

Two-Piece Post Is Easy For One Man To Handle

When building a pole barn or shed, it can be quite a challenge to manhandle 10 or 12-ft. posts by yourself. Arco Rosenow of Chillicothe, Ill., makes the job a lot easier by making 2-piece posts out of "staggered" 2 by 4's and 2 by 6's.

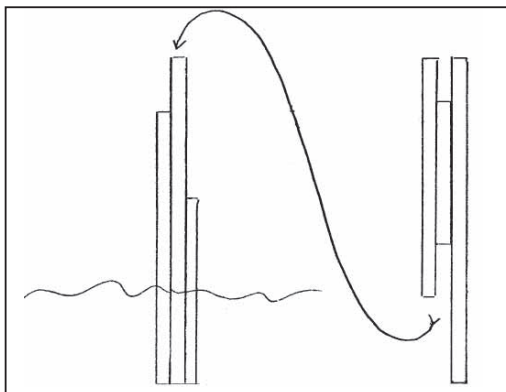
"I put the first part in the ground and get it aligned and set in place. Then I put the second piece on top and screw them together," says Rosenow.

To make a base post for a 10-ft. high wall, he uses one 8-ft. 2 by 6; one 7-ft. 2 by 4; and one 6-ft. 2 by 4. The top half consists of one

5 1/2-ft. 2 by 6; one 7-ft. 2 by 4; and one 8-ft. 2 by 4. The extension post has a 6-in. deep pocket on top to hold the truss.

"The advantage of this idea is that the 8-ft. base posts are easy to set and level. I attach the base boards together as I set the posts. You're doing all this with the level resting on top of the post at only 5 ft. high while using a drill, a 3/8-in. step drill bit, and 3-in. screws," says Rosenow.

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Rosenow makes 2-piece posts out of "staggered" 2 by 4's and 2 by 6's. "The advantage of this idea is that it's much easier for one man to handle the 8-ft. base posts."

The Sun Waters These Cows

When Jeff Cunningham was told by a local government agency that he was going to have to fence off the creek running through his pasture, he was concerned how he was going to get water to the small herd of cattle that graze there.

"The creek and a small spring fed pond that overflows into the creek are the only water sources for the pasture," explains Cunningham.

A solar-powered water pump proved to be the solution. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, which wanted the creek fenced off, contracted with a local alternative energy supplier to set up a watering system for Cunningham.

Mike Findley, Sun Energy Systems in nearby Port Colborne, Ontario, put together a package that included a 50-watt solar panel, 12-volt deep cycle solar batteries, and a float pump system with a 12-ft. lift. A hose running from the pump carries water to 110-gal. poly tanks on either side of the small stream. A float on the end of the hose connects by extension cord to a controller on the solar array. It turns the system on and off according to tank water level.

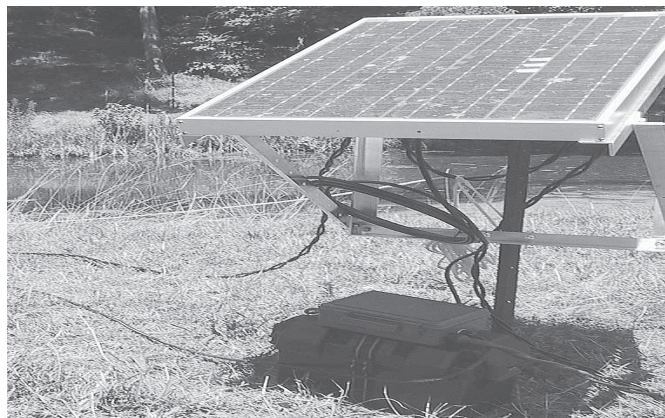
"When I move the cattle from one side of the creek to the other, I just drag the hose across and hook it up," says Cunningham. "The battery pack more than maintains water levels over night."

The pump is a standard sump-type pump that hangs from a float in the center of the small pond. As a water source, the pond is more stable than the creek where water levels can fluctuate by season.

