

# Remote-Controlled F-250 Helps Rancher Feed Cattle

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Ken Myers and David Anderson took the engine out of a Ford F-250 pickup and converted it to electric power. Then they went one step farther to create the only remote-controlled pickup we've ever seen. It makes one-man cattle feeding fun, they say.

Anderson is an all-natural beef rancher. Besides saving energy, the all-electric truck eliminates the diesel engine noise and smoke, and the remote controls save him the cost of a hired hand.

The \$15,000 he spent on the conversion wasn't just for fun. He also uses the truck for fencing and laying out irrigation pipe, among other things.

The remote controls attach to a lanyard Anderson wears around his neck. As he unloads hay into feed bunks, he hits a button on the remote to move the truck ahead. With several relays and four buttons on the remote, he can steer, brake and even blow the horn to warn cattle in front of the truck. The remote works up to 500 ft. from the truck.

"When I go through a gate I only have to get out once," Anderson says, noting the remote

saves him a lot of time just getting in and out of the pickup doing chores around the ranch.

Myers made the conversion with a 42 hp electric motor out of a delivery truck. Other than adding an adapter to connect it to the manual transmission, changing to electric wasn't that difficult.

"A lot of the time involved figuring out all the relays for the remote. But we did it," Anderson says. Friend Ken Myers, a former high school shop instructor and auto repair shop owner, has experience with electric conversions. He has driven more than 100,000 miles on a 1965 Volkswagen Beetle he converted to electric in 1992.

Twenty 6-volt, deep-cycle, lead-acid batteries stored under the pickup bed power Anderson's truck. The charge plug is on the back of the passenger side of the cab. A plug outlet attaches to a headache rack. Anderson uses the electricity for grinders or drills and even an electric frying pan to cook a meal while out working.

Anderson's F-250 charges up in 3 hrs. or less and when driven at 40 to 50 mph it lasts up to 50 miles - for "less than the cost of a cup of coffee". With 5,000 to 6,000 rpm's the truck has out-pulled an F-250 diesel truck. Batteries start losing recharging power after 5 to 7 years. As lithium batteries evolve, Myers believes they will be more affordable and efficient. He adds that some states offer tax credits for electric vehicles.

He and Myers sell DVD's (\$19.99 each), and they plan to put together a packet detailing how to build your own remote-controlled electric pickup.



David Anderson says his remote-controlled Ford F-250 pickup works great for feeding cattle and for doing a wide variety of other jobs.



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Remote control unit attaches to a lanyard Anderson wears around his neck (left). Truck is powered by twenty 6-volt, deep-cycle, lead-acid batteries stored under pickup bed.

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## Miniature Harvestore Silo Stands Just 15 Ft. High

"Everyone who sees it says it's the cutest thing they've ever seen. I'm happy with how it turned out," says Nathan Braunschweig, Lomira, Wis., about the miniature sealed silo he made out of 3 used Harvestore silo panels.

He uses the mini silo to store feed for the 150 chickens he keeps on his farm. The 3 Harvestore panels measured 5 ft. high and were 9 ft. long before they were rolled into shape.

The structure stands 15 ft. high and is just 36 in. in dia. It weighs about 1,500 lbs. and sets on a 4-ft. sq., 10-in. thick concrete pad next to his chicken coop. The silo holds about 2 tons of cracked corn or oats. Braunschweig runs the grain through his home-built feed mill previously featured in FARM SHOW (Vol. 34, No. 3).

The silo is fitted with its own filling system, which includes a pipe and a homemade, gooseneck-shaped filler tube on top. It has a V-shaped floor with an auger underneath that delivers feed into a large rubber dish, which serves as a feed tray for the chickens.

"It's just a smaller version of the bigger Harvestore silos that stand on our farm. I fill it exactly like you'd fill a regular Harvestore," says Braunschweig. "I use a built-in blower on my feed mill to deliver feed up the filling pipe on the outside of the silo. It works so well that I plan to build another one just like it."

Braunschweig got the used Harvestore silo panels, and silo bolts, from a silo dealer he used to work for. The company supplies new and used parts for Harvestore silos and unloaders, and also tears down old silos and rebuilds them for sale.

"The panels had been removed from the top of a silo and could no longer be used for silage because acid had pitted the panels' glass lining, which would let in oxygen and spoil the feed," says Braunschweig. "However, I knew the condition of the glass lining wouldn't matter for grain so I asked if



Mini sealed silo stands just 15 ft. high and 36 in. in dia. It's filled by a pipe with a gooseneck-shaped tube on top (left). Feed is augered out the bottom into a feed pan.



I could have them. I had a local fabrication shop roll the panels end to end, and then bolted them together."

One problem is that feed sometimes tends to plug up in the floor's opening. "My feed mill is designed to turn the grain into a powder, so when I blow ground oats into the silo it really packs down and can hang up. I plan to replace the V-shaped floor with a flat floor and build a miniature unloading auger

like the ones that Harvestore uses," says Braunschweig.

He used 3/16-in. thick steel to build the cone-shaped roof and cut a hatch into it. "The roof is the same thickness as the Harvestore panels, so this silo will be around for a long time," he notes.

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