

Polymat's insulation factor sets it apart from its competitors as 2 extra feet of mat in each end kit seals snugly against the wall. This makes it waterproof and airtight, helping maintain the desired temperature.



Air-Filled Curtains Keep Dairy Barns Comfortable

Ventec's air-filled curtains consist of UV-resistant, inflated polyethylene tubes made to tightly fit barn walls. They let in lots of light during winter but keep out cold. In the summer, they're easily lowered to boost ventilation.

Each section of curtain comes with two

2-ft. wide end kits, one of which is equipped with air blower motors. Galvanized steel support pipes add strength against high winds or other extreme weather.

"All the individual cells or tubes are connected to each other and the blowers," says Guillaume Lévesque, Ventec sales and

marketing representative. "When the blowers start it brings the air into the cells pushing the curtain up and down. For longer or higher sections, up to three blowers will fill three sections in the curtain, top, middle and bottom. Normally, for flexibility, the middle fills first, and if we want to fill a larger opening, the other blowers will run and bring the bag down to the ground."

The curtains are made from 3 to 16 ft. in height and can cover up to 150 ft. in length for one section. Three blowers handle up to 150 ft. of curtain.

"The poly membrane is attached by wires and cables, two lower cables tightened up in the end kit, and one cable up top attached to the rail. When the air goes into the tubes it just follows the rail with the inflation lifting the bag," says Lévesque.

Power can be supplied by a simple electrical switch, but normally it's run through a control system guided by artificial intelligence along with probes and sensors installed inside and outside the barn. The system can be programmed to open and close automatically based on temperature, humidity and other weather conditions.

He explains the insulation factor sets the Polymat apart from its competitors as 2

extra feet of mat in each end kit seal snugly against the wall. This makes it waterproof and airtight helping maintain the desired temperature, plus the transparent membrane allows for plenty of outside light to reduce indoor lighting costs when the curtain is closed. When the wall is folded down in the summer, natural light and airflow are provided.

"It stops cold air and drafts keeping the animals comfortable and productive," Lévesque says. "We've set them up throughout Canada and the northern U.S. in cold winter weather and they work great. We've even installed some near Siberia, Russia."

The Polymat G3 is produced in Quebec and available to North American farmers through a dealership network.

Lévesque says the curtains are priced per linear foot with a standard 10 ft. high, 100 ft. long membrane selling for about \$2,500 (CAD). All components needed to complete a wall of this size would be approximately \$8,000 (CAD) plus S&H.

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New & Improved Recoil Post Driver



Redesigned Hammer Head spring recoil post driver lifts up on a recoil so users can concentrate on pulling it down.

Driving T-posts is a lot easier with the Hammer Head, a spring recoil post driver from Shep's Mfg. Jack Shepenson made his first recoil driver in the late 1990's (Vol. 26, No. 4). He says the new driver is much improved and, unlike his first model, he has applied for a patent to keep it American-made.

"When I started building my first model, local farmers liked it, and I sold several hundred," says Shepenson. "When a large farm supply company started contracting with me in 2004, the business took off."

Unfortunately for Shepenson, he had no patent, and after a few years, the farm supplier moved production to China.

"About a year ago, I was reading reviews

of their driver on the internet, and it was rated only 2 out of 5 stars due to resistance from the spring," says Shepenson. "I redesigned it so that after the first cycle, it lifts the 13 1/2-lb. driver up on the recoil. The user only has to concentrate on pulling it back down."

Shepenson is confident the new design will be a big help to the elderly and less physically able. It also has an optional add-on weight (2 1/2 lbs.) for even greater down pressure.

"The spring will wear out eventually, but it's easy to replace," says Shepenson. "My supplier suggests it should last for several thousand cycles without any problem."

Shepenson notes that a key feature of the recoiling driver, aside from speed and ease

of use, is its safety. With a manual driver, the user tends to lift it to the same height as when they start with a post. That can result in the driver being lifted off the post and falling back on the user.

"With the Hammer Head, being raised above the post is not a problem," says Shepenson. "Unlike a fully manual driver, the recoil driver is constantly adjusting to the ever-shorter post."

Suggested retail price is \$80. Check with Shepenson for availability.

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Danish seed cleaner uses different outlets to clean seed.



Seed Cleaner Goes Mobile

The Big Fat Seed grain cleaner mounts on a gooseneck trailer so it can travel farm-to-farm, turning grain crops into seed. Engineered and manufactured in Denmark, the grain cleaner uses a combination of forced air and gravity to separate the heavier, most viable seed from lighter grain and dirt.

Ole Norgaard is a Montana farmer who imports and sells the grain cleaners from his farm. "Buyers of the trailer-mounted unit will be able to take it to the farm bin to clean and select their own high-quality seed for planting. It can also be used to pre-clean grain

to a higher quality before selling."

The grain cleaner runs on single phase 220 farm current. It has a phase converter and variable frequency drive control box that allows the operator to control the fan speed on the grain cleaner.

Norgaard admits that the Big Fat Seed grain cleaner is similar in many ways to competitive systems built largely in Ukraine and imported to the U.S. However, he argues that the Danish unit is built to higher quality standards in smaller lots, reflecting farmer/user input.

The grain falls through a high-volume air stream. Dust, dirt and light non-grain material are removed with the airflow. Clean grain and occasional stones are channeled into five outlets by weight. Stones fall into the first outlet, with the heaviest seeds into the next outlet. The remaining three outlets capture the second heaviest seeds, lighter seeds and very light and broken seeds, respectively.

"The seed flow inlet and the speed of the fan fine-tune seed selection," says Norgaard. "Handles over the outlets can further fine-tune the flow for the ideal cut of seed. It's very simple, user-friendly and inexpensive to operate."

"Our latest model has been modified with input from farmers in the U.S. and Denmark," says Norgaard. "With only one step between the user and the manufacturer, we can respond quickly to customer needs."

The Big Fat Seed cleaner is now in its third version and the first designed specifically for mobile use. Changes made in the most recent model include the addition of a window so the operator can monitor the separation process and adjust cuts in the grain flow for better seed selection. Other changes affect where materials are deposited.

Trash and dust are now collected in a dust net collection system at the rear of the unit. A handle-controlled end gate bypasses the net when cleaning crops like sunflowers, corn and emmer. These crops can create static electricity charges in the dust net. Chaff and other light materials will then collect and block the airflow through the net.

"Blockage creates back pressure, which interferes with the cleaning process," says Norgaard. "A North Dakota farmer suggested

the bypass, and we adopted it.

"We also made a change to outlet number five, which handles light and broken grain," adds Norgaard. "We installed a slot that can be opened to direct the light grain directly into the dust collector net or into outlet number four for light grain."

Outlets were made more versatile in the new version of the grain cleaner. A flow director is now mounted on each outlet.

"Flipping the control handle directs the grain to either the left or right-hand side of the trailer," says Norgaard. "Originally the outlets had to be detached and reversed. Now there are outlets to either side."

Two additional changes reflect the company's desire to resolve even small problems. "A farmer discovered a dead spot on the top of the machine that can collect a small amount of water," says Norgaard. "We made a change in design to drain the water away."

The company also added access holes with removable covers to the shroud on the back side of the fan.

"A farmer noticed that a couple of grains could get trapped there," says Norgaard. "Adding access to the sides allows us to blow them out. It's just a small thing, but we wanted to take care of it anyway. We're always looking to integrate common sense and good ideas in the design."

For pricing on the grain cleaner, contact Norgaard.

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