Made It Myself

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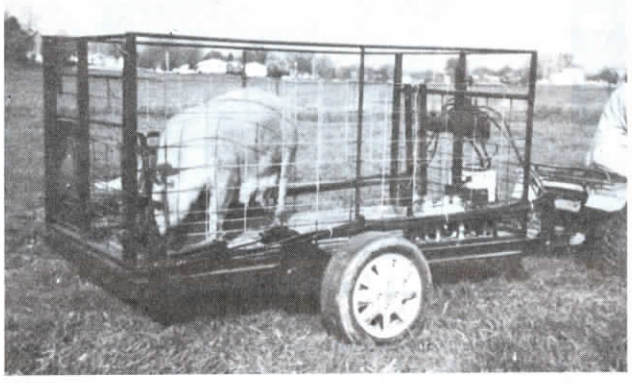
"Best Of The Best" Hog Farmer Inventions

Our thanks to Dale Miller, managing editor of NATIONAL HOG FARMER for his help in pulling together this roundup of made-it-myself inventions from the annual inventions contest sponsored by the magazine. Winners were judged by showgoers at the World Pork Expo last June in Des Moines, Iowa.



ATV Hydraulic Hog Cart

"It works great for moving small bunches of pigs," says Brock Hansen, Wyoming, Iowa, about the hydraulic hog cart he built to pull behind his ATV.

The hog cart received honorable mention in National Hog Farmer's inventions contest.

Hansen copied the design of full-sized hydraulic trailers, but built his cart only 4 ft. wide and 8 ft. long.

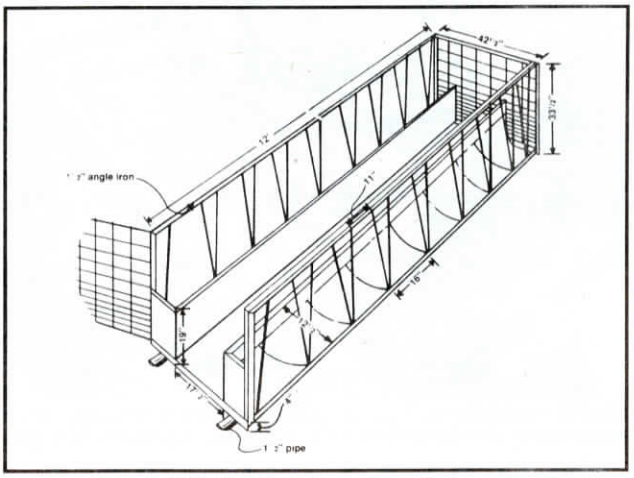
"The cart makes it much easier to load and move sows and litters into and out of pasture huts," says Hansen. "It holds two 600-lb. sows. I also use it in winter to move 60 25-lb. pigs out of our nursery to outside pens. It works great in wet conditions because it doesn't tear up pasture or newly-seeded ground. I can hook the trailer to my tractor. However, I still use my 16-ft. long tractor-pulled hydraulic cart to haul large bunches of hogs."

Hansen welded the wheels and hubs from a 1988 Ford Escort GT to the axle which he built from a 1 1/4-in. dia. steel shaft. He positioned the axle about 4 in. off center so most of the load's weight rests on the trailer tires. He used 4-in. channel iron to build the frame and spaced the cross members 2 ft. apart. He built the tongue from 2 by 2-in. tubing and angle iron and the floor from 3/4-in. treated plywood painted on both sides. He used 16 ft. of hog panel to build the sides and mounted reinforcing rod around the top. Hansen salvaged a 12-volt hydraulic pump and a pair of 8-in. stroke hydraulic cylinders from the tailgate of a cargo van. He mounted the pump and a 12-volt battery on the cart's front panel and mounted the cylinders behind the wheels. He pushes a button on the cart to activate the pump and uses a lever to raise or lower the floor. When the floor is raised all the way up, he can flip a "stop" over the cylinders to lock the cart in position.

