Company Turns Bale Wrap Into Plastic Lumber

An Ontario company is turning white plastic silage bags into plastic lumber called "Baleboard."

Charles Sparks and Lisa Lackenbauer of Think Plastic, Inc., perfected a technique that allows them to salvage the waste plastic. Baleboard costs 25 to 30 percent more than cedar wood and 2 to 3 times more than pressure treated lumber but the product needs no painting or treatment, is easily cleaned, and it'll last indefinitely.

Although there are a variety of "composite" building materials on the market that combine plastic with wood fiber, and plastic boards that contain other polymers like polystyrene and polypropylene, Think Plastics' product is unique in that it's 100 percent polyethylene.

Baleboard is ideal for farm fencing, barn flooring, horse stalls, greenhouse framing, docks, and even outdoor tables and benches, says Sparks.

Baleboard won't rot, splinter, leach chemicals, or require maintenance. It can even be sterilized. The boards can be nailed, glued, stapled or screwed without splitting (unlike other composites), and ceramic insulators aren't needed for electric fencing. Baleboard lasts indefinitely and is also recyclable over and over again, the company says.

In the summer of 2005, Think Plastics picked up more than 140 tons of material from more than 20 landfill sites. The company's 16,000-sq. ft. facility is located right in the middle of a livestock producing part of Ontario. So far they only recycle white plastic.

"Ten thousand pounds of plastic will make more than 200 2-in. by 6-in. by 12-ft. planks that weigh 43 pounds each," Sparks says.

The company also produces 10-ft. long, 4-in. sq. beams.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Think Plastics Inc., 267 Victoria Street South, New Hamburg, Ont., Canada N3A 2K5 (ph 519 662-6665 or 866 516-2253; fax 519 662-6667; info@thinkplastics.ca; www.thinkplastics.ca).

Waste plastic from silage bags is turned into plastic lumber called "Baleboard".

About 10,000 lbs. of plastic will make more than 200 12-ft. 2 by 6 planks.

Boards can be nailed, glued, stapled or screwed without splitting.

Subsoiler Turned Into Cable Layer

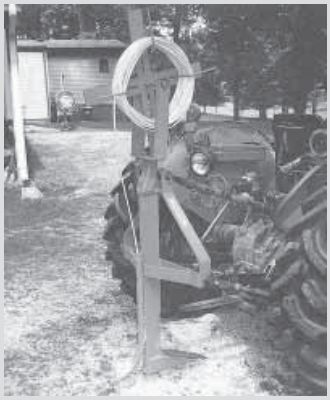
Donald Feilbach, Piasa, Ill., put a spool holder on his King Kutter subsoiler so it could bury electric cable 1 ft. underground. After the cable is laid, he drives the tractor wheels over the trench to pack the ground down. "You don't even know it's been disturbed," he says.

To add the cable to the subsoiler, Feilbach bent a piece of 1-in. pipe 90 degrees and then welded it to the back of the subsoiler with the end almost as far down as the blade. A small length of rebar reinforces the curve at the bottom. The top of the pipe is about level with the lift arm pins on the 3-pt. hookup.

Feilbach fashioned a 3-in. wide spool holder out of flat steel and scrap metal that holds different size cable on it.

"I buried 80 ft. of cable in four minutes," says Feilbach. "I even went across the gravel driveway with no problems."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Donald Feilbach, 7547 Rt. 111, Piasa, Ill. 62079 (ph 618 729-4491).



Feilbach bent a piece of 1-in. pipe 90 degrees and then welded it to the back of the subsoiler, with the end almost as far down as the blade.

Photos courtesy University of Maine

Tipping the sulky back lowers the frame to the log, which is then chained in place.

Do-It-Yourself "Sulky" Makes Logs Easy To Move

Moving logs is easy with this nifty do-it-yourself hand sulky, says Ben Hoffman, forester and retired forestry professor at the University of Maine. It has two wheels connected by a frame with a long handle. Tipping the sulky back lowers the frame to the log which is then chained in place. Tipping the sulky forward lifts the log so it can be more easily dragged through the woods.

"I first thought about making one years ago when skidding pine logs for a pole barn," says Hoffman. "I thought it would be a handy way to get firewood out of my woodlot."

While teaching at the University of Maine, he read about sulkies being used in Tanzania. With the assistance of a faculty member and a student in engineering, Hoffman came up with his simple design. It called for wheels from 24 to 28 in. in dia. and a reach of about 36 in. between the wheels. The handle was 72 in. long, but it could be made to be extended. The longer the handle is, the greater the leverage to pick up the logs.

"We built the prototype using a pair of small motorcycle wheels and mounted them on a pair of stub axles," says Hoffman. "We used an I-beam for the frame connecting the two wheels and angle iron for the wheel yokes."

That first prototype could easily handle 300-lb. loads. Hoffman says maximum load is mainly dependent on the wheels selected.

Tipping the sulky forward lifts log so it can be more easily dragged through the woods.

His prototype had a notched bar at the center of the frame sized to fit choker chains used to secure the logs. The closer to the center of the logs the chains were placed, the less the drag. Hoffman points out that when pulling logs down hill, additional drag acts as a brake.

Since Hoffman first built his hand sulky in 1977, several commercial units have come on the market. One of the most ergonomic and efficient, he says, is produced by Future Forestry Products, Inc. (ph 888 258-1445; www.futureforestry.com).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ben Hoffman, 103 Storer Rd., Bradford, Maine 04410 (ph 207 327-1064; bennmeh@earthlink.net).

Drywall Lift Has Saw Blade Ratchet

Putting up drywall on a wall or ceiling can be quite a job, especially if you have to work by yourself. Tom Reitsma, Staffordville, Ct., solved the problem by building his own drywall lift.

"It has saved me a lot of time and muscle power," says Reitsma. "I came up with the idea because I needed to hang a lot of 4 by 8-ft. drywall sheets on the 9-ft. high ceiling of my garage."

The drywall lift rides on four small caster wheels and consists of two wooden uprights that slide up or down inside wooden guides. Using an old circular saw blade and a piece of angle iron with a spring attached to it, Reitsma made a ratcheting mechanism that holds the sliding part of the frame up. Webbing is attached to a round dowel that's hooked to the bottom of the uprights. Turning a crank causes the uprights to move up or down.

A hinged wooden frame on top supports the drywall and is mounted over center, allowing Reitsma to load a 4 by 8 sheet of drywall by himself. When the drywall is on it, the weight of the sheet levels the frame out.

"It works great and can lift drywall sheets up to 9 ft. 3 in. high. I already had most of the material except for the wheels, so it cost a lot less than renting or buying a commercial model," he notes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tom Reitsma, 7 Wales Road, Stafford Springs, Ct. 06076 (ph 860 565-3054; walstibn@cox.net).

Wood frame that holds drywall mounts on two wooden uprights that slide up or down inside wooden guides.

Ratcheting mechanism consists of an old circular saw blade and an angle iron "ratchet" with a spring attached to it.