Photo shows Bissen's truck fitted with the 22-ft. grain box. Note tag axle at rear.

When not mounted on truck, the front end of box is held by a pair of temporary legs and a set of wheels under the back end.

DOES THE JOB OF TWO TRUCKS FOR LITTLE MORE THAN THE PRICE OF ONE

"Switch Box" System For Hauling Livestock, Grain

Here's the slickest system we've ever seen for making one truck do the work of two.

Built by Fred Bissen of Stacyville, Iowa, with the help of his sons and Freeman Welding, Little Cedar, Iowa, the "switch box" system consists of a new Ford cargo truck, a 28-ft. livestock box and a 22-ft. grain box. In just 10 to 15 min., one man can switch from one box to another without tools.

Bissen says he got the idea from scrap trucks that pick up dumpsters loaded with construction debris or other garbage. "It lets one truck do the work of two with just one subframe and hoist. With either box mounted, the truck is as good or better than any grain or livestock hauler on the market," says Bissen.

In order to keep the height of the boxes down and still be able to switch from one box to another, the men had to mount the Omaha Standard hoist down between the truck frame members instead of on top. That meant one frame cross member had to be reworked to arch down under the hoist. An 8,500-lb. "power up, power down" electric winch mounts at the front of the subframe.

Even though the livestock box is 6 ft. longer than the grain box, both have the same stringers underneath that fit into the subframe, and the same king pin runs across the back of the frame to lock both boxes in place.

When not mounted on the truck, the front end of each box is held by a pair of temporary legs and a set of wheels under the back end. To mount, the operator backs the truck up under the front end of the box, raises the hoist and lift rail to an incline, and then hooks up the winch, which pulls the box into place. Once the box is mounted, the legs and wheels slip out of their sockets and a king pin is inserted across the back of the truck, locking the box in place. An "air down, spring up" tag axle at the rear can be used to move big loads. Lights unplug at the rear from one box to another.

Bissen built both boxes from scratch, using steel framing, plywood sides, and tongue and groove flooring. "We overbuilt everything so it would last. It's a real attention-getter wherever we go," he notes.

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To mount the grain or livestock box, hoist raises lift rail to an incline and winch pulls it into place.

Dunn uses 25-ft. high permanently-mounted blower pipe to load silage into bunk.

Forage Blower Fills Bunker Silo

"It eliminates the possibility of tractors and wagons getting stuck in silage, and allows us to build a bunker silo that takes up less space," says Leo Dunn, Clemons, Iowa, who uses a forage blower and a permanently-mounted 25-ft. high blower pipe to fill his bunker silo.

Dunn chains the pipe to a platform that's bolted to the side of the 32-ft. wide by 120-ft. long by 14-ft. high bunker silo, which is closed on one end. He uses a Deere 4630 tractor equipped with a front-mounted blade to level the piles created by the blower.

"Other farmers in my area unload silage on-the-go from a wagon into a bunker silo that's open on both ends," says Dunn, who feeds 1,100 beef cattle. "The tractor and wagon can get stuck if the silage isn't packed down well enough. We can unload a wagon load of silage into the blower in 5 min. and there's no chance of getting stuck. Using the blower also allows us to close up one end of the bunker silo and build a shorter but taller silo that takes up less space."

Once the silo is filled, the silage pile at the open end is too steep to drive down with the 4630 tractor. Dunn attaches one end of a long cable to the 4630 and the other end to a tractor outside the silo. He then lets the cable out slowly to allow the tractor to roll backward down off the silo.

Dunn has two 20 by 80-ft. vertical silos that are located 100 ft. away from the bunker silo. When the vertical silos empty out, he refills them from the bunker silo with a 100-ft. long, 16-in. wide conveyor powered by a 10 hp electric motor.

Dunn had a Humboldt, Iowa fertilizer equipment manufacturer bolt two 50-ft. long conveyors together. He equipped the double conveyor with an old hammermill axle. He mounted the motor on the bunk feeder end of the conveyor which is 3 ft. off the ground. The other end of the conveyor is at ground level. Dunn uses a tractor and front-end loader to load silage into a wagon which meters it onto the conveyor belt. Altogether he spent $2,200 on the conveyor.

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Dunn refills his vertical silos with silage from the bunk silo using a 100-ft. long rubber-belted conveyor that he loads with a front-end loader.