

**Gerard Waters, Summerville, S.C.:** “I save the caps off fine point Sharpie markers that have dried up to use over the end of caulking or construction adhesive tubes to keep them from hardening. They fit tight and work well.”

**Rod Walters, Canton, N.C.:** “I’m retired and don’t have a crew around, so I have to find ways to get things done myself. I’ve found that my backhoe bucket beats all the other tire tools out there for breaking a tractor tire bead and changing the tire.

“One of the best things I’ve done in my shop is to put all hoses and cords on reels, so they stay neat and ready to use. Makes storage easy.”



“I’ve found I can make a simple portable worktable by clamping a piece of plywood to my tractor’s loader bucket. Gives me a useful place to make repairs anywhere, and I just put it away when I’m done.

“Sometimes, I find that bending a wrench is the only way to reach a bolt. In this photo, I bent a box end wrench to reach an awkward bolt in the vehicle I was working on.”



**Jim Deardorff, Chillicothe, Mo.:** “I have been sandblasting and painting farm equipment for years and use this simple idea to keep trailers from moving around while I’m working on them. I just place wheel rims under the tires and the trailer won’t move. Works on 4-wheel trailers too.”



**John Rochester, Charlotte, N.C.:** “I’ve found that I can use sockets and a vice to remove a U-joint from the end of a driveshaft. I put one socket on the bearing cap and make the other one big enough for the cap to push through.



“One handy idea when working with gaskets and other small parts that you’re trying to hold in place is to use zip ties to hold them. Works great, and once the parts are loosely secured, you can just cut the zip ties and pull them out.

“I now consider a rag to be one of my essential tools when working on an engine. I tuck the rag down under whatever I’m working on, and it will catch any small parts that I drop. It has saved me a lot of hassle many times.

“I’ve found that lowering the front end of trucks by letting air out of the tires makes engine work a lot easier. I used to do this on my 5-ton Chevy truck with 10/20 tires and it really helped. Much less climbing in and out. I put blocks under the front end to keep the full weight of the truck from pressing down on the flat tire.

**Dale McLaen, Rutland, N.Dak.:** “I use pallet forks a lot for moving different types of pallets and totes, but it seems like the forks are always in the wrong position for the two most common pallet sizes. I fixed this by measuring those pallets and then painting the back support of the pallet fork frame to match. Now anyone using the pallet forks can easily adjust them to match most pallets in seconds without guessing.

“If you’ve got odd objects, you routinely pick up, you can also add markings specifically for those items.

“The same trick works on adjustable loading ramps on car trailers or semi-flatbeds. Just set the ramps once for whatever you load most often and then mark the positions with various colors of paint. You can also paint a matching path on the deck to guide yourself when backing equipment on the trailer.”

**John Humeniuk, Baudette, Minn.:** “I was cleaning up the fuel filter on a Farmall Super H that I’m restoring. I decided to add a bullet casing prefilter, which I’ve done before.

“I dug around in my junk box to find the right brass bullet casing to go inside the gas line. I drilled a few holes in it before dropping it primer end up into the fuel filter inlet port.

“They’re really easy to add, and they seem to work well, catching larger solid particles before they hit the filter. It’s a cheap, stand-up, coarse filter that keeps the debris out of the filter and keeps the line flowing.”



## Trailer Tips That Really Work

Dale McLaen’s trailer tips can add years to tire life, improve suspension systems and keep brake light and turn signal cables clean, dry and intact. Until he retired, McLaen ran an equipment repair business on his farm.

“One of my biggest complaints about my car trailer was how quickly the tires would develop a choppy diagonal wear pattern,” says McLaen. “Once this pattern starts, it gets progressively worse and is impossible to stop.”

It’s a pattern he has seen many times over his years in the repair business. He’s also seen it on the rear tires of front-wheel-drive cars.

“With cars, it’s almost always due to worn shocks,” says McLaen. “Since my trailer and 100 percent of every trailer I’ve worked on have no shocks on any axle, I decided to add them to my trailer and see what happened.”

McLaen welded the lower shock mounting bolts onto the bottom of the spring plates. He then measured the total amount of vertical axle travel and worked with his local NAPA dealer to pick out shocks that matched those dimensions.



McLaen describes the results as one of the best things he could have done. With the shocks in place, the tires began to wear evenly.

“My tire life pretty much doubled,” says McLaen. “I can’t say if the load rides any better, but the reduced tire wear and longer life are a big improvement.”

McLaen understands that adding shocks to a new trailer when it’s being built would increase the price. However, he thinks the change would be well worth it.

“I wouldn’t buy a car or pickup that didn’t have balanced tires and a good set of shocks,” says McLaen. “I’d never buy a trailer again without tires balanced and shocks on every axle for the same reason.”



Another trailer sore spot with McLaen is car trailer suspension, in particular, the nylon bushings and hard-to-lubricate bolts at spring ends, shackles, and equalizers.

“They’re not very robust, and they just don’t hold up to the heavy loads they have to support,” says McLaen. “Worse is that if the bushings wear through and the shackle bolts near the spring ends wear the spring end holes oblong, the springs will need to be replaced and the suspension rebuilt.”

McLaen replaces the nylon bushings with bronze and the shackle bolts with bolts that have grease zerks.

“The zerks allow you to periodically lubricate all the bushings at the pivot

points, extending the suspension life,” says McLaen. “It helps to jack up the trailer until the suspension hangs free before greasing it. That ensures grease gets into the portion of the bushings usually under the most load.”

McLaen orders his suspension kits online. He notes that if they come with nylon bushings already installed, it may be necessary to order extra bushings. “You can press out the plastic bushings and push the bronze ones in their place,” says McLaen.



McLaen has an easy way to prevent trailer connections from getting drug and damaged. He stores them up and out of the way.

“I butt welded a piece of 2 1/2-in. exhaust tubing to the tongue with a notch at the top for the connector cord to fit through and an open spot at the bottom for moisture to escape,” says McLaen. “I added a cover to the top, which keeps the cords from dancing out and also keeps out most of the elements.”

As a bonus, connector pins also stay clean for years because they’re out of the weather, notes McLaen. “I put these on every trailer and haven’t had anyone, including me, accidentally drag a connector since.”

McLaen takes his trailer wiring maintenance one step further with an enclosed 7-pin junction box. He mounts a black weatherproof rectangular box at the base of the connector cord retainer tube. It’s sized to hold a junction box connected to the trailer wiring. A pigtail cable plugs into it and connects to the tow vehicle.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale McLaen, 13756 Hwy 11, Rutland, N.D. 58067 (ph 701-678-5232).

## Easy Way To Send Your Ideas

How often do you see an idea when you’re out and about and say, “Hey, that should be in FARM SHOW”? Next time that happens, just take out your phone and send us a photo or two. Just text them to us at **952-465-5019**. If you want to leave a voice mail explaining what you’re sending, this phone is dedicated to FARM SHOW stories so it’s on and available 24/7. No need to worry about disturbing anyone. Call or text day or night with your ideas, comments, or suggestions.

