



Pallet shed comfortably houses Katter's tractors, planters and tillage equipment.

PALLETS PROVIDE STRENGTH, ECONOMY

Farm Buildings Made Out Of Wood Pallets

Wood pallets get used many different ways on farms, but chances are you've never seen anyone use them the way Boyd Katter does.

He built three farm buildings out of wood pallets.

"A local stove company had a surplus of 40 by 48-in. pallets that they didn't know what to do with. They couldn't shred them because their machine broke down and they couldn't burn them because of EPA regulations. So they offered them to the public for free," explains the Delaware, Ohio, farmer. "I have a 16 by 7-ft. cattle trailer that I loaded full of the soundest oak and hickory pallets I could find every day for two weeks. The ones I hauled home were the cream of the crop because I hand sorted them all."

Katter used about 70 of the recycled pallets to build a 20 by 43-ft. pole-type machine shed. He used another 44 to build two portable igloo-style calf pens.

"Wood pallets are an increasing environmental nuisance to dispose of, but are easy to recycle for all kinds of uses around the farm," Katter says. "My boys couldn't believe I put up buildings with them."

Here's more about the machine shed and pens Katter built with the pallets. They went up easier and faster than conventional buildings, in part because pallets form both the structure of the building and also have facing boards on them to attach siding and roofing to.

• Katter's three-stall machine shed was put together in sections on the ground, then lifted into place with a Bobcat.

The 13 by 20-ft. main shed has 8-ft. high walls. The sides of the pallets are nailed together and 2-ft. pieces of 3/4-in. plywood are nailed across the joints between them. The pallet walls are secured with steel strapping to 6 by 6 poles set 4 ft. deep in the ground every 5 ft.



Calf hutches made out of pallets are strong and durable, says Katter.

The open-span, gabled roof is about 12 ft. high at its highest point. The angles between pallet roof sections were also formed and reinforced with 3/4-in. pieces of plywood.

There's a 15-ft. long shed on each side of the center section. Rafters and lateral supports are 2 by 6's.

Corrugated steel roofing and siding cover the building.

"The arches, bracing, and plywood plates, in combination with the strength of steel siding and roofing, produce a shed that's as solid as a rock," Katter says.

• The pallet calf pens are 10 ft. sq. at the base with arched igloo-style roofs and open floors. They were constructed just like the machine shed.

"They'll hold six to eight 300 to 600-lb. calves," Katter says. "They're remarkably strong, but are very easy to move because they're mounted on runners made out of treated lumber."

Sides of the pen are made up of nine pallets. The closed end is reinforced with oak 2 by 4's and 2 by 6's. A flap-type ventilation window installs on the closed back side



Plywood "gussets" reinforce roof sections.

of the pen. The front side is fitted with a gate.

Steel siding covers the shelters.

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Loader-Mounted Cutterbar

A 6-ft. sicklebar mower mounted in place of a bucket on a front end loader lets Clarksville, Tenn., farmer Ed Hildreth cut sorghum heads off his standing sweet sorghum crop.

"Before we came up with this idea, we had to cut the heads off by hand," says Hildreth, who grows sweet sorghum for making what's commonly called sorghum "molasses". All seed heads must be removed from the 12 to 15-ft. tall crop before the cane is processed by a mill. Processing involves squeezing the juice out of plants.

Hildreth says he couldn't find anything like his front-end mower on the market. He started with a bale spear frame minus the spear. He welded a platform to the frame and mounted a 5KW gas-driven generator and a 1 hp. electric motor (1,800

rpm's) on the platform. The motor connects to an 1,800 to 3,600 rpm gear reducer which belt-drives a Massey Ferguson 6-ft. sickle. The generator motor has electric start and generates 110-volt power to drive the motor. Normal tractor hydraulics are used to raise and lower the front end loader.

Hildreth says he spent \$1,500 putting the cutterbar together.

Hildreth sells sweet sorghum syrup in 1 and 2-lb. jars (for \$3.50 or \$7.00 respectively plus \$5/lb. shipping). He notes that it has a distinct flavor that can be used as a sugar sweetener and is a good source of certain nutrients, such as potassium.

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Horse-Drawn Big Bale Hauler

Jack and Steven Gunter, of Val Marie, Sask., combined new technology with old to come up with a horse-drawn round bale handler for feeding cattle.

The Gunters use two Belgian horses to pull a wagon fitted with a commercial bale handler designed to slide into a pickup box. It'll load and haul up to two bales at a time, then unroll them or drop them directly into a bale feeder.

"Using horses eliminates wear and tear on our pickup and saves fuel," says Jack.

The Gunters used 8 by 1 1/2-in. steel tubing to build a frame that they mounted on the running gear of a new Deere 700 wagon. Then they bolted the "Bale Master" bale handler to that frame (Bale Master is built by Mike's Welding, Rt. 1, Sundre, Alberta, Canada TOM 1X0 ph 403 638-2393). A pair of telescoping arms are used to lift bales onto the wagon. A

hydraulic motor powered by a 13 hp electric-start Honda engine provides hydraulics to the bale arms. The engine and controls are mounted inside a home-built cab on front of the wagon.

"It works as well as any tractor or pickup-mounted bale handler," says Gunter. "We use it to feed about 10 bales every day to our 300 cows. The telescoping arms let us load or unload both bales without having to move the horses. The bale handler weighs 950 lbs. and is balanced by the weight of the cab in front. When we unload a bale off the back of the wagon, the front wheels jiggle a little but the front end doesn't raise up. The arms can lift 2,700 lbs."

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