



Rig is equipped with rotating "magazine" that holds supply of posts.



"It lets one person put up a mile of fence posts in an 8-hour workday," says inventor Tim Herrmann.

## AUTOMATICALLY GRABS A POST AND DRIVES IT

By Bill Gergen, Associate Editor

# First-Of-Its-Kind Fence Building Machine

Driving home from work one day, Tim Herrmann saw his 76-year-old uncle driving steel fence posts into the ground. The sight prompted him to start working on an easier way to drive posts.

His patent pending "Theilman Fence Master" is a computer-controlled, hydraulic-operated machine that automatically drives steel fence posts. It's available either as a pto-driven or self-propelled model and can carry a "magazine" of steel T-posts or plain pipe posts.

"It lets one person put up a mile of fence posts in an 8-hour workday and the fence will be perfectly straight or, if you want, naturally curved," says Herrmann, who has built other models to handle both fiberglass and wood posts.

The machine is controlled from the tractor cab by push button controls. Posts load into a rotating "magazine" that holds up to 60 posts. To drive a post you simply push a

button. The unit grabs one post at a time from the magazine and drives it into the ground. Fence wire is unrolled from spools at the back of the unit as you drive along.

A laser beam alignment system on the Fence Master makes it easy to put posts in a perfectly straight line. You can install crooked or curved fence lines by turning off the laser alignment system and using a remote manual post positioning button.

"This machine will drive a post about every 60 seconds or less," says Herrmann. "It has a self-leveling feature so it'll always drive posts straight, even on side hills. One person can operate it, but it's more efficient with two operators - one to run the machine and the other to follow behind to tie the fence onto the posts. There are two wire unrolling spools, one on each side of the machine.

"If the operator is out of position, the machine will not drive the post, giving the operator a chance to reposition the machine. It

will also stop itself if the post hits a rock while it's being driven in. The undamaged post can then be driven in elsewhere.

"The self-propelled version has all wheel drive and front and rear axle steering, with a lockout for just front wheel steering. The front and rear axle steering mode works great for repairing fences or getting into tight spots.

"I've also developed two other models. One is designed to put in fiberglass posts and weighs just 700 lbs so it can be mounted in the back of any 1/2-ton pickup. The driver operates the post driver and single strand fence unroller right from the pickup cab and can put in a post every 45 seconds or less. The magazine holds up to 120 posts. This unit doesn't have a laser alignment system. The other model is much more expensive and is designed for contractors. It's available either as a self-propelled or pull-type unit and stands 11 ft. high and weighs about 8,000 lbs. It's capable of driving in wood posts as

well as all other kinds of posts. It pre-drills a hole that's slightly smaller than the wood post and then drives the post into it. It also works great for setting round or square poles for building sheds."

Inserts can be bolted into the magazine on any of the machines, allowing you to switch between driving in fiberglass posts, T-posts, or pipe posts. "For example, you might want to drive in five fiberglass posts, then a steel post, then five more fiberglass posts, etc.," says Herrmann.

Herrmann says he's looking to license, capitalize, or custom make individual machines.

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## Extra-Long Shotgun Kills Birds With Less Noise

When Wendell Diller goes crow hunting, he can pick off a bunch of birds and the rest of the flock never knows what happened.

That's because Diller has the quietest shotgun around thanks to its extra-long 7-ft. barrel.

The new-style shotgun barrel meets all U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms requirements.

Diller says it's much more quiet - and accurate - than anything on the market.

He says he could have made the barrel even longer, but 7 ft. was all he could fit into his hunting vehicle, a 1988 Plymouth Volare wagon chugging along toward its 350,000th mile.

The shotgun shoots normal 3-in. shells, but Diller loads his own, going up two sizes in steel shot and adjusting the powder load so he can achieve shot velocity of 900 to 1,000 feet per second.

When he pulls the trigger, he still gets a kick. But instead of a normal shotgun blast, all you hear is a soft "poof" that causes minimal disturbance to people or animals.

Diller's built two long barreled shotguns so far and friends have built two more. No two are alike but he thinks a combination of steel and aluminum wrapped in fiberglass, similar to Winchester's Win-Lite shotgun barrel, will probably be the best bet for manufacturing long barrels that are light enough to handle. For liability reasons he's not anx-

ious to try to tell people how he made his barrels, but, he says, "a trained gunsmith can probably figure it out."

To reduce noise, his barrel is vented with a series of 1/16-in. drilled holes, located toward the muzzle. The number and placement of the vents is proprietary information. He's applied for a patent on the design and is working with arms makers who want to produce long barreled guns.

"The vents release gases slowly from the barrel, so you don't have the one big shock wave when they escape the muzzle," he explains.

Diller doesn't like to call his long barrel a silencer. A silencer has ports that release gases into another chamber, while his barrel vents gases into the atmosphere. He wants no conflict with BATF over this.

The longer barrel and larger shot in the shell makes Diller's shotgun shoot differently than typical shotguns. "You need to lead a moving target a little more with this," he says.

To help shooters learn to use the longer-barreled guns, Diller has developed shotgun shell tracers. He recently applied for a patent on these, too. "We use a sort of shuttlecock made of a bright colored plastic to replace the wadding in the shell. That lets us follow the trajectory of the shot and see how far in front or behind the target we are," he says. It really helps in shooting skeet or clay pigeons."



Wendell Diller says he has the quietest and most accurate shotgun around thanks to its extra-long 7-ft. barrel.

Diller says he hopes to see both the long barrels and the tracer shells on the market sometime soon, but has no idea what either might cost.

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