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“All-Purpose” Portable Barn

Here's a good idea for hay growers - and anyone else who'd like to have a bit more flexibility when putting up new buildings around the farm.

Robert Barnett, Burlington, Okla., designed a new all-purpose portable barn that's easy to set up for use as a bale shelter, machinery shed, calf shelter, etc.

The 33 by 50-ft. open-sided metal barn mounts on wheels that make it easy to move around. According to Barnett, the barn pulls down the road easier than pulling a 28-ft. stock trailer loaded with cattle.

The building is made of 2 by 1/8-in. sq. tubing on the main frame and 1 1/2-in. tubing on the rafters. The building folds in half lengthwise to 16 1/2 by 50 ft., making it narrow enough to be pulled behind a 1/2-ton pickup down rural roads and over bridges. One half has a tongue and two wheels attached to it, which are removed for set-up. Six hinged legs - three on each side - give the barn a 10-ft. eave height. The legs, made from 4-in. sq. tubing, fold up for transport to reduce the building's overall height. Additional height can be gained by bolting on 2 or 4-ft. extensions. Each leg rests on top of a portable 3-ft. sq. concrete pad.

The half of the roof that folds over the other half is built in two sections that are hinged at the ridge. A front-end loader fitted with a boom and chain is used to pull half of the roof over at a time. Once the roof is in place, a loader fitted with a bale fork is used to raise up one end of the building so that each of the legs on that end can be unfolded and bolted together. Then the process is repeated at the other end of the building. Finally, the wheels are removed. A flexible vinyl cap is used to

cover the ridgeline.

“It works great for storing big square bales. It holds about 90 big square bales. And it should have some value when it's no longer needed or when the buyer retires, unlike permanent barns that are often neglected and fall apart,” says Barnett. “I came up with the idea because I used to be a custom hay grower on land that I leased. I had to get out of the hay growing business after I had an accident. I had built two permanent barns and wished that I could have sold them, so I decided to build a portable barn. This way I can move the barn to wherever the renter wants it. Most renters don't want to spend money on a barn for hay storage. With a portable barn, if you ever lose the lease you can just move the barn.”

“It sells for about \$3,000 more than a permanent barn of comparable size. But you can resell it without having to sell the family land. So far I've built two buildings. I sell them for about \$17,000 apiece.

“It works a lot better than using tarps which require a lot of labor to put up. If the wind is blowing too hard the tarp can tear. Also, tarps generally don't last more than three years or so. It's less time consuming to haul hay to a barn in the field, rather than to tarp the bales at the side of the field, or to transport the hay to an off-site barn. Another advantage is that hay stored inside a barn is generally worth about \$20 per ton more than hay that has been tarped. Considering this difference, a farmer could pay for my portable barn in only about three years.”

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FARM SHOW associate editor Dawn Throener recently traveled to Lincoln, Neb., to test-drive Kawasaki's new “4 to 2” utility vehicle which has a second-row passenger seat. When extra cargo space is needed, it quickly converts to a 2-passenger rig by folding down the back seat. Dawn reports that the new Mule is a powerful machine with a smooth ride. You can check it out at www.kawasaki.com.



Tim Gearm and his wife offer rides on this old Eli Bridge Ferris wheel, which they bought used. It had been torn apart, so they repainted it and put it back together.

Backyard Carnival Rides Provide Fun For All

Tim Gearm loves to make 70-year old ladies and little kids scream with joy, and that's exactly what they do when they ride on his backyard Ferris wheel and merry-go-round. The Hereford, Texas man bought the used Ferris wheel and built the merry-go-round himself. Now he offers rides to just about anyone who wants one - civic groups, clubs, church groups, and kids of every age.

“I always enjoyed carnival rides and thought it would be fun to have my own,” he says. “I was particularly curious about old Eli Bridge Ferris wheels.”

Eli Bridge Ferris Wheels had a monopoly on mechanical Ferris wheels for years until new hydraulic units began to be introduced in the 1970's. Gearm, a retired mechanical engineer, found an old one that had been torn down and set aside. It was a park model, which meant it had been stationary, not moving from town to town.

“It had about ten coats of paint on it that had to be sandblasted off. I repainted and put it back together and affixed new decals from the still-operating company,” recalls Gearm. “It had a bunch of lights on it, but we put about 1,000 more on. The project was fun for the whole family.”

The seats needed to be repaired and new canvas covers sewn for each one. Gearm bought an industrial sewing machine, and his wife taught him to use it. His sons helped with metal and electrical work.

Watching folks enjoy the 46-ft. tall, 36-passenger ride started Gearm thinking about other rides. Intrigued by carousels, he soon found out that most old wooden carousels were either in bad shape or the horses and other creatures had been sold off to collectors.

“Even junk was bringing \$30,000 to 40,000,” recalls Gearm.

He found out that before some of the carousel owners sold their hand carved horses to collectors, they had molds made in Juarez, Mexico. The foundries there cast aluminum replicas to mount back on carousels, keeping the patterns as part of the deal.

“I was able to go there and buy a whole group of animals, a giraffe, a monkey, and different horses,” says Gearm. “I brought them



Gearm also built his own merry-go-round. All but two of the 16 animals move up and down.

back, sanded them down and powder coated them white. Then I painted them with a special paint for their colors and powder coated them clear to protect them. They look like old porcelain.”

To make the carousel, Gearm mounted a 12-in. dia. pipe in concrete with a height of 16 ft. One bearing mounts at the top of the pipe and a second one is about 5 ft. lower. Similar to an umbrella, 3/4-in. rods extend out at 45 degree angles from the top bearing to a 21-ft. dia. hoop. Rods descending down from the hoop support the outside of the carousel platform. A second set of angled rods extends down from the lower bearing to support the inside edge of the platform.

As the platform circulates, all but two of the 16 animals move up and down. Gearm installed a 5 hp geared motor hooked to an AC inverter. The inverter allows him infinite speeds with the AC motor. He and his wife designed a tent top and sewed it themselves. They also installed 2,200 lights and a sound system.

“We had a 4-year-old birthday party out here the other day, and they all had fun,” says Gearm. “That's what a carousel is for.”

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