The end gate can be pinned on either side to swing open in either direction. By lifting a 2-ft. slide gate built into the end gate, Wilson can back the cart flush against the door of a building and "walk" hogs into or out of the cart. He ties a 4-ft. wide divider gate anywhere inside the trailer to keep small pigs from getting stepped on by their mother.

Hansen says he spent $300 to build the cart.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brock Hansen, RR 1, Wyoming, Iowa 52362 (ph 319 488-2520).



Walk-In Sow Feeder

Some of his lots didn't have enough room for permanent fenceline feed bunks, so Arvin De Cook, Sully, Iowa, built his own 12-ft. long walk-in sow feeder from steel and angle iron scavenged from a local salvage yard.

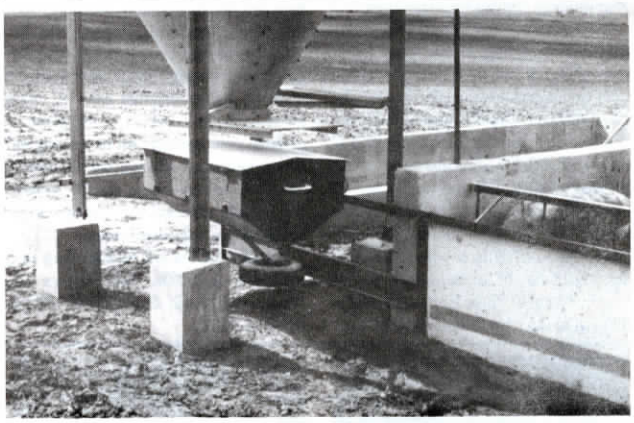
The feeder took first place in National Hog Farmer's inventions contest.

"Limit-feeding sows is economical, but carrying buckets full of feed into a pen of hungry sows is a challenging, if not dangerous, chore," says De Cook. "Feeding on the ground or on open concrete slabs can waste a lot of feed and allows sows to fight over feed. My feeder makes feeding safer and easier."

De Cook used two 12-in. long, 12-in. wide U-shaped lengths of steel for the troughs. He used 1 1/2-in. angle iron to weld a frame around the feeder, then used 1/2-in. reinforcing rod to make divider bars. The head openings are 16 in. wide at the bottom and 11 in. wide at the top. There are nine feeding spaces per side. He welded a flat piece of steel to the inside edge of both troughs to keep sows from rooting out feed. The walkway is 17 1/2 in. wide. A section of hog panel closes one end of the feeder. Pipe skids (1 1/2-in.) make it portable.

De Cook is now manufacturing the feeders and sells them at a cost of $20 per sow.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Arvin De Cook, Rt. 1, Box 91, Sully, Iowa 50251 (ph 515 594-3438).



Rail-Mounted Feed Car

Michael Ryan, Ryan, Iowa, solved the problem of pushing a wheel barrow or cart through mud or snow to feed sows along a fenceline feed bunk by building a rail-mounted feed car.

The feed car took second place in National Hog Farmer's invention contest.

The feed car rides on a single 2-in. wide rail mounted on a bunk-style, fenceline feeder. Ryan raised the bulk bin 1 ft. so the car can roll under the bin boot for easy filling. The feed car holds about 400 lbs. of feed - enough to feed 90 sows once a day. A hinged roof on the car keeps feed dry. When not in use, Ryan parks the car under the bin so the lid won't blow open.

Ryan uses a grab handle welded to the end of the car to pull it along and scoops feed to sows by hand. "I can feed 42 sows in one minute," says Ryan.

He made the rail by bending 2 by 10-in. pieces of strap iron in the shape of a "U" so they hang over the top of the bunk, then welded 2 by 2 by 1/4-in. angle iron to the straps.

He built the feed car from 14-ga. sheet metal. Two 4-in. steel wheels roll along the top of the angle iron while two smaller wheels run inside the rail and two run beneath it. A 12-in. rubber wheel mounted on the bottom of the car rolls along the bottom side of the feed bunk for added stability. The rail extends 5 ft. beyond the bunk so the car can get under the bin.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Michael Ryan, RR 1, Box 154, Ryan, Iowa 52330 (ph 319 932-2089).