Findley says the system is priced at about \$1,600 for the solar panel and pump with the 100-amp hour batteries priced at about \$237. Capacity for the system is about 1,400 gal./day. Findley says a \$2,135, 125-watt system would produce about 4,500 gal./day. Although he hasn't installed many for cattle producers, Findley says interest is growing for the off-the-grid systems.

"I think we will see more of them being used," he says. "The solar panels and pumps are practically maintenance free, and if you treat the batteries right, they'll last a long time."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Findley, Sun Energy Systems, 40 Ramey Ave., Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, L3K



System includes a 50-watt solar panel, 12-volt deep cycle solar batteries, and a float pump system with a 12-ft. lift. A hose running from the pump carries water to 110-gal. poly tanks on either side of the small stream.

2L3 (ph 905 835-8963; fax 905 835-9884; info@sunenergysystems.ca; www.sunenergysystems.ca).



Removable Quick Latch For Cattle Gates

By Janis Schole, Contributing Editor

Here's a cattle gate latch that I think is innovative. My husband, Keith, designed it so maybe I'm biased, but I don't think so.

In high traffic livestock areas, he needed something that would work better than the factory chains on his pipe gates. Those were cumbersome and not very safe.

What he came up with is strong, quick, safe, and flexible because it's removable and can be used as either a left or right hand latch. And the gate doesn't need to be cut or welded so it's not weakened.

The latch fits any 2-in. pipe gate. Three 2-in. muffler clamps secure it to the gate so the latch can easily be removed and relocated to a different gate if necessary.

"It's a quick-latch that's meant for dangerous places such as in runways or behind loading chutes," he says. "Using a chain in these places isn't fast or safe."

Keith's home-made latch consists of a 4 by 16-in. metal plate with holes drilled for the muffler clamps.

A 1-in. dia. pipe welds to the plate. A 7/8-in. dia. rod that slides inside the pipe has a 6-in. right angle handle on one end. When pushed all the way into the pipe, the rod extends past the end of the gate to a cleat on the fence.

Two short pieces of 1/4-in. thick, 1-in. sq. plate form a stop so that when the handle is down in closed position, the cattle can't push it open. Because there are two of these stops (top and bottom), they also form a slot that the rod has to slide through to get the gate open.

Keith says that if the latch is used in permanent holding areas, it should have added



Home-made latch fastens to 2-in. pipe gate with muffler clamps.



security. To achieve this, a flexible tarp strap can be used to hook around the gate and the handle so that there's no way the cattle can rub it into position and get it open.

Keith says he really likes using his latch because it slides smoothly and freely, but is strong.

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The 8 1/2-in. dia. convex mirrors mount on both sides of the operator. A knob on the back side of mirror is used to adjust it up or down.

Rear View Mirrors For Skid Loaders

"Our first-of-its-kind safety mirrors for skid loaders work better than anything else on the market," says Iver Peterson, Pine City, Minn.

The 8 1/2-in. dia. mirrors have a convex shape and are designed to mount on both sides of the operator. A knob at the back side of the mirror is used to adjust the mirror up or down.

The powder-coated mirrors are available for Melroe Bobcats and Deere skid steers. Mounting brackets for other skid loaders are being developed.

"The mirror's convex shape gives you a great field of vision, with no blind spots," says Peterson. "It makes a fantastic difference. You can see what's directly alongside you as well as 30 to 50 ft. off to the side without turning your head. You can even see the ground directly behind the skid loader. In my opinion, mounting a convex mirror outside the cab works better than mounting it inside the cab, where you can see only shoulder high



behind you. With my mirror, you can see right behind the rear wheel without having to look over the skid loader's lift arm."

On Bobcat models, the mirror bolts onto the loader lift arm. You just replace an existing bolt and put the mirror on and then tighten a self-locking nut. On Deere models, the mirror mounting assembly has a wrap-around design with a steel plate underneath the lift arm that you tighten with two nuts.

The mirrors fit all Bobcat models including the earliest models and up to the mid 1990's.

Mirrors for Bobcats sell for \$49.56 apiece plus S&H. Mirrors for Deere skid loaders sell for \$55.50 plus S&H. Volume discounts for dealers are available.

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