Reader Letters

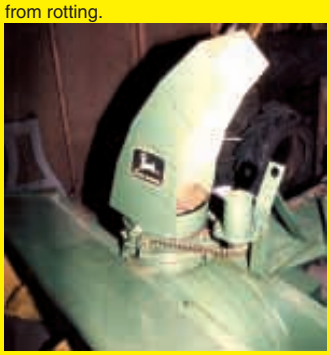
I have a metal machine shed that isn't bird proof. I hired an exterminator for several years to rid the building of birds, but the service got so expensive that I quit using it. From then on my machinery became completely covered with bird droppings. Then I decided to cover my tractor with black plastic and haven't had any bird problems at all. As soon as the birds come into the building they turn around and leave. I can't tell you why it works, but it does. ***(Elvin Pritts, Farm Toy Repair Shop, RR 1, Box 9, Guide Rock, Neb. 68942)***

It's important to have a switch on the power line that leads to your fuel tanks. So mount a light on a pole in the area and put the switch in a handy area, like in your home or shop. That way you'll always know whether the power is on or off. ***(Charles Poole, 1805 N 31st Rd., Ottawa, Ill. 61350)***

I recently made this steel wheel tricycle, adding a bracket on back to support a 2-ft. long wooden planter box. My wife keeps the tricycle in our front yard. She puts more plants in a homemade wooden

wagon that sets on our front porch.

The big front wheel is off an old milk cart designed to haul cream cans. The rest of the bike is off an old unicycle, including the bearings and pedals. The rear wheels are made from strap metal and metal rods. Sometimes I remove the planter box and ride the tricycle around at shows, although it doesn't go uphill very well because the wheels are so big. My wife places an aluminum cake pan at the bottom of the box to keep the wood from rotting.



The chute on this snowblower was originally equipped with a hand-operated crank. I didn't have a push-out window on back of my tractor cab, so I had to get off the tractor and turn the chute manually. I converted it to operate hydraulically by mounting an orbit motor next to the chute and chain-driving it. To rotate the chute I just operate a joystick lever in the cab. ***(Patrick G. Prom, 12661 Pioneer Trail, Eden Prairie, Minn. 55347 ph 952 944-9266)***

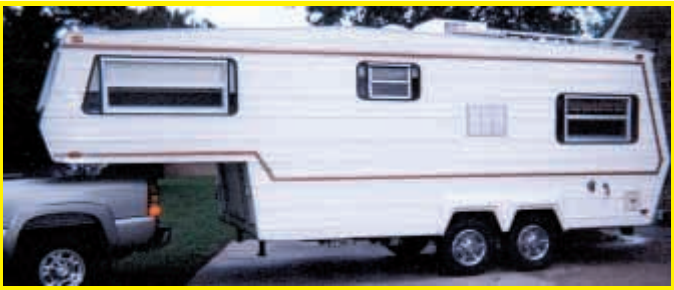
An unused hog self-feeder, wired to a series of stacked wooden pallets, makes this feeder just the right height for cattle. (***Rex Gogerty, Hubbard, Iowa)***

I came up with low-cost portable posts by anchoring steel fence posts in car wheel rims filled with concrete. The rims can easily be rolled to nearby locations. They come in handy whenever I take my collection of antique tractors to shows. By tieing yellow rope between the posts I can quickly rope off my tractors. ***(Don Peck, 212 No. Elm St., Zearing, Iowa 50278 ph 641 487-7306)***

We make hay feeders for our horses out of old square or rectangular water tanks, along with scrap lumber and welded-wire

hog panels. We bolt four 2 by 4s onto the corners of each tank to serve as uprights and nail sheets of plywood across two ends. The panels are bent into a V shape above the tank. The design keeps animals from wasting hay, as the tank catches any dropped hay before it can land on the ground. ***(Logan VanRheenen, 4656 East Third Road, Mendota, Ill. 61342 ph 815 538-3619)***

These gate locks were made for our new cow barn. We can close the gate by giving it a small push, and the iron on



I built this 24-ft. long fifth wheel camper back in 1979, when there weren't any like this on the market yet. I used light gauge, 1 1/4-in. rectangular tubing to build the frame and mounted it on the chassis of a Dodge pickup. I installed the tubing every 16 in. on the floor and ceiling and pop riveted an aluminum skin to it using aluminum roofing sold by Sears.

Years earlier, I built another fifth wheel camper equipped with a pop-up awning on one side. Whenever you opened the top, the tarps would come up and the beds slid out. The tarp was raised and lowered by a boat winch hooked up to

an electric motor. When I got to the campground, I pressed a button to raise the tarp. ***(Robert Judice, 5317 Daspit Road, New Iberia, La. 70563 ph 337 229-6375 or 337 229-8180)***

either side lifts up and falls down once the gate is between the two pieces of steel. Our cows can't open it. ***(Don Hofer, Prairie Home Colony, Box 147, Wrentham, Alberta, Canada T0K 2P0)***

As a kid, I figured out how to cut the angles on a stave to make a wooden bucket. Years later, after I got married and bought a house, my neighbor and I were reroofing the front porch. The house is 110 years old and the material under the shingles consisted of odd scraps of rough cut oak lumber. We pulled it all off and replaced it with plywood. Wanting to thank my neighbor for helping me, I picked through the pile of old oak, recalled my days as a kid, and made him a bucket.

My spouse saw it and asked me to build one for her, too. Well, the next thing I knew, I was in the bucket business. Since that first bucket for my neighbor, I've made dozens of buckets and sold some for as much as $50. I've also experimented with making barrels and drums out of curved staves. I like to use old wood that I pull out of the trash pile and dumpsters. The stave stock needs to be only about 2 in. wide and 12 in. long. Hardwood flooring scraps and cut-offs work well.

My neighbor, who happens to work part time at a wood working store, suggested I teach a class in bucket making. That

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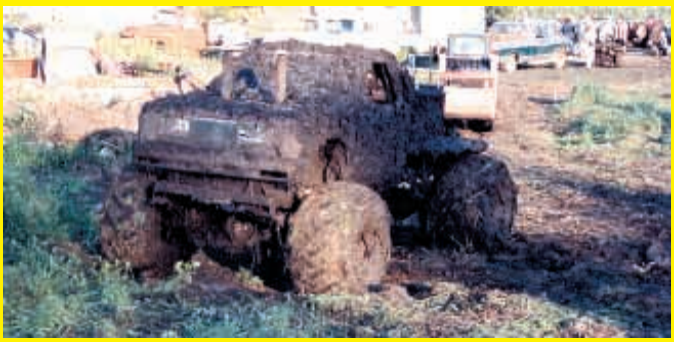

My home-built, 4-WD, articulated "mud truck" can get in and out of just about any mud hole and works great for hill climbing. It's fun to drive. I built it by modifying a junked-out 1978 Chevrolet 1-ton pickup.

It's powered by the Chevy pickup's original 350 cu. in. gas engine. It's fitted with two rear drive axles, both off Chevy 1-ton pickups.

I used 1 1/2 by 3 1/2-in. rectangular tubing to build a new frame. The cab and front fenders are off a Chevy S-10 1/2-ton pickup. The hydraulic cylinders and steering unit are off a Massey Ferguson combine. A modified beer keg was used for a gas tank on back. The box on back of the rig is used to keep mud off the radiator and transmission cooler. A pair of "glass pack" mufflers with tractor flaps on top extend straight up out of the hood. ***(Steven Werner, 761 E. Court, Belle Plaine, Minnesota 56011 ph 952 873-5678)***