

Gate Hangers Bring Flexibility to Cattle Sorting

By building and installing a pair of three-hinged devices onto a post, Dave Kerr greatly improved the options he has available to him when sorting cattle. When the need arises, the Harrowsmith, Ontario farmer simply lifts the gate off one set of hinges and replaces it on one of the other sets, at a completely different angle, hence positioning the gate in a new direction.

"I call them gate hangers, and they're great for penning cattle and also corral cleaning because you can easily swing the gates right out of the way for cleaning straight through," he says.

To build each device, Kerr took a horseshoe-shaped piece of metal with ears drilled for bolts and welded on three loops, each with pins welded at the end. By bolting a piece of flatbar to the ears of the horseshoe, the devices can be securely positioned on the gatepost – at any height to accommodate various gates. He made two different sized loop-length pins, positioned two inches from the post. The third set of pins is 6 in. from the post, which allows for more swing side-to-side without binding or stopping at the post.

On the gate hanger that is positioned at the top of the post, Kerr made all of the pins longer than the bottom set in order to make gate installation easier. Also, the top pins have holes drilled in them for lock clips, preventing the gates from being lifted off the pins.

It takes Kerr about four hours to build one complete set, and he has made several sets for use around his farm. He used short ends of scrap iron, so the cost was negligible.

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Kerr welded three loops, each with a pin welded at the end, onto horseshoe-shaped piece of metal. Entire set-up clamps onto gate post.



Gate hanger is designed so Kerr can lift gate off one set of hinges and replace it on one of two other sets, at a completely different angle.



According to tractor rebuilder Harry Herl, Versatiles are relatively cheap to repair because many replacement parts can be bought from over-the-road truck parts shops.

Rebuilt Versatile Tractors Are "As Good As New"

"Most Versatile owners will tell you their tractors are reliable, easy to work on, and usually cheaper to repair than other comparable-size tractors because you can buy many of the replacement parts needed from over-the-road truck parts shops. That's why we decided to get into the business of rebuilding used Versatiles to like-new condition," says Harry Herl, who runs his tractor rebuilding business in Quinter, Kansas, with the help of his sons.

They start with older model Series I or II Versatiles that they buy at auctions. They generally replace the engine with a new, more fuel efficient Cummins engine. Transmissions, differentials and final drives are inspected and repaired or replaced as needed. The tractors are also completely repainted, the cab interiors reinsulated, new seats installed, and the tires are replaced.

"When the tractors leave our shop, we expect them to be ready for another lifetime of fieldwork," says Herl, who provides a warranty with his rebuilt tractors.

For one recent rebuild job, Herl even replaced the original Versatile cab with a cab off a 4840 Massey Ferguson 4-WD tractor to provide more room and visibility. They also replaced the original hood with a sloping, easy-foldup hood for better access to the engine compartment and better driver visibility.

"Our business has spread mostly by neighbors telling neighbors," Herl says. "When you consider the price of rebuilding one of these tractors and the service you can then get out of them, along with the reasonable price of replacement parts, they stack up real well against a new tractor."

The Herls also stock salvage parts for Versatiles so they can supply many replacement parts that might be needed down the road.

The rebuilt Versatiles sell for \$45,000 to \$55,000.

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Combine Converted To Front-End Loader

Spinning around the feedlot on a 2-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader wasn't Lawrence Bepalko's idea of fun. His brother Edward didn't like it too much, either.

But an end loader or 4-WD tractor with a bucket was well beyond what the Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, brothers thought they could spend. They upgraded to a real loader tractor by building their own from a couple of old combines.

"Lawrence designed it and we built it together," Ed says. "We put up hay with a Hesston stacker and feed hay with the front-end loader. We also use it for scraping and loading manure, so we spend a lot of time on the loader."

They started with an IH 815 combine and stripped it down to the frame. "All we had left was a big wheel assembly and the two channel irons attached to that," Ed says. They used the original engine and hydrostatic transmission from the 815, but remounted the engine farther back for better ballast.

To ensure they had plenty of strength in the machine, they added an extra frame from a late 1950's or early 1960's Case 1000 combine. Wheels, axles, and power steering all came from the 815.

With the engine in place, they designed and installed framing and bracing for a quick-

attach Leon's front-end loader.

They use a 6-ft. wide self-leveling bucket with a grapple fork on it, so they can use it for hauling both manure and feed.

They designed and built the cab to look more like the cab on a big backhoe and mounted it near the center of the frame. "It has a sloping top, with a window in the front, so we can see the bucket when it's fully raised," Ed says.

While the engine is usually heavy enough to counter the load on their bucket, they clamped 600 to 700 lbs. of flat steel to the back of the frame. This weight is removable, though they've never taken it off.

They used the original combine tires on the drive wheels.

The Bepalko brothers built their loader 7 years ago, mostly to save money. The original 345 cu. in. 8-cyl. gas engine has since been replaced with an IH 414 cu. in. diesel engine. "We could have bought a used bi-directional tractor or something similar. But the total cost of our conversion was only about \$3,000. We spent another \$6,000 to replace the engine."

They're still not quite finished with the machine. An engine hood and a mast for a fork lift are in the design process.

"It took a lot of time and labor to make



Stripped-down IH 815 combine is equipped with a quick-tach Leon front-end loader.

this conversion, but in the long run it saved us at least \$25,000 over the price of a used machine and maybe \$60,000 over the price of a new one."

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