Garage door springs inside pieces of conduit on the side of Nichol's utility trailer make it easy to raise the rear drive-on tailgate.

"Made It Myself" Trailer Liftgate

"I modified my utility trailer to make it easy to raise the rear drive-on tailgate," says Steve Nichols, Galesburg, Ill.

His lift mechanism was patterned after the Gorilla-Lift tailgate that has spring-assisted cables in low-profile housings that attach to the top of a trailer's side rails (www.gorilla-lift.com; ph 877-388-8895).

Nichols decided to use a similar idea to lift the hinged ramp on his mower-hauling trailer. "I bought a couple of 160-lb. garage door coil springs and some lightweight conduit. I bolted the springs inside the conduit, mounted the tubes on top of the trailer's sideboards with muffler clamps, and attached cables to the springs and ramp. I welded a bracket to the back end of each piece of conduit to bolt two ball bearing rollers (from Lowes) to guide the cable as it extends and retracts.

"It's tempting to set this up without enclosing the springs, but I've seen them break and they can be kind of dangerous.

"If I did it again I would use light wall square tubing because it would be easier to mount in place. But the conduit was much less costly. I have about $40 invested in this lift, so I saved about $150 over the commercial unit."

The spring-assisted cables run through pulleys to tailgate ramp.

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Forklift-Mounted "Safety Cage"

A forklift-mounted safety cage, built from the metal cage on a 250-gal. chemical shuttle, makes high-up work safer for David Hansen of Pisek, N. Dak.

"It's a lot safer than standing on a wooden pallet, and I have a lot of room to work. I can have everything with me," says Hansen.

The safety cage measures 3 ft. wide by 4 ft. long and 38 in. high. Hansen cut out part of one side of the shuttle to make an entrance and used 1 1/2-in. angle iron to partially close the hole back up for support. A small safety chain with a hook at one end closes off the top of the entrance.

Hansen bolted a plywood section onto the shuttle floor and then bolted expanded metal onto the plywood.

"It took only about an hour to put together. I use it to do everything from changing light bulbs to washing out fertilizer spreaders to doing roof work," says Hansen. "I figure that if the shuttle floor is strong enough to support a 250-gal. bulk tank weighing 1,600 to 2,000 lbs., it's strong enough to support me. Chemical shuttle cages like the one I used are readily available at little or no cost."

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Forklift-mounted "safety cage" was built using the metal cage off a 250-gal. chemical shuttle. Inventor David Hansen bolted a plywood section onto the shuttle floor and then bolted expanded metal onto the plywood.

Chaploney cut three 12-in. square openings on front of a 5 1/2-ft. plastic toolbox, leaving strips between the holes and a 2-in. high barrier at bottom to contain the feed.

"Toolbox" Pig Feeder

You can make an efficient, virtually indestructible pig feeder from an ordinary pickup toolbox, says Seth Chaploney, Bradford, N.Y.

"It was cheap to make and there's very little waste," says Chaploney.

He started with a 5 1/2-ft. plastic toolbox that a friend gave him. He used a sawzall to cut three 12-in. square openings on front of the toolbox, leaving strips between the holes and a 2-in. high barrier at the bottom. Then he screwed on a 12-in. wide board at an angle inside the toolbox, leaving a 1 1/2-in. high gap at the bottom for feed to fall through.

"It'll hold about 200 lbs. of feed. The weathertight lid keeps the feed dry," says Chaploney, who raises 3 pigs on his hobby farm. "I prop up the lid, then dump feed by hand over a fence and into the feeder. The feed trickles down to the openings and the pigs have all the food they need. There's very little waste. The lid latches shut so pigs can't lift it up."

At first Chaploney set the toolbox on a pair of cinder blocks, but the weight of the feed caused the toolbox to sag. So he removed the blocks and screwed a pair of wooden poles onto each end of the toolbox that are anchored in the ground.

"My total cost for the project was about 50 cents worth of screws. Everything else I already had," notes Chaploney.

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Ron Vogelsmeier modified a 6-ft. wide front-end loader bucket to fit his tractor's 3-pt. hitch.

Easy-To-Use 3-Pt. Dirt Bucket

Ron Vogelsmeier got more than he bargained for when he rebuilt a front-end loader bucket to fit his tractor's 3-pt. hitch. It loads, hauls, dumps and more.

"I can lift it up, tilt it all the way forward, and drag it like a box blade," says Vogelsmeier.

He wanted to be able to move dirt without putting weight on the front end. When he found a slightly used, 6-ft. wide loader bucket at a local New Holland dealer, he figured out a way to adapt it for his 3-pt. hitch.

"The bucket was only $200 as it was pin-on. Most loaders now are quick-attach," says Vogelsmeier. "I used scrap steel to reinforce it and other parts salvaged off old pieces of farm equipment. I bought a cylinder and new hoses, as well as sleeve material for pivot points. The whole thing only cost around $400."

Vogelsmeier built a rectangular frame with 2 by 2-in. heavy wall tubing. Steel plate welded to the underside of the tubing was bolted to a standard Cat. II drawbar, purchased at Tractor Supply Co.

He connected the top link to the front crossbar of the frame with the lower arms attaching just ahead of the bucket.

Sleeves welded to the rear end of the frame accepted the pin-on bucket. More steel plate on the top side of the frame was welded in place as a base for the 23-in. stroke cylinder. Heavy steel gussets reinforced the drawbar/frame connection as well as the cylinder mount.

"I can lift the bucket up, tilt it all the way forward, and drag it like a box blade," he says.

Exactly where to mount the cylinder was the biggest challenge Vogelsmeier ran into with the project. "The issue was how to make it dump, yet maintain height for dumping," he says. "I tried to mimic the geometry of the original loader bucket, and it worked."

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