Lorton offset one panel to create an opening just wide enough for him to squeeze through.

They Make Their Own Concrete Fence Panels

By C.F. Marley

Weary of constantly having to repair the wooden fences around their feedlot, Harvey Lorton of Greenfield, Ill., and his sons decided to make permanent concrete fence panels as well as a number of self-standing, portable concrete panels that allow the Lortons to quickly split their feedlot in two to separate groups of animals.

The 4-in. thick portable panels stand 4 ft. high. The Lortons made three 8-ft. long panels which they use to divide their feedlot and two 10-ft. long ones that they place at one end of their bunker silo. Each panel stands on a 3-ft. wide concrete "foot". Pairs of steel loops on top of the panels allow them to be picked up and moved anywhere with a front-end loader.

"The self-standing portable panels eliminate the need for a gate," says Lorton. "Whenever we divide the feedlot we put cows and calves on one side of the fence and fat cattle on the other side. We offset one of the panels slightly to create an opening just wide enough for a person to squeeze through, but not an animal. It lets us access a creep feeder that we keep on the cow-calf side of the fence.

"The key to making the portable panels is to make sure that the rebar in the upright panel is well secured to the 3-ft. wide horizontal 'foot' so that the upright panel doesn't pull out of the foot when the panel is raised

Panels split feedlot in two, allowing cattle from three pens access to this waterer.

off the ground. We found that the solution is to weld the rebars in both sections together before pouring the concrete.

"It cost about $1 per sq. foot to make the poured concrete permanent fence which is actually less than it costs to build and maintain a conventional wooden fence. They really work nice for loading manure because you can push the manure right up against them, making it easy to load. They also keep the wind away from the cattle. We bolted a 36-in. high strip of tin roofing on top of the fence on the west side of the feedlot to further break the wind."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harvey Lorton, RR, Greenfield, Ill. 62044 (ph 217 368-2168).

The 12 by 14-ft. pen is welded to front part of frame off an old disk.

Portable Calf Pen Built Out Of Old Disk

When a neighbor gave Clifford Craig an orphaned calf to raise one spring, the Galva, Ill., grain farmer bottle-fed it until summer. Then he needed a way to get the calf to grass, so he built a 12 by 14-ft. portable calf pen that mounts on an old disk.

"I built it on the spur of the moment because I wasn't equipped to handle livestock, but I think the idea might be helpful for many cattle producers," says Craig. "To move the calf I just raise the disk, drive slowly to a new spot, and let the disk down again. The calf walks right along inside the pen."

He first cut off the rear end of a 14-ft. wide Kewanee single axle disk and threw it away, keeping the lift wheels and hitch. He welded a 2 by 5-in. channel iron horizontally onto each side of the disk frame, then bolted a 14-ft. long cattle panel to each side. The calf enters and exits the pen via a hinged gate at the rear. A piece of wire cattle panel runs across the front. A 55-gal. plastic barrel at the front of the pen serves as a water tank. Craig cut the barrel in half and laid it down horizontally, then bolted an angle iron frame on top of it for strength. He then placed the barrel at an angle under the disk frame and bolted it on, with part of the barrel extending through the cattle panel.

"It really works good and didn't cost much to build," says Craig. "In the summer I move it every day. I generally use a small tractor to pull it, but I can even use a riding mower. I already had the disk which I had bought at an auction for $300. I bought it for parts after the bearings in my disk failed and I learned that new ones would have cost $100 apiece. I've used five bearings off the disk so I've already paid for it.

"In hot weather I place a section of canvas over the pen to form a canopy that keeps the calf in shade. I welded a pair of channel irons vertically onto each side of the disk and welded a steel rod between them near the top. I place the canvas on top of the rod and use bunge cords to fasten one end of it to the cattle panel and the other end to the rear gate."

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Layer of small square cornstalk bales is used to form roof of open-sided shelter.

Cornstalk Cattle Shelter

Cattle stay snug and toasty warm inside this open-sided shelter made"for next to nothing" from bales of cornstalks, and poles cut out of the woods.

Duane P. VandeZande needed a place for his beef cattle to shelter during cold weather but he couldn't justify construction of an expensive commercial shelter. Instead he went to the woods to cut wood poles and made a framework which he then covered with square and round bales made out of cornstalks.

He put a row of large poles down the center and along either side, and then laid smaller dia. tree trunks at an angle from the sides to a center board at center. Then he laid a layer of square bales of cornstalks across the entire roof of the shelter. He closed in the back wall of the shelter with a couple rows of round stalk bales.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Duane P. VandeZande, Rt. 2, Box 104, Preston, Minn. 55965.

"Zero Grazing" Better Than Rotational

Rotational grazing has been the hottest buzz word in livestock in recent years. But some British farmers are moving beyond that to what they call "zero grazing", according the magazine *Farmer's Weekly.*

In a zero grazing operation, cattle are kept in feedlots near hayfields, and fresh forage is cut each day to bring to the animals. With no grazing on pastures, forage yields go up and the grass or alfalfa recovers faster.

One proponent of zero grazing is Edward Whalley, a farmer-manufacturer near Cheshire, England. He has just introduced a new mower-feedbunk combination that makes it easy to cut and feed fresh forage on a daily basis.

Whalley, who milks 300 dairy cows, designed a new mobile feed bunk that pulls on a tandem hitch alongside his special-designed twin drum mower. The mower blows long, unchopped grass straight into the elevated bunker which is then pulled to the feeding site and unhitched.

The success of the system hinges on the ability of the mower to provide long, unchopped material. Unlike chopped grass, this undamaged forage stays fresher longer. "Chopped grass starts to heat up within 24 hours," notes Whalley, who designed the bunker so cattle can pull out the long-stemmed grass from both sides.

New twin drum mower and blower fills mobile feed bunker with long, unchopped grass.

Whalley says many farmers have become convinced zero grazing is the way to get the most production out of hay fields but the machinery available up to this point has made it a labor-intensive proposition. Using his new system, he says he can mow and haul the grass needed for one day in a shorter time than it would take to move cattle between fields and set up temporary fences. What's more, since he switched to zero grazing, milk production has gone up.

He uses two mobile bunkers to feed his 300-cow herd.

The twin drum mower and mobile bunker are on market in England but no importer has been established for North America.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Edward Whalley, Cotton Abbots, Waverton, Chester, England. (Photo and story excerpted from *Farmer's Weekly*)

Clipped Tails Denote Animals In Heat

To keep track of 12-month-old heifers in heat, the 125 Cattle Company in Roswell, New Mexico, clips the "switch" off the end of each heifer's tail when the animal is seen in heat or when the chalk is worn off of tailheads.

That way, only "clipped", cycling animals are moved into breeding pens. Unclipped heifers are checked by the veterinarian for potential reproductive problems. ***(Drover's Journal)***