

Made It Myself

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“Upside Down” Woodsplitter Handles Big Logs

“My woodsplitter handles logs too big for one person to lift onto a conventional table-type splitter. We have an almost endless supply of this type of wood that I can get for nothing to heat my shop and my house,” says Terri Stearns about the heavy-duty splitter he built to mount on a skid steer loader.

The splitter is ideal for hauling wood from the many giant maples that grow in the area of New York where Stearns lives. The power company, for example, often has to cut them down and offers the wood to the public for free. But hardly anyone wants the big 30 to 40-in. dia. chunks.

Stearns' splitter is an upside down version of a conventional splitter. It straddles big pieces of wood where they lie on the ground. The splitter's frame helps protect the operator from flying wood while splitting.

The heart of the woodsplitter is an 11-in. high cutting wedge made out of 1-in. thick cold rolled steel. A knife-sharp edge

is ground into the edge and there's a wing on each side that pushes the logs apart. The wedge is cut into and welded to the right side of an 8 by 8-in. reinforced H-beam so it's extremely solid, Stearns notes.

A 5-in. dia. hydraulic ram with 30-in. stroke provides up to 50,000 psi to the 9-ft. 6-in. long by 30-in. wide machine. The ram is entirely encased in a steel cage to protect it from contact with wood or ground. The only moving part is its push block, which can only be operated from the cab of the skid steer.

The 1,000-lb. woodsplitter attaches to and detaches from Stearns' 552 Mustang skidsteer in five minutes. He perfected it in three weekends last winter.

“I've cut 15 cords of wood with it and I can split wood faster than two men can stack it,” he says.

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Axle Extensions For Deere 4555 Tractor

“I'm working toward putting all my equipment on 120-in. centers for working eight 30-in. rows. One of the first steps was widening out our 4555 Deere tractor,” says Gene Banwart, Liberal, Mo., who is in the process of changing his farm over to ridge-till.

“After cultivating with the wide axle on this tractor, I don't understand why all manufacturers don't offer it as an option. It lets me sit back in the seat and see clearly down both sides of the tractor to exactly where the tires are in relation to the row. What's more, with a 60-in. wheel width, turn radius was restricted to 28 ft. By widening the axle to 120 in., I can take all the 'stop' wedges out of the wheels and get an 18-ft. turn radius.

“I first priced some wheel-type spacers for the tractor but they wouldn't have left much clearance for cultivating tall crops and I wouldn't have had room to use saddle tanks for 28% side dressing.

“One day I pulled off one of the final drives on front to see how it was made and I discovered that the front axle drive

shaft has the same spline as my 6620 combine. I called my dealer and found out I could get a combine drive shaft extension just over 25 in. long. I needed at least 25 in. to get the coupler out past the differential housing.

“I found a machine shop in Pittsburgh, Kan., that would make axle extensions for me to go around the drive shaft extensions. I had to take the final drives to their shop. It was rather complicated as they had to machine places for washers to run so the extended driveshaft would not move around too much. It also ended up being more expensive than I'd figured - about \$800 for each side. I put plugs in the extensions so I could pump differential grease into them. I also cut the tie rods and found some milling stock that just fit over them so I could easily extend the rods as needed.

“The extensions bolt in place so I can change back to the original 60-in. wheel width, if needed. I've used the tractor in this extended configuration for almost two seasons now with no problems.

“One benefit of the widened axle is that



Closed Circuit Camera Monitors Calving Pens

“It lets me check the cows in my calving pen from the comfort of my house,” says Bruce Chern, Smoky Lake, Alberta, about his closed circuit camera that's mounted on a 30-ft. high TV antenna pole in the middle of his 3 1/2-acre calving pen.

The camera rotates 360 degrees and sends the picture directly to a TV monitor in Chern's house. A halogen light mounted above the camera provides enough light for the camera to “see” what's happening at night. A second camera in Chern's barn allows him to keep an eye on cows that calve in the barn during cold weather.

Chern has used his camera system for two years. “There's a remote control joystick on the monitor that tilts the camera up or down or moves it from side to side. I can ‘zoom’ the camera in for a close-up view. It really works good. Even when the camera is as far as 100 ft. away from a cow I can read her ear tag. The Halogen light provides an almost perfect view even in the middle of the night.

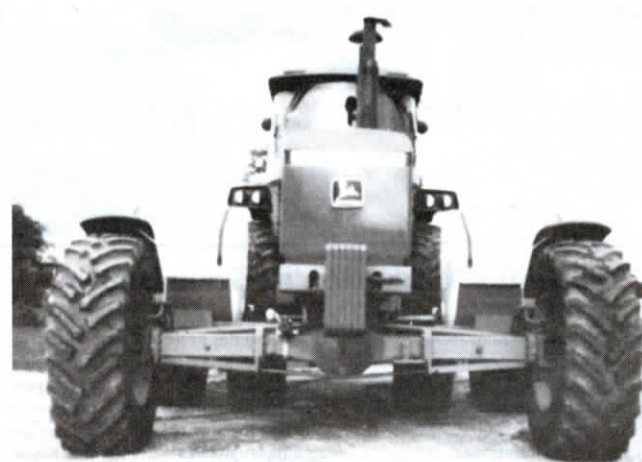
“Before I installed the camera I had to check cows every three or four hours during the night. I've learned that I really don't need to go out to help cows as often as I

had been doing. Usually when you disturb a cow in labor, she quits what she's doing and it may take two or three hours before she resumes labor. There's less stress on both the cow and the calf if the labor process isn't disturbed.

“I already had the TV antenna pole. I paid about \$4,000 for the antenna-mounted camera and \$1,000 for the camera in the barn. The antenna-mounted camera is mounted in a heated box that's thermostatically-controlled. A fan inside the box cools it off in warm weather. The Halogen light is strapped on top of the box so it moves with the camera. Dusk-to-down light sensors automatically turn the light on at night and off in morning.”

The antenna is anchored to underground concrete footings and also chains to corral panels. A junction box for the power lines is mounted on the pole 10 ft. off the ground. Underground power lines connect the cameras to the monitor and are encased in protective plastic sleeving.

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it gave extra room for saddle tanks. I bought some 180-gal. Ag-chem ‘tear drop’ tanks and saddles but didn't like the position of the tanks. They were too high and too far forward so I built my own brackets. The tanks don't stick out more than 3 or 4 in. past the outside tires with enough room for a cat walk between the tank and the engine, and plenty of room to enter the cab. I moved the latch forward that holds the door open. It now holds the door open so

the driver can enter, even though it doesn't open as wide as before.

“The biggest advantage of this mounting position is that I can still see the front tires at ground level when cultivating, just like before I put the tanks on.”

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