

Mobile Brooder Pens Save Time, Labor

Meredith Bell's brooder pens make moving chicks to pasture easy. As new chicks come out of their shipping boxes, they are placed in the 4 by 8-ft. by 34-in. high pens. That's where they stay until it's time to go to pasture.

"I came up with the idea when starting Autonomy Farms," says Bell. "I didn't have extra labor, and it took too much time moving the chicks."

Perhaps because Bell was new to farming and poultry, she was open to trying new ways.

"I started looking online, but couldn't find anything to speed chick handling," recalls Bell. "I started brainstorming with a welder I knew, and we came up with the pen. I tried one for 2 mos., made some changes, and built more. Now I use them for every batch I raise."

Each 4 by 8-ft. bed has access doors on the ends and the front side. There's a fourth access door at the bottom of the box. The sides are expanded metal with 1 1/2-in. wide holes. The framing is 1 by 1-in. aluminum tubing. Pens are stacked two high with forklift receiver tubing (1 by 4) attached to the underside of the lower pen.

A heavy plastic tray lines the bottom of the pens, which sits about 8 in. off the floor. New chicks are greeted with a layer of wood chips, fresh water and feed.

When the weather cools, Bell adds 1-in. foam panels to the top of each pen and covers the stacked pens with a layer of 80 mil marine vinyl to hold in the heat.

"Our temperatures can get down to 26 to 28 degrees," says Bell. "In the warmer seasons, chicks spend about two weeks in the pens, shifting to about three weeks in the winter."

When the chicks are ready for pasture, moving is fast and easy. Bell uses a fork-equipped loader to pick up each stack and deposit it at the door of a moveable pasture pen. She opens the doors and pushes the chicks down a ramp, through the door and



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onto the grass.

"It's an easy way to move the chicks and to clean out the pens," says Bell. "We drop the bottom door of the pen, remove the tray and let the chips and manure drop onto the field where they decompose."

Cleanup is even easier. Bell uses a power washer on the pens, lubricates the hinges and sets them aside for the next batch.

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Bell raises and markets chicken, eggs, lamb, beef, hogs and turkeys, all pasture raised. She makes deliveries to CSA and bulk order customers in Los Angeles.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Autonomy Farms, 21600 Adobe Rd. Bakersfield, Calif. 93307 (ph 661-430-0106; info@autonomyfarms.com; www.autonomyfarms.com).



Gerhardt used the panels to build a 4 by 8-ft. and a 4 by 16-ft. planter box.

Raised Garden Beds Made From Garage Door Panels

When John Gerhardt's neighbor replaced his garage door, the old panel sections were going to be tossed. As they were made from metal and were filled with insulation foam, local recyclers weren't interested in taking them.

Gerhardt thought they would make good raised flower and garden beds.

Gerhardt used the panels to build 4 by 8-ft. and 4 by 16-ft. raised beds.

"I used 2 by 6's to frame up the panels and screwed them to 4 by 4 corner posts," he says.

At 18-in. in height, Gerhardt knew they would require a huge amount of soil, so he

came up with a unique solution.

He gathered all the empty milk bottles he could from the recycle depots, left their caps on to keep them inflated and covered the bases of the planter bottoms. Then, he laid landscape fabric over the jugs and added soil.

"I needed less than half the soil I otherwise would have needed. With barely a foot of dirt in them, the plants grow like crazy."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Gerhardt, 1537 Lakeshore Dr., Menasha, Wis. 54952 (ph 920-659-2633; jgerhardtsr@live.com).



SawHaul is a universal chainsaw carrier that can be mounted to farm equipment.

New Way To Carry A Chainsaw

Keith Finley of Chanute, Kan., used to carry his chainsaw in his tractor bucket. Unfortunately, the saw bounced out of the bucket and wound up under his tractor tires.

"It was a birthday gift from my wife," Finley says with a sheepish laugh. "I didn't want to tell her about running over a \$900 saw."

Tractors don't have any convenient places to carry a chainsaw, so Finley got to work on what would become the SawHaul. "I started out looking to buy something and couldn't find anything like this," he says.

After field testing prototypes for a few years, Finley landed on the SawHaul, which he calls the "first universal chainsaw carrier that can be mounted to any piece of farm machinery".

Finley, CEO of GearHaul Universal Mounting Solutions, says he's even mounted a SawHaul on a Harley Davidson and another on a snowmobile. However, the Tractor Kit, which mounts on a lift-arm, is their biggest seller.

The U-bolt goes around the back of the lift arm and attaches to a plate that has a durable plastic mounting unit designed to hold the saw. The saw is protected by a durable plastic scabbard that fits squarely into a slot on the

mounting unit.

The SawHaul Complete Kit for ROPS and Manlifts can accommodate square or round tubing up to 2 1/4 in. wide.

UTVs and ATVs are also perfect for the SawHaul. "If it has a Rollbar, it'll hold a SawHaul," Finley says.

The SawHaul Kits also work with trenchers, backhoes and bulldozers. He also has SawHaul kits designed to attach to a Polaris Ranger® or General®.

"Not only is everything we sell made in America, but we even source the materials like our nuts and bolts directly from our local hardware store here in Kansas.

"We've even just come out with a new snap-on type of SawHaul kit," Finley says.

The SawHaul Complete Kit for Tractors is \$149.99. The Complete Kit for ROPS and Man Lifts retails for \$139.99, while the Complete Kit for Polaris vehicles is \$159.99. The SawHaul Complete Kit for bucket trucks is \$149.99, and the SawHaul Base Kit with pro-grade scabbard is \$149.99.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kenny Finley, GearHaul Universal Mounting Solutions, 23450 Brown Road, Chanute, Kan. 66720 (ph 620-431-2706; info@sawhaul.com; www.gearhaul.com).



As a trucker, Jimenez-Rosario sees many trucks that are vulnerable to thieves.

Deterrent Lock Keeps Cargo Safe

"Thieves who target semitrailers and storage containers know they need to be quick and quiet. The Deterrent Lock eliminates that advantage," says Raul Jimenez-Rosario. The veteran trucker invented the lock after a truck driver friend had \$30,000 in freight stolen from his rig.

Most locks can be cut easily with a bolt cutter, he notes. The Deterrent has a disc padlock, which makes cutting it harder, especially as the shaft is inside the lock and it is behind an 11-ga. steel bracket connected to the door's upright bars.

"It only takes three or four seconds to put on and take off," Jimenez-Rosario says about the lock. "You can put it in three different places - lower, at the handles midway up the door, or higher."

The high position is ideal for storage containers as thieves need a ladder to reach

it. The Deterrent bracket has holes for the lock for both standard trailers and containers.

As a trucker, Jimenez-Rosario sees many trucks that are vulnerable to thieves.

"It makes sense to add security to loads, as cargo theft continues to increase," says Jimenez-Rosario. The Deterrent is also useful for construction sites or for anyone who rents containers to store items.

The lock is made in Wisconsin and sells for \$99. Jimenez-Rosario and his daughter assemble and package the locks. He offers discounts on large orders and often delivers them personally within 400 miles of Milwaukee.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Vidalina Enterprise, Milwaukee, Wis. (ph 262-893-9474; klaatu1341@gmail.com; www.vidalinaenterprise.com).