and the cable loops at the frame."

Faulkner also has the option of using the framework without the gin poles. Once he has unpinned the poles and unhooked the cable, he hangs a snatch block from a short length of chain attached to the hooks.

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Johnson extended the frame of his riding mower and added a 3 by 3 1/2 ft. dump bed for chore work.

Converted Mower Makes Manure Hauling Easier

Damon Johnson of Erda, Utah, converted a 15-hp. MTD riding mower into a dump truck to help his twin daughters with their chores.

"We have horses so my daughters are always busy cleaning up manure," he says. "They had to move it a long way using a wheelbarrow. They say the job is a lot more agreeable now that they get to drive it there."

He extended the framework of the hydrostatic mower backward along with the axle.

"It was just a matter of extending the frame," he recalled. "I just cut out some pieces of scrap metal and welded it all together. I have a lot of experience fabricating, and the process of extending the frame and moving the axle didn't take too long."

"The trickiest part was the measuring," Johnson says. "You really have to be precise to make sure everything is straight."

"I had to lengthen the belt that goes from the engine to the back axle," he says, "and I had to make sure the pulleys lined up."

He says the process was made even simpler by the fact that most riding mowers aren't made with specialized parts.

"If you go to Home Depot and look at mowers, and then head to another store to look at a different brand, a lot of them have the same parts," he adds.

The dump bed is 3 by 3 1/2 ft. with 14-in. sides. It dumps using two 12-volt electric linear actuators. One lifts the bed up to dump and one locks the tailgate shut.

"I haven't seen anything quite like this on the market," Johnson says, which is another big reason he undertook the project. "I was looking for something completely different."

He said the process was inexpensive for him because he has "a lot of extra lawnmowers and metal laying around. I couldn't justify buying a \$15,000 side-by-side for this job."

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The Agriplanter collects plugs from trays and places them on a conveyor belt that moves them to the actual planting unit.

"Transplanter" Covers 50 Acres/Day

Ontario vegetable growers report that by using the Belgian-made Agriplanter they can do the same amount of work with up to 75 percent labor than they would normally need. Workers are only required to set trays of plugs in place. The machine does the rest.

"It's 3 times faster than plug transplanters, and the electronic eye detects any misses," says Roel Jennen. "Each robotic row unit can plant 275 plugs per minute. Anything with a plug can be planted. A 6-row Agriplanter can plant 50 acres a day, while existing planters would be pushing 20 acres on a good day. A 2-row machine can plant 10 to 15 acres a day without pushing it."

Jennen became the Canadian distributor after several area vegetable growers imported Agriplanters. Short-term labor is increasingly difficult to find, notes Jennen, and the robotic planter significantly reduces that concern.

"I have a cousin who raises 200 acres of onions and 150 acres of tomatoes," says Jennen. "He used to have crews of up to 35 people working 14-hrs. days for 20 days to plant onions."

"With his 4-row Agriplanter he needs only 4 to 5 people, and the machine doesn't get tired," he adds. "He can plant 18 hrs. a day."

The machines are available in multiple configurations, from a single row unit to a 6-row model with spaces of 19 in. between rows.

Eric Puehler, Puehler AgCo, is the U.S.

distributor. "We have sold them to tomato growers in California, cabbage growers in New York, tomato and pepper growers in the Midwest and cabbage growers in the southeastern U.S."

The Agriplanter collects plugs from trays and places them on a conveyor belt that moves them to the actual planting unit. Rubber discs rotate plugs in the right direction to be planted at the correct depth.

Mechanical planting discs with adjustable down pressure open the row to receive the plug. Pressure wheels press the soil around the plug. A Raven controller delivers water and fertilizer to the plugs.

Jennen admits the Agriplanter is not for everyone. "It best fits growers with 100 acres or more and in particular those who don't have large crews for the entire growing season," he says. "While it is quite an investment for a grower with 50 acres, if they are planning to increase acreage, I think it would pay."

Both Jennen and Puehler requested interested readers contact them for more information and pricing.

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Low Stress Cattle Handling Tool

By Heather Smith Thomas

Dr. Joseph Stookey, a cattleman and recently retired professor from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, says one trick that works great to calm down nervous cattle when restraining them for dehorning or other procedures is a device called the Easy Boss E.

It's an "oral distraction" tool that can reduce fear and stress when the animal is in the chute. "Don Findlay, a cattle veterinarian from Manitoba, took this idea and created a tool that is now being marketed. Don is a graduate of our college, and went to Australia after graduating in 1978. About 10 years ago he called me to tell me about this idea. He'd found a small group of producers in Australia using this thing and wanted to know if I thought there was anything to it," says Stookey.

This oral distraction works well for cattle because chewing is a natural behavior. If there is something foreign in the mouth, they focus on chewing it, figuring it out, trying to get rid of it, etc. It can distract them from pain and/or various procedures being done to them.

Don Findlay is now marketing this tool. "We did an experiment to see how well it worked - while freeze branding we used it on half the animals. We measured heart rate, how much they struggled, etc. The animals that had the distraction had lower heart rate



The Easy Boss E helps to distract cattle, during procedures by holding it in the animal's mouth.



and less struggling than the ones without it," says Stookey.

Easy Boss E is marketed in the U.S. and Canada and many other countries and listed for \$82.40 on Partnar Animal Health website.